

Answered by Clemens Wangerin, Studio Director, SCEE's Liverpool Studio

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 remember when I went for my first interview for a job in the games industry in 1992, that both my parents were of the opinion that I was wasting my time with this "fad". To be fair though, I don't think anyone at that time envisioned the explosive growth that our industry has seen in the last 10-years alone and the mass-market's adoption of gaming as one of their favorite past-times.

When I first started playing videogames – which was back in 1979 on the Atari VCS – I remember thinking that games like Pac Man and Night Driver were just the coolest games ever. And that notion hasn't really changed over the past 25 or so years – every year there's a game you think is the coolest thing ever, and I think it's a major reason why videogames manage to surprise and captivate people's imagination.

What have been your favourite PlayStation projects to work on?

Most recently, both Wipeout Pure and Formula One 05 have been an absolute pleasure to be involved in – the teams behind both games consistently exceeded expectations and delivered fantastic games at the end.

Overall in my time with SCEE, I have fond memories of working on (in no particular order): the original F1 and Wipeout, because of the impact they had when released; Alundra, because it was such a fantastic Action RPG and did really well in Europe; Colony Wars 1 & 2, because they were visual masterpieces that broke new ground for space-shooters.

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?

I think new technology always opens up new possibilities that have previously been thought unattainable – we already saw that with the PSP and the notion of downloadable content for Wipeout Pure, for example, which was unheard of for a handheld before PSP became a reality.

The sheer power of PS3 will definitely enable us to make a huge step visually from where we are now, but games will have to really push the gameplay side of things to keep enticing people into our world of games.

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

From our own games, Colony Wars would probably be something that could look absolutely astonishing on PS3. I'd personally like to see something that was as captivating as GoldenEye, as atmospheric as Ico and that has the large-scale population of the Dynasty Warrior games from Koei.

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

Personally I think you'll see a lot more games personalising the experience for the gamer on the fly; so that there are subtle and major differences between how I play a game and how my friend plays the same game.

And those titles who are aiming to capture the largest audience possible will continue to bring new input devices to market, which remove (for non-gamers) the complicated layout and functionality of a standard controller. The games that are already doing that today are EyeToy, SingStar and SCEE's forthcoming Buzz.

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

By definition, the "golden age" would be the most exciting period in gaming history and I think we've probably already had about three of those periods – when PSone came out, then PS2 and now the PSP/PS3. We're fortunate to be working in an industry that continuously looks to break new ground and redefine people's expectations of what gaming is about and that works with technology that keeps getting better and better. So in short, I feel that there's more "golden ages" still to come.

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

The best PlayStation party I have EVER been to is one that took place at ECTS in 2001 – Jamiroquai played live and he was supposed to play for 30 min. In the end, he played for nearly 2 hours because the whole places was rockin' and the vibe was just out of this world.

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

That's a good one ... it would obviously have to be a game where I'm able to do things that I can't in real-life – e.g. like snowboarding in SSX; being a stealth agent in Splinter Cell or fighting against zombies in Resident Evil 4.

What's your funniest PlayStation moment at E3?

I think it was either the first or second E3 ever – seeing one of the External Producers with his shirt off, screaming at the top of his voice and waving his

arms about like a mad man during the Foo Fighters concert while being filmed and shown on a giant screen next to the stage (you know who you are).

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

In no particular order - passion, innovation, late nights, sleek, global, fun, diverse, big brand, people, friendly.