

The Linux Game Industry

Who am I?

- Ryan C. Gordon
- icculus.org
- Epic Games
- Electronic Arts
- Activision
- Croteam
- Running With Scissors

Where we were

December 9th, 1994

- Dave Taylor releases Doom for Linux.
- “I did this ‘cause Linux gives me a woody.”
- “It doesn’t generate revenue.”

Abuse

- Dave Taylor again, at Crack Dot Com.
- Sold as Shareware
- (Now open source!)
- Crack Dot Com dies working on Golgoltha.

The Next Generation

- Loki Software, inc.
 - Civilization, Quake3, SimCity, etc.
- Hyperion
 - Shogo: MAD, SiN
- Tribsoft
 - Jagged Alliance
- Vicarious Visions
 - Terminus

Things Fall Apart.

- Loki has some baby-momma drama.
- Hyperion abandons Linux for *Amiga*.
- Tribsoft goes under.
- Vicarious Visions goes to Xbox devel.
- Everyone starves.

Where we are.

Not dead yet.

- Epic Games
- Id Software
- S2Games
- Garage Games
- Transgaming
- Linux Game Publishing
- eGenesis
- icculus.org

Some titles of note...

- Unreal Tournament 2004
- Doom 3
- Serious Sam
- Savage
- Medal of Honor
- A Tale in the Desert
- Marble Blast

Pimping for icculus.org

- Commercial, now open source games.
 - Rise of the Triad
 - Descent
 - Freespace 2
 - Aliens vs. Predator
 - Duke Nukem 3D

Things that helped

- Foundational libs: SDL, OpenAL, OpenGL...
- Success of MacOS X. No, really.
- Portable engines
- Modding
- Dedicated servers
- Lots of begging and pleading.

Rough statistics

- UT2004: more servers than Windows, twice as many clients as MacOS X.
- ArmyOps: all Official servers running Linux.
- Half-Life: 50-60% servers running Linux.

Where we're going.

The Negative Part of the Talk

Don't celebrate yet.

- A delicate balance; will developers return?
- Vicious cycle of content and money.
- Small returns, big grief.
- No one can get hit by a bus!

People Acting Badly.

Congrats to the Game of the Year!



Game: Really Simple Syndication (RSS)

Our editors are all business and turned up their noses at selecting favorite games. These are the kind of people you want to hire to roll out your company desktop systems. But even though it might not look like *Quake* or *Frozen Bubble* when the boss walks by, there's a new hit game that Linux people are playing on the Net, and whether you want to call it blogging or social software, players are everywhere. It's like painting *Dungeons and Dragons* figures or collecting baseball cards, but with real people.

The glue tying it all together is a simple XML-based syndication format called RSS, which sites such as Technorati and software projects such as Planet are using to bring together Web content in new ways. Who's a blog king and who's a bozo? Pop in to Technorati to check the score.

Reuven points out that the all-in-one social network sites LinkedIn, Orkut and Ryze aren't particularly useful, but he says they're "all scratching the surface of something new and interesting." It gets really interesting when social networking info crosses site boundaries and anyone can crawl it. Game on!

Our marketing sucks.

- Word of mouth is a total failure.
- Advocacy isn't always good.
- Every Windows developer has been burned by Linux at some point.
- Every Windows gamer has seen a negative view of Linux gaming at some point.

The Fine Print: The following comments are owned by whoever posted them. We are not responsible for them in any way.

I'm not really surprised (Score:5, Insightful)

by [An Ominous Cow Erred \(28892\)](#) on 0:15 24 January 2002 ([#2892444](#))

At Hyperion, an alternative platform game software porting company I work for, we've produced titles for Linux as well as MacOS and AmigaOS. The Linux versions simply bombed, with the Amiga versions outselling them by a good margin. The *AMIGA* versions! The Amiga market, by a good estimate, is around 100 times smaller than the Linux community.

What we got from Linux users were not sales, but tons of email demanding that we put up the binary executables on an ftp site for free so they could download them and use them with their Windows version of the game. For some reason they just couldn't grasp that it cost us money to both license and port the software, and that we didn't see a red cent for the Windows version they bought. It didn't matter, all they wanted was free beer.

As a Linux enthusiast myself (active in my LUG, promoting Linux wherever I can) it really saddens me that so many users will clamor for Linux games but won't actually pony up the money when they become available. It's very, very depressing.

::goes to cry in his non-free beer::

James Sellman -- Hyperion Entertainment -- <http://www.hyperion-entertainment.com/>

Red Herrings

- Open Source Game Development: failure.
- WineX: Not the problem, but not the solution, either.
- Linus is not a celebrity. Bill Gates is.

Some Modest Proposals.

Stuff we need.

- Binary compatibility.
- Better drivers.
- More warm bodies.
- Tools, tools, tools (valgrind)
- Indie developers.
- Desktop-oriented Linux companies.
- Homeless people selling newspapers.

Buy more Linux games.

- Yes, they'll be out later.
- Yes, they'll cost more.
- Don't like it? The only way to stop it...
 - ...buy them anyway.

Stop dual-booting.

- They're just games!
- You will probably live to see Doom 3 anyhow.

Find me a celebrity.

- Howard Stern and OS/2.
- Bring me Oprah!

Support Indie Gaming!

- <http://icculus.org/lgfaq/gamelist.php>
- Mountain King
- PomPom
- GarageGames
- Introversion Software
- IllWinter
- eGenesis

Finance a mod.

- Small investment, potentially big returns.
- Branding, etc.
- Gets into the Windows gamers' heads.

Guerrilla Porting

- “By Any Means Necessary.”
- Port it in your off hours.
- Make the cold call, do it for free.
- Porting dedicated server? Do the client, too!
- Make friends. Get in the door.
- Tie it to your business.
- Get in bed with the Mac publishers!

End user stuff

- Stop whining. You heard me.
- Build tools if you can.
- Report bugs.
- Show your friends the cool stuff.
- Tell publishers what you want. Use wallet.
- Don't pirate games, you prick!

Moral Outrage vs. The American Dollar

- Money is the language of the privileged.
- Never discuss *Libre Software*.
- Never discuss Monopolies.
- Never discuss personal freedom and choice.
- Talk about The Bottom Line:
 - You will make this much more.
 - You will spend this much less.

Hire me.

- Good, fast, clean work.
- Games, tools, middleware or otherwise.
- An army of developers at my whim.
- Everything your heart desires.
- ryan@icculus.org

BOF

- Linux Gaming BOF is in room 305
- Session B12
- 5:15 to 6:45
- Please refrain from throwing rotten fruit until then.