

Sandra Knowles, *Founding Editor*

Digital Times is a "for eCommerce newsletter reporting on the development and/or availability of interactive products and services."
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The Digital Age -

My Site is my LIFE!

My site is my life! was the anguished cry of someone that called me at 6:00 a.m. this morning, horrified that a 'new expression of her site' was 'live' without her approval. It's true - the web has become a lifeline to our presence. That being said, have we ever been this vulnerable? This is not like the misprint of a business card, flyer, or listing in the phone book Yellow Pages. On the other hand, web site errors can be corrected quickly, if you have a responsive programmer and design team.

p.s....Back Up Your Data!

Digital Diaries- Gulf War II

There was some television coverage during the Vietnam War, but 'digital age' coverage of this war is unprecedented.

This time we have BLOGS, [Web Logs] which are online journals & diaries that allow people to share, with their virtual neighbors on the Internet, thoughts, feelings, experiences, calls and letter from the front. Here are some insightful blog(s).

[Sergeant Stryker](#)

[Where is Raed?](#)

[Blogs of War](#)

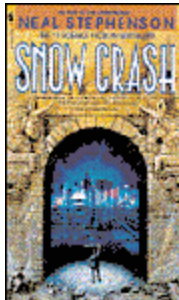
[The Horton Chronicles](#)

[Freedom in Research and Education](#)

[U.S. MilitaryWives](#)

[Washington Post Guide to Blogs](#)

Snow Crash



Snow Crash is a book I'd like to point you to, as it details a futuristic time in a libertarian world where the Mafia deliver pizzas and the Library of Congress has merged with the Central Intelligence Agency to form a public company. The principal characters have a superhero-like immunity to being hit when people shoot at them. There are some structural similarities between this book and the 1999 movie The Matrix. The commercial Internet is much like the book's hyperrealistic digital world, 'Metaverse.'

It's a hoot, doesn't take itself too seriously, and might provide relief for some of us. Written by Neal Stephenson and Published by Bantam Books in 1992, it is available in paperback. ISBN 0-553-56261-4. You can buy it used, from [AMAZON](#).

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Post-Conference Analysis

by Reporter Jeff Lindsay

While the number of attendees at the annual San Jose-based GameDevelopers Conference [GDC] rises every year, the past couple of years have shown a decrease in the overall production value on the expo floor. Three years ago, the GDC expo floor was covered with towering booths by some of the biggest names in the industry, as well as some newcomers. This year, more than last year, company booths have shrunk and some didn't even show up at all. Microsoft's usual two-story booth was nowhere to be seen. The amount of "free junk" was also down. The main reason for all this has been the losses by the bigger publishing companies that have happened in the past year, but whatever factors were involved in the simply smaller (not small) expo floor, it was still a GDC worth attending.

Warren Spector pointed out in his design key-note that every GDC seems to have a theme. In 2000 the theme was the console-war, when Microsoft announced the X-Box, in 2001 the theme was simply Will Wright (The Sims creator),

Continued --Scroll Down





Post-Conference Analysis, *Cont'd*

by Jeff Lindsay

last year the theme (in my opinion) was online gaming, and this year the theme was sequels and using licensed properties. Of course, Warren's view of the theme this year might have been a little too opinionated considering his key-note was the only one related to this theme. In reality, every year's GDC has several "themes."

One theme of this year, which has showed up in more than just the GDC, is the use of middleware solutions. Now that production costs are through the roof, it doesn't seem to make sense developing in-house technology for most games when the same required technology already exists, and these days, most technologies exist in some form of middleware solution somewhere. They range from graphic engines, to AI engines, to whole production studio solutions. Criterion's RenderWare Studio had one of the biggest booths next to Intel and Sony as they are trying to position themselves as the premier middleware solution for game development. There were several other specialized solutions there, including the MMOG solution known as BigWorld.

Last year there was a boom of interest in Massively Multiplayer Online Games, and even though it continues this year in the industry, it didn't show at the GDC as several network engine middleware solutions did not appear on the expo floor. Others just had a smaller appearance. One of these network solutions was Zona's Terrazona technology, which had a comfortably large booth in the center of the floor.

The number of sessions on MMOGs was plentiful, and since I have a strong personal interest in these game, I attended most of them, including a one day tutorial about running them. The tutorial (and most of the following sessions) were headed up by some of the biggest MMOG designers and producers, including experienced Ultima Online and Everquest development veteran Raph Koster, who is currently working on Sony Online's Star Wars Galaxies, and another Ultima Online veteran Gordon Walton, who is currently involved in Electronic Art's The Sims Online.

The Game Developers Choice Awards (<http://www.igda.org/awards/>) and the Independent Games Festival (<http://www.indiegames.com/>) the accompanied the GDC have gotten better over the years and are worth attending for even those attendees that are simply gamers. And even though the expo seemed smaller production value-wise, it seemed as big as ever with so many people attending that you had to swim through the expo floor and in the session halls. It was worth attending and next year will definitely be equally worthwhile.

Jeff Lindsay is the founder
of Progrium Software

The information contained in Digital Times is a combination of original editorial content and information pulled from wire services, research and various online resources.

Just a Thought.....

What If Saddam Hussein survived the bombing last week, but lost a leg How pissed-off do you think his doubles would be?

And, from my new hometown of Las Vegas, here's the



BOMB SADDAM SONG

A Poem from the Front...

by Sergeant Koppl of Asheville, N.C.

It has been weeks since we have spoken, I know her heart is close to broken.

Defending our nation isn't always fun, There are only a few who can get the job done.

It strains our honor and our lives, It hurts our children and our wives.

Often the people of the nation can't see that we sacrifice so that they may be free.

But ribbons and medals can't compare, to the love of home waiting there.

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