

Answered by Yoshiki Okamoto, creator of Street Fighter II, Devil May Cry, Onimusha and Genji and CEO of Game Republic

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?

Actually, I never knew that it was a games company until I landed a job there. I originally intended to be an illustrator, so I felt drawn to the ad that said "Poster illustrator wanted" and joined the company. Of course, I didn't know about games nor imagine how big the industry would become. However as I played and studied games, I thought this could grow so much. Speed of the growth is within a predictable range, but I think it is growing quite fast.

What have been your favourite PlayStation projects to work on?

It has to be the series of Street Fighter II. The arcade game named "Final Fight" is the beginning of it, and by attracting many users at game arcades and transplanting the game into home game systems while keeping its quality, the series developed. Since the really good title is not the first one but maybe the second or the third in the series, we were trying to always measure up to users' expectations. With this series, I was able to have direct contact with the users the most through the games.

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?

Of course there are plenty of them! Not simply about how much capacity it has, but I feel that whatever ideas I come up with can be realized into games. There have been many kinds of restrictions so far, but from now on, the issue of having to give up due to hardware ability will be decreased dramatically. However, by just that much, I cannot ease up on the job and ideas need to be developed elaborately, so it is tough. I wonder if my ability as a planner gives up first.

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

Past titles are no longer mine, so I am not thinking of doing any remakes. If someone told me to remake "Genji", I would probably hesitate.

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

The Future? Where? Hmm... It is probably not a good answer to just mention footage and movies. It is fundamental that a game is "fun to play" and that has not been changed at all since the first game made its first appearance. Old ones include Igo and Shogi. Rules and how-to-play these games have not been changed right? Yet the style has been changed. Online will be a must-have from now on, too. Through the games medium, I think that many different communications will be born, such as "person who plays together, and person who doesn't", "person who is near, and person who is far", and "person whom you know and person whom you don't". Maybe games will become more like "tools" rather than just "games".

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

Hmm, I think I could have different perspectives about that, as Japan and the world are different, as well as arcade and console system. However, as far as console in Japan goes, which I am developing for, I think that we've had it in the past. But in a few years' time, I want to change the past to "the first golden age" or "prime time". That's for now and the future. You can't make games anymore if you don't have that kind of spirit.

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

That would be "Ridge Racer", "Minna no Golf (Everybody's Golf)" and "Tekken". These titles are excellent as they never miss their launch considering the fact that the launch with the new hardware works against time.

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

“Genji” for sure. I want to show up in the very beginning of the game as a non-important tiny character and be killed right away.

What’s your funniest PlayStation moment at E3?

I don’t know as I didn’t go this year, but I always enjoy some exciting announcements every year. Someday, I will give everyone some exciting news, too!

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

Revolutionary! PlayStation has changed gaming, distribution, sales, image, and many more.