

Answered by Dominic Cahalin, Lead Designer, MediEvil Resurrection, Cambridge Studios

When you first started working in the games industry did you ever think it would be as big as it is now? And when you first started playing videogames did you ever imagine they could be this cool?

I clearly remember the nervous excitement and uncertainty in the build up to the launch of the original PlayStation. Of course, strange as it might seem now, at that point nobody was certain that it would be a success. Thankfully, things started well and then just got better and better.

Working for SCEE at that time was a bit like riding a rollercoaster that just kept on getting faster and faster. To be honest I don't think anyone at that very early stage could have confidently foreseen the massive scale of the phenomena that PlayStation would become.

Being a games enthusiast throughout my younger teens I always thought that videogaming was the height of cool! In retrospect though, I can see that many (especially older) people thought of it as a pretty geeky and childish past time. I guess I never imagined that videogames would become so sophisticated, diverse, and aspirational, but I'm glad they have!

What have been your favourite PlayStation projects to work on?

My first really exiting project for SCEE was working as an assistant producer on a groundbreaking 3D platformer called Jumping Flash. The development team even incorporated some of my design suggestions, which I was extremely chuffed about!

Next I was asked to devise a game appraisal system for the approvals group, which proved to be a really interesting project. Rather than focusing solely on gameplay and graphics, the finished system also took into account many other different aspects of a title that might contribute to its commercial performance. This proved to be extremely useful for estimating the likely marketability of a game, as well as its artistic merits.

More recently, I helped to kick off World Tour Soccer, and have had great fun updating the MediEvil franchise for the sexy new PlayStation Portable.

With the advent of PS3, are there any concepts that you've been dreaming about for years that, with the new technology, can now be brought to fruition?

Too many to mention! There are so many new possibilities for gaming now that the technology is getting super fast.

It may sound a little obvious, but there's no escaping that the key thing about the increased power of PS3 will be the increased potential for realism. I don't necessarily mean photo-realistic visuals, but rather the creation of environments that look and feel more convincing due to the fact that they are more comprehensively interactive. I think we will definitely see some really stunning, groundbreaking titles over the next few years.

Equally, are there any other classic titles that you would like to see remade, with the benefit of modern day developing?

Having just completed MediEvil Resurrection on PSP, I would love to create an ambitious sequel on PlayStation 3. It would be great to take all of the appealing and well loved aspects of the MediEvil universe and wrap them up in truly state of the art play mechanics and visuals.

Where do you see the future of gaming, what areas do you think will change in the future?

I believe that in order for video gaming to become an even more accessible and popular medium than it is now, it will need to place less emphasis on specialist skill sets (such as controller expertise) and offer up ways of interacting with games that are increasingly intuitive. You can already see this phenomena happening with the likes of EyeToy and SingStar. For the first time, non-gamers are able to sample the delights of gaming without having to show exceptional hand-eye coordination or dexterity!

I don't think tough and skillful games will vanish though, I just think that ultimately developers will find ways of making games easier to interact with, and that the gameplay challenges they present will lie more firmly in the actual game worlds rather than in the interfaces.

Do you feel we've had the 'golden age' of gaming, or are we seeing it now?

I think that what constitutes 'a golden age' of gaming is a very subjective and personal thing. It's a bit like a middle-aged person saying nostalgically that the seventies or eighties was the golden age for pop music. Well, of course, they are entitled to their view, but how much that view is skewed by their personal experiences of that time and their changing perception of life and art is surely open to discussion!

Ultimately I think that each generation of gaming has produced a number of superb and iconic games, whether it be Jet Pac on the ZX Spectrum, Turrican on the C64, Ocarina of Time on the N64, Ridge Racer on the original PlayStation, or GTA on the PlayStation 2. All of these games (and many, many more) could lay claims to being definitive 'golden age' titles and yet, of course, they all come from different eras.

What's the best PlayStation launch party you have ever been to?

The launch party for This is Football was pretty amazing. Everyone was extremely erm.... merry, and a TIF tournament (between journalists and developers) was arranged. The action was relayed directly to a huge screen at the top of the room, and a noisy crowd of 'supporters' were soon singing and chanting at the top of their lungs! The famous football commentator Clive Tyldesley then arrived on the scene and proceeded to provide extremely detailed and hilarious commentaries (over the intercom) as the videogame matches were played. It was a truly memorable day.

If you could transport yourself into a game which one would it be?

I am presuming you mean temporarily?! If so, then it would have to be World Tour Soccer, scoring the winning goal for England in the dying moments of the World Cup. Nice.

What's your funniest PlayStation moment at E3?

I've never actually been, I'm always too busy trying to complete the games that are being promoted there!

Describe, in ten words or less, what sums up PlayStation for you?

Style, escapism, empowerment and FUN!