All the RAGE

By Rodney Magrowitz

The worldwide video gaming market is a billion-dollar, cutthroat industry with manufacturers constantly seeking new technology to beat their competition and entice gamers to jump on board their product. Enter A-Rage, a unique technology set to provide gamers with a "real-life" dose of entertainment.

Unlike conventional video games, A-Rage's Augmented Reality (AR) technology is a head-mounted display that allows the player to see computer-generated images integrated into the real world. As such, all you play video games outdoors, with the 360-degree 10-view making the gaming experience more absorbing than ever.

UniSA's Wearable Computer Laboratory's Professor Bruce Thomas, Dr Wayne Nekok and advanced computer and information science student Ben Avery developed the technology. It is being marketed under the guidance of Greg Macpherson from ITek, UniSA's commercialisation business which is providing funding and intensive hands-on management to turn the technology into a market-ready product.

Avery programmed the software for the A-Rage project as part of his honours program in 2004. In particular, he focused on the game Sky Invaders, designed to demonstrate the full capability AR technology on the A-Rage.

"It was an enjoyable project and a lot of fun to be able to do something that has contributed to an actual product that will be released into the market," he said.

Fellow UniSA student Ross Smith also played a significant part in the development of the hardware and electronics aspect of the design. The next step of the development stage was to design a prototype that could be presented to industry.

Market research suggested that for the target audience of 15 to 35-year-olds, the most important design feature was to ensure that the visor did not make them feel dizzy. This brief was given to UniSA industrial design students, who came up with suitable design prototypes as part of their studies.

The project has attracted significant worldwide interest from gaming companies and gamers alike. Avery said he was excited by the potential for the growth of A-Rage during the next three years.

"During the next 18 months we hope to form an alliance with a major console company and launch the product into the market with the aim of having two million units sold within three years. Over this time we will also be developing the next generation of AR games," he said.

Winning DESIGN

Third-year industrial design students from the Louis Labourne Smith School of Architecture and Design were recruited to submit designs for the prototype A-Rage unit.

Twenty students were asked to design a headset and backpack that met specific aesthetic and ergonomic criteria. An independent panel judged Andrew Everett, Sam Hadie and Tim Murphy to have the winning design (pictured above).

Industrial design lecturer Martin Pyne, who oversaw the design project, praised ITek for giving students the opportunity to be involved.

"We are keen to develop similar projects with other companies in the future," he said.

ZOOMING into young filmmaker awards

By Emma Masters

UniSA students and graduates featured prominently at the recent 2005 Zoom Awards for young South Australian filmmakers.

The People’s Republic of Animation, a collection of short films and multimedia producers (many from UniSA), won Best Animation for their film ‘Punt Guts Rov’, which was made for and screened at the Adelaide Film Festival earlier this year.

And recent UniSA journalism graduate, Mark Egan, won the $5,000 Young Filmmaker’s Human Rights Award, for his film ‘ABC’, which looks at the issues of human rights through the eyes of a child. Searie Fiddes, a current third-year film and video production student, was shortlisted for the award.

As part of a finalist year course in film and video production subject, Egan wrote, produced, edited and shot ABC with the assistance of another UniSA student, Tom Littler, and a friend, Kieran Pizzarelli.

"Although it took the four month period of last year’s course to make the film, I’d been playing with the idea for about a year or so," Egan said.

"I came from just thinking about kids’ shows, such as Sesame Street, where the world is wonderful and fluffy, and then how, when you go back and watch them as an adult, everything is not as magical and perfect as you first thought."

The film is a five minute montage that consists of the letters of the alphabet, represented by everyday things, such as: "A is for apple", "B is for book", etc. it’s for children. The concept is then repeated, except this time the letters represent the harsher realities of the modern world.

"For the second time the images are in a bit different, they’re more warped and confronting," Egan said.

"When F is for foot – what used to be a normal foot is replaced by an image of an Iraqi child who had his foot amputated.

"It’s going from Sesame Street to the Iwo Jima bellises, so to speak.

Egan said the money he won has gone towards establishing himself in the Riverland town of Renmark where he is now the producer of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s morning radio show for the Riverland area.

"It’s been great and has helped me buy a car, pay my rent, buy food and purchase furniture, it really couldn’t have happened at a better time for me."
BY MICHELLE NARDIELLI

LEADING learning for SA’s African kids

In recent years more than 1,000 children have arrived from some of Africa’s worst trouble spots to begin new lives in South Australia. Most have survived war, famine and trauma and many have seen things that are inconceivable to their school buddies. Many come here as orphans and are looked after by relatives, friends or acquaintances in tight knit communities that proudly "look after their own".

UNISA students formerly from Sudan are keen to make a difference for students struggling to adjust to life and study in a new country.

Social work student Peter Agalla and marketing and international student Emmanuel Tongue want to help.

"Many young Africans are ambitious. They want to do well at school; they have strong aspirations because they see moving to a new and safe place as a real opportunity," Agalla said.

"The problems arise when they cannot achieve what they and those around them expect of them.

"The teenagers especially struggle with English language from the word go because the people looking after them often don’t speak English, they lack the support required to succeed, especially in the more difficult subjects they take on."

Agalla said that the burden for younger primary school children was that they picked up the language so quickly they often became the one English-speaking member of the family and were called upon to act as interpreters when they should be studying or at school.

Tongue said the fallout from not coping with study was often troubling, especially among young boys who tend to drop out of school rather than fail.

"Apart from the initial English language training students get for a few months, there is not much one-to-one support for young students," he said.

"When they move to a regular school, their frustrations can be a bit overwhelming for some students."

In a bid to turn this around the pair have hit on the idea of establishing a special after school study centre in Prospect for African teenagers and they are hoping to get fellow students to help out.

"There are teaching and sociology students and other students who may want to get involved for the important experience it will give them and we want to hear from them," Agalla said.

"We are not in a position to pay tutors but we hope to find some volunteers that will help us get this project off the ground. Once we have hit on a model that works we want to encourage other schools to set up this kind of support structure for African students."

Agalla and Tongue want to talk to any UNISA students who are interested in getting involved in this exciting project from the ground up.

"The African community as a whole has a strong ambition to become a successful part of the local community," Agalla said.

"This kind of work with children during these critical years in their education can make the difference between success and failure." Anyone interested in the project can contact Peter Agalla on agallp@students.unisa.edu.au

SIX OF UNISA’S MOST PROMISING ENGINEERING STUDENTS HAVE BEEN PRESENTED WITH ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED BY THE DEFENCE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANISATION (DSTO).

Young Engineers win defence support

BY MICHELLE NARDIELLI

Six of UNISA’s most promising engineering students have been presented with annual scholarships awarded by the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO).

All second year students of the Bachelor of Engineering (Information Technology) - Darren Milligen of Payneham, Benjamin Stadler of Golden Grove, Christopher Thomas of Reynella, Gregory Richards of Port Augusta, Andrew Orr of Tramore, and Michael Eaton of Heathfield - each received a $2,000 cheque and framed scholarship certificate of achievement as an encouragement to pursue studies and research in information science.

Director of DSTO’s Information Sciences Laboratory, Neil Bryan, said the scholarships were especially important in a year when the valuable contributions of pioneering scientists were being reflected across the world, the International Year of Physics.

"This important support to students at the undergraduate level is a demonstration of DSTO’s commitment to developing the intellectual capital needed to broaden Australia’s scientific base by inspiring a new generation of scientists and engineers," Bryan said.

"As a major employer of scientists, engineers and information technology specialists, it is vital to DSTO that Australian universities continue to produce high quality graduates.

"So we are more than pleased to support this endeavour by awarding these scholarships and encouraging students to strive for excellence in their chosen field."

UNISA’s Head of School of Electrical and Information Engineering, Professor Andrew Natalski, thanked DSTO for its institutional commitment to furthering its collaboration with UNISA in many areas but particularly in enhancing educational development for students.

"DSTO’s Centre of Excellence in Systems Engineering – Systems Engineering and Evaluation Centre (SEEC) – is one example of the collaboration, with SEEC’s Professor Stephen Cook jointly appointed by DSTO and UNISA," Natalski said.

"DSTO supports a large number of consultancy, research and educational projects, and a flagship of that support is the continuing education initiative which strongly underpins postgraduate continuing education."

A BRASSIE BRONZE

It seems UNISA architecture graduate author Brassie has another string to his bow: The Magill campus library has just unveiled a bronze bust of famous Australian author and namesake of the library, Colin Thiele, which is the work of Brassie. The sculpture was fixed in the library foyer in April as an additional permanent tribute to the former head of UNISA’s antecedent college and author whose books have been read and loved by millions of children around the world.

MARKETING SUCCESS RECOGNISED

UNISA top marketing students are being recognised with a series of awards this month. The School of Marketing and the Marketing Students Association have organised awards for the top student in each of last year’s marketing courses. Marketing Studies Association president Hayley Barich said support from sponsors had made the awards possible. "Starting support from a wide range of companies involved in marketing has enabled us to make an award to the top student in each undergraduate marketing course for the first time in many years," she said. A cocktail evening and awards presentation was held this month.

POSTGRADUATE EXCELLENCE

Excellence in postgraduate studies was recognised at the Students' Association annual awards recently. More than 150 staff and students attended the event at Civic East complex, which recognised staff and students for their contribution to the UNISA postgraduate community.

The overall Research Student of the Year was Anna Hickey-Moody (graduated), from the School of Education, Arts and Social Sciences (EASS). The runner-up was Mahinda Pathapagama, from the Division of Information Technology Engineering and the Environment (ITEE), Peter Quinn, from Electrical and Information Engineering, was named Coursework Student of the Year. The runner-up was Vatch Santar, of Computer and Information Science.

The Best Research Students of the Year were: David Haley, of the Institute for Telecommunications Research; Sarah Jay from EASS, Nicholas Yelich from ITEE, Pamela Able from Health Sciences and Tim Rodgers from Business.

BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES

The Cheung Kong Endeavour program is not only helping postgraduates to travel and research. It has also allowed three UNISA postgraduate students to spread their wings. The students Robyn Fleetwood, journalism/international studies (studied in Paris), Kim Khanh Vien, occupational therapy, and Lisa Cranage, international business/intercultural studies (have all won scholarships to study in Hong Kong). They will be studying with UNISA partner institutions, the Hong Kong Baptist University, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Chinese University Hong Kong. The students each received a $5,000 scholarship to support their travel and accommodation for the semester program. Each student received a special plaque at the ceremony to announce the scholarships, engraved with a Chinese proverb that captures the spirit of the Cheung Kong Endeavour program – "Learning has no boundaries."

The closing date for the 2005 applications for these scholarships is August 12 and more information is available at http://www.cik101.dit.unsa.edu.au/. International education programmes, funding programme categories/international scholarships, exchanges...
A feast of NETWORKING

More than 220 students and graduates received first
industry advice from prominent UniSA alumni at
the recent Network Now dinner held at the Adelaide
Convention Centre.

Seated with leaders from industries as diverse as business and
sports, communications and computer science, marking
and building - including SA Tourism Commission CEO, Bli
Spurr; SA Lottoratics Commission
CEO, June Roache and former
Lord Mayor of Adelaide, Alfrad
Huang - students learned
essential tips and tricks for
career success while sharing a
course meal and enjoying
a drop of local wine.
Hosted by Pat McKean, the
dinner was progressive in both
its style and format - six
students were matched and
seated with two prominent
alumni and at the end of each
course, the students moved to
their next allocated table.
Challenges and competitions
throughout the night, made it
a lively, interactive and
entertaining evening.

In its second year, Network
Now, sponsored by Homestart
Finance, has proved itself a
must-do function as much for
local businesses as for students
and graduates.

NETWORKING: Rebecca More
with guests left to right:
Professor Bill Spurr, Penny Griffin
and Sam Barlowe, middle right.
David Jones chats with Ken
students (bottom right).
Rural and remote HEALTH

By Associate Professor Peter Munro

First-year medical radiation students spent an intensive week learning about and experiencing the lives of rural and remote health workers, staying in Pt Augusta and Winton during the day and camping out at the base of the Flinders Ranges during the evening.

Taking over all available accommodation at Spur Creek, 37km south of Pt Augusta, the students learned first-hand about the range of issues facing people living and working in rural communities. They participated in a range of activities, visiting hospitals and health organisations and speaking to health workers from across the region.

The students attended a cultural awareness program with the Spencer Gulf Rural Health School (SGRHS) Aboriginal health team, and visited the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science, the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Mcatana Outback Centre and the Anzac Lances Centre, and spent a day at the Pt Augusta Hospital.

Pt Augusta’s Social Vision Unit also gave the students a warm welcome, hosting an evening and providing them with a unique opportunity to mix with professionals from a range of health, education and business backgrounds. During the evening, the Mayor of Pt Augusta, Joa Bushby, expressed a genuine appreciation of the students travelling to study in the region and urged them to seriously look at working in a rural community on completion of their studies.

The program clearly provided a chance for students to gain an appreciation of the environment and the health issues that face rural communities at both a personal and professional level. With evenings spent around a camp fire, it was natural that friendships were formed among the group – a fantastic opportunity for those in their first year at university. Several students said they would now consider a rural workplace and felt richer as individuals from the experience.

In its first year, with such positive feedback from staff, students and health organisations in South Australia’s north-west, it is hoped that the program will be run again next year as an intensive course.

Fostering a neighbourly EXCHANGE

Wahyu Mukti Kusumaningtyas – Tias for short – is one of 18 young Indonesians who recently visited South Australia as part of an innovative cross-cultural exchange program.

The 22-year-old American literature graduate from Java spent three weeks on a work experience placement at the SA8T CEUSA office at UnISA as part of the Australia-Indonesia Youth Exchange Program, and said she was returning to Indonesia inspired and better informed.

The program, funded by the Australian-Indonesian Institute and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, aims to help young Indonesians and Australians experience each other’s culture via a two-month exchange program that includes home stays, cultural and social activities and workplace placements.

Unfortunately, because of security concerns, no Australian contingent visited Indonesia last year, something Tias hopes will change soon.

“It definitely recommend the program to others, but it’s important that it goes both ways,” she said.

“I think it’s really important to foster better understanding between the two countries because there are a lot of misconceptions on both sides.

“A lot of people in Indonesia think Australians hate us, but actually they don’t – I’ve found them very welcoming and open minded.”

The big differences between the two cultures that jumped out at Tias during her exchange include ideas about workplace culture, gender roles and community values.

“There’s a lot more multitasking in the Australian workplace, whereas in Indonesia, most workers have very specific roles from which they are not encouraged to deviate,” she said.

On the other hand, the concept of “gathering together” (working together) is very important in Indonesia, said Tias, with each member of a village expected to do their bit to contribute to the greater good of the community.

For more information on the Australia-Indonesia Youth Exchange Program visit the website at www.tcn.com.au/ aiehp

TALENT Wins

Are you a dabb hand at pithy cartoons or does the muse move you to write perfect poetry?

We want to highlight the talents of UnISA poets and cartoonists in these pages. Apart from the joy of being “published” the best poet and cartoonist will win a $50 book voucher. The competition closes on June 20 and winners will be published in the July edition of Student@UnISA.

Entries can be sent via email to unisaunisa@unisa.edu.au or by post to Student@UnISA Competition, 100 North Terrace, Adelaide, SA 5000. Please provide contact details, including your student ID, with your entry.