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Conference Agenda (2/06/11) - (Agenda and presenters will be updated as additional panelists for each topic are confirmed.)

Previsualization and Virtual Production Conference – February 24/25

DAY 1: PREVISUALIZATION AGENDA FEBRUARY 24, 2011

8:00 - 9:00 Registration & Light Breakfast
9:00 - 9:15 Welcome & Introduction



9:20 – 10:15

By Design: Previsualization Throughout the Production Cycle

How can new digital technologies foster economic efficiencies and enhance the creative development of a project? This question is being pushed to the forefront by technological developments and economic realities that are putting downward pressure on budgets and tightening production schedules. With the all-digital workflows of HD and digital cinema cameras and real-time generation of CG performances and camerawork, the ability to visualize elements of a production before final decisions are made is increasingly available. How is previsualization being used to meet the challenges and opportunities of today's production environment?

Confirmed Panelists: Ron Frankel (Founder of Proof Inc, and co-chair of the joint Committee on Previsualization of the American Society of Cinematographers/Art Directors Guild/Visual Effects Society; founding member, Previsualization Society); Aaron Weintraub, (Visual Effects Supervisor, Mr. X)

10:25 – 11:20

Working Smart: The impact of Previs on Crew Roles, Responsibilities and Interactions

Previsualization is an interactive process whereby directors, cinematographers, production designers, visual effects artists, producers and others work through technical and creative aspects of production planning. What are the implications of these developments for your role in the production process? How can you become part of the international group of screen industry professionals shaping the future application of these processes?

Confirmed Panelists: Brian Pohl (co-founder/previsualization supervisor at POV Previs; founding member, Previsualization Society); Darren Cranford (President, Keyframe Digital); John Courte (Senior Houdini Artist, Side Effects Software), Bob Munroe (Visual Effects Supervisor/Second Unit Director, Splice, Dolphin Tale, in post-production)

11:30 – 12:15

Discussion: Professional development and education needs for previsualization

Panelists: TBC

12:30 – 1:45 - **Lunch and Networking**

2:00 – 2:50:

Case studies In Previsualization

A presentation of previsualization case studies with a discussion of scenes/sequences and the technologies, workflow, opportunities, and challenges.

Panelists: TBC

3:00 – 4:00:

Previsualization For 3D: A case study

This presentation will explain how previsualization was used in pre-production and principal photography for Starz Animation's new hybrid short, Lovebirds. To meet tight budget and schedule constraints Starz used stereoscopic previs techniques extensively to solve technical and production challenges proactively and to minimize creative exploration on set. Decisions regarding set design and construction, camera rigging, shooting schedules, and stereo cinematography were mostly driven by data gathered in the previs process.

Lovebirds is an innovative new hybrid stereoscopic short being produced by Starz Animation Toronto in collaboration with the 3DFlic initiative, a collaboration between leading filmmakers and top research scientists to bring a new stereoscopic experience to the screen.

Presenter: Rob Burton, (VP Technology, Starz Animation)

4:10 – 5:00:

Virtual Filmmaking using smart assets

Working with computer graphics applications, technical artists work with many assets such as geometry, textures, motion data and more. These assets live separately from each other and only in the hands of a professional can they be set up and deployed. With Smart Assets, these pieces can be pre-rigged and packaged then used by artists who do not have an in-depth knowledge of computer graphics. In this presentation, Paul Salvini, CTO at Side Effects Software will introduce you to the use of smart assets in Houdini to previsualize a feature film shoot.

Confirmed Panelists: Paul Salvini, (CTO, Side Effects Software), Robert Magee (Product Marketing Manager, Side Effects Software)

5:10 – 5:30:

SIRT Previs Research Demo – Integration of game and film technologies

The convergence of film, TV and gaming technologies and business models is a featured panel topic on day two. Today's technology demo offers a brief overview of a SIRT research project developing custom software linkages to integrate animation and camerawork from Vicon motion-capture equipment and digital visual effects from Houdini within the Unreal game engine. This real-time visualization is in the early stages of development but has implications for previs and virtual production in film, TV and gaming.

Confirmed Panelists: Avrim Katzman (Sheridan College); Lesley Northam (University of Waterloo); Michael Irwin (SIRT Centre)

5:45 - Cocktails and Social Networking

DAY 2: VIRTUAL PRODUCTION

AGENDA FEBRUARY 25, 2011

8:00 - 9:00 - Registration & Light Breakfast

9:00 – 9:45

Developments in Virtual Production

This panel focuses on emerging trends in virtual production given significant impetus by the technological developments and publicity surrounding their use in Avatar. "As a starting point, virtual production is defined as 'computer graphics on stage,' or the process of shooting a movie with real-time computer graphics, either for all-CG movies (such as Christmas Carol) or visual effects movies with live action (such as Avatar)."

*Joint Technology Committee on Virtual Production

Confirmed Panelists: Jason Walter (Virtual Production team consultant, Autodesk), TBC

10:00 – 10:50:

Previsualization and Virtual Productions at SONY Pictures Imageworks

Sony Pictures Imageworks has been involved in a variety of visual effects and animation productions, which start with on-set data capture, previsualization and final postproduction of real and virtual worlds with real and virtual characters. This talk will show case technologies, challenges and solutions that the Imageworks team accomplished over a number of productions. Case studies in this talk will include the comprehensive challenges on projects such as Tim Burton's Alice in Wonderland, Zemeckis's Beowulf, Warner Brother's production of Watchmen etc.

To realize Tim Burton's vision of Alice in Wonderland, Imageworks had to research/develop technologies to capture photography on set, setup pipelines to deliver over 2400 shots with complex environments, rich characters, virtual worlds as well as conversion of the project into stereo. At the same time since this was a live action capture Imageworks had to maintain a low acquisition footprint on set. On the other hand, projects such as Beowulf allowed Imageworks to have a more active onset involvement resulting in a refined control while delivering final digital renderings of virtual actors in virtual environments. This

talk will discuss the challenges in virtual productions, showcase the technologies and solutions that were developed and used by SONY Pictures, Imageworks to bring many prominent visual effects and animation projects to a successful completion.

*Presenter: Parag Havaladar, PhD
Software R AND D Supervisor (Sony Pictures Imageworks)*

11:00 – 11:40:

Virtual Production: An approach to collaborative storytelling

Virtual production technologies and workflows can impact the the process from pre-production through post in a variety of ways. As with previsualization the process can impact both relationships among the key creative and financial personnel involved in a production and their ability to effectively apply their skills and experience. This presentation will consider approaches to virtual production with a particular focus on its implications for collaboration within production departments and between key creative personnel.

Presenter: Ron Frankel (Proof)

11:50 – 12:30:

Convergence: Virtual production technologies in film, TV and gaming

Executives and creative leads from game and film/television companies will discuss the convergence of film, television, and game projects within today's multiplatform delivery environment. What do people mean by "convergence" and how is it affecting different sectors of the entertainment industry? Panelists will discuss how projects are developed with multiple delivery platforms in mind, how digital assets are shared as part of the business model, and how a convergence strategy impacts technology choices and traditional project development cycles.

Confirmed Panelists: Jim Laird (CFO, Bedlam Games); Lui Francisco (Artistic Director, Bedlam Games); Steve Hoban (Founder, Producer, Copperheart Entertainment)

12:30 – 1:50

Lunch and Networking

2:00 – 2:50:

Technology/Workflow Demo: Real-time scene-blocking and virtual cinematography using motion capture

Virtual Production can be an immersive process combining gaming technologies and real-time graphics performance to provide filmmakers with feedback similar to that of a live-action shoot. One of the main technologies being employed is motion capture. Representatives of Vicon, a world leader in optical motion-capture systems, will demonstrate how their system—which was developed in collaboration with Autodesk—is being used for virtual cinematography and animation within a pipeline for previs and virtual production.

Confirmed Panelists: Jimmy Corvan (Vicon), Jeff Beavers (Vicon)

3:00 – 3:50

Animating Your Performance: The actor's role in virtual production

Motion capture is a software and hardware-based process that transfers an actor's performance to a digital character, and can also record the movement of cameras, props and set pieces. Motion capture of acting (whether for feature films or games) is generally referred to as performance capture. This panel will look at how this process affecting the actor's preparation and on-set work. What are the approaches to performance capture and the skill sets required by the actor engaged in a motion capture shoot? Where is technology heading in terms of the role of the actor in the virtual production process?

Confirmed Panelists: David Footman, (Scripted Event Director, Ubisoft Toronto); Dusan Dukic (Actor, Assassin's Creed)

4:00 – 4:50:

A virtual production workflow: Autodesk pipeline

This talk will review a virtual production test drama recently completed by the Autodesk Consulting team. The project was used to help explore virtual production / cinematographic workflows and develop consulting services around the process. Autodesk collaborated with SIRT to acquire motion data and perform virtual cinematography. This talk will provide an overview of the project, a technical summary, lessons learned, current results and nextsteps. Performance capture and voices by David Ferry and Sean Lawrence, with the participation of ACTRA (Toronto).

Presenter: Jason Walter, Autodesk Media and Entertainment, Consulting Team

Please note: All panelists, moderators and speakers subject to change.
