

Dutch Gaming



for developers to distribute their products to gamers. Xbox Live Arcade, PlayStation Network and WiiWare represent platforms for creative games that can be produced by small, focused teams. Developers in the Netherlands have embraced this opportunity and delivered some of the best examples of easily accessible and highly playable games.

Serious and casual games

Currently the Dutch have strong positions in two of the more interesting branches of the game industry – the serious game market and online casual entertainment.



Advergame TracChallenge2 by developer Little Chicken promotes Vredestein tires

Entertainment game Toki Tori for Wii and iPhone by developer Two Tribes

Serious problems require serious solutions. The Dutch have a long history of successfully battling the elements. As a result, they have learned to expect the unexpected and to prepare for multiple contingencies. With this know-how as background, they're poised to create training games and interactive simulations with great accuracy and depth. Dutch serious game developers such as VSTEP and E-Semble (Delft) have successfully developed training solutions for numerous international clients.

The market for casual games has exploded in recent years. The Dutch represent a leading edge in developing this business. Unlike that of traditional video games, the casual games appeal largely to elderly and female players. The universal popularity of casual gaming has broadened the exposure of interactive video games as a whole.

Another increasingly popular category is advergames. Games like Little Chicken's racing game Trac act as a viable tool to attract consumers to specific products – in this case, Vredestein tires. Any advertiser would want to be associated with fun. Dutch advertising agencies recognize the power of branded games to generate an awareness of particular products in the consumer's mind. These "advergames" now are an integral part of any advertising campaign worldwide.

Gaming research and resources

To ensure Holland's creative and business influence in the international games market, the Dutch have invested in creating courses in more than twenty colleges and universities. Curricula reflect the technical, design, and creative elements needed in the modern international marketplace. The future for gaming looks bright in the Netherlands with these highly skilled professionals entering the field.

The Dutch government is also co-funding several large-scale research projects to discover how to effectively apply advanced gaming techniques in training and simulation products. The goal is to make the Netherlands the most productive and most cited research center in Europe for gaming that is aimed at education, training, and entertainment.

One example is the GATE project with a total budget of 19 million euros. This project has three objectives:

- to advance the state of the art in gaming,
- to facilitate knowledge transfer to companies, and
- to show the benefits and potential of gaming in public sectors.

The hope is to develop a globally competitive knowledge-base of game technology. The GATE project will work toward enhancing the productivity and competitive edge of small- and medium-sized creative companies.

Moreover, the Center for Advanced Gaming and Simulation (AGS) in the Netherlands has become a leading-edge research center for advancing state-of-the-art techniques. The goal of AGS is to create technology for highly effective

learning and training experiences. For this purpose, Utrecht University, Utrecht School of Arts, and the TNO organization have combined their creative talents and professional skills in the fields of computer science, information science, virtual reality, psychology, and game design.

Gaming events

As a result of the growing and increasingly professional game industry in the Netherlands, some high profile and successful events have emerged. Two such events are the annual NLGD Festival of Games and Free Gaming.

The NLGD Foundation offers room to all disciplines within the games industry to work either directly or indirectly with serious or entertainment games. Included are publishers and developers, research organizations, educational institutions, and trade and industry. The NLGD Festival of Games is being supported by local, regional and national governments.

The largest consumer event in the Netherlands is Free Gaming in Rotterdam. It's an open-air event for people of all ages to experience the latest games, get



Serious simulation game by developer E-Semble

information about game development, and participate in a wide variety of related activities at no charge. The event is supported by Dutch publishers, developers, distributors and local authorities. The latest event drew more than 10,000 visitors. Many are looking forward to the next event on July 18, 2009.

The Dutch are quickly becoming "masters" of the gaming industry. Dutch game products, designed and built with Dutch technology, are now an integral part of mainstream global gaming.



ShipSim, a serious simulation game by developer VSTEP