



Sim Ops Studios, Inc.

IEEE Social Intelligence in Applied Gaming

August 2009

Presentation Overview

- **Sim Ops Studios Company History**
- **Hazmat Hotzone – University Vision**
- **Code3D – Commercial Product**
- **Challenges & Opportunities**
 - **Breaking into new industries with games**
 - **Marketing to new audiences**
 - **Commercial realities**
 - **Business models**
- **Opportunities in Social & Casual Gaming**
- **Q&A**



Sim Ops Studios

Company Overview:

- A spin-off company from Carnegie Mellon University
- Focused on using gaming technologies for simulations and training
- Extended platform recently into broader market with Wild Pockets

Relevant Experiences:

Bringing a product from a University setting into commercial application

Breaking into an industry unfamiliar with using gaming in a serious context

Learning about business models and funding the hard way



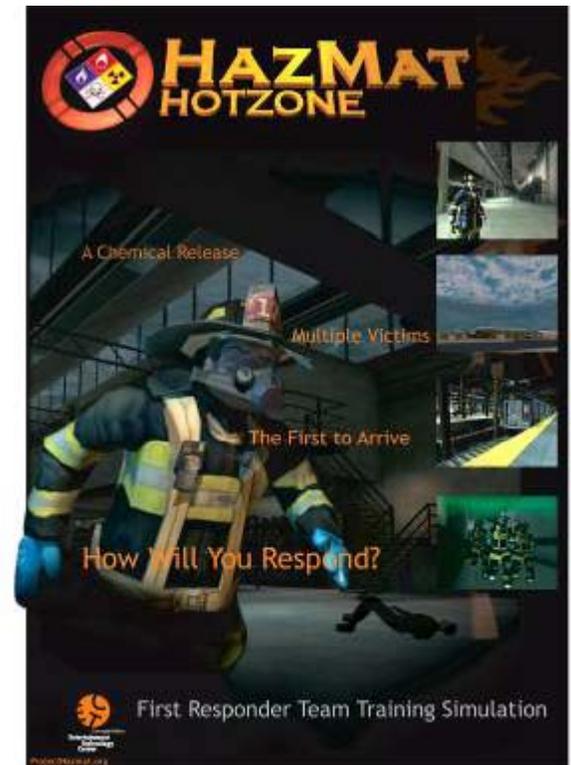
Hazmat Hotzone

Research & Development: Carnegie Mellon University (2002 – 2005)

- Hazmat Hotzone Prototype
- International PR (CBS Evening News, MSNBC, USA Today)
- Several years development and testing
- 100+ emergency responders tested and worked repeatedly with the Fire Department of New York (FDNY)

Challenges in the University:

- New field – not well understood, needed early adopters
- Games not taken seriously outside of entertainment
- Flexibility of the tool while keeping easy to use
- Changing teams, limited resources/skill sets



Hazmat Hotzone



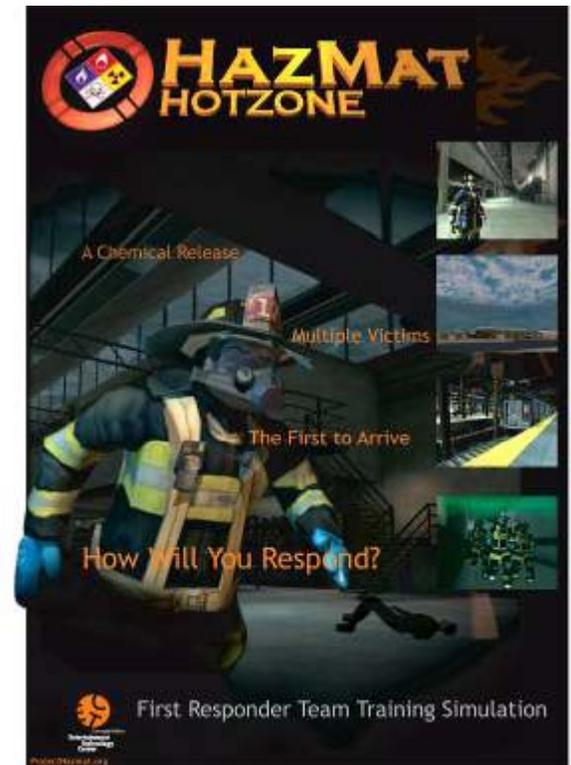
Overcoming Challenges

Overcoming Challenges in the University:

- Solid and fast prototype
- Frequent user testing (with the side-effect of buy-in)
- Marketing through serious video
- Found a highly credible early adopter
- Leverage press, media, and online communities

Decision to Commercialize

- Funding limited, development cycles too long
- Needed dedicated resources
- Commercial software needs support & maintenance



Code3D Virtual Training Technologies

- Commercial Release May 2007
- Business Model re-evaluated and changed
- Connected into online community
- In use by 1000+ emergency response instructors

Challenges in the Commercial Sector:

- Technology
- Funding – Market Size
- Finding Early Adopters
- Business Model
- Market Moved too Slowly



Challenges & Opportunities

Breaking into a new market

- Create high quality, serious marketing (videos, websites)
- Use viral mediums for exposure
- Connect with a highly credible early adopter – require little, but give them a lot in return
- Leverage press & media by focusing on the story



Hotzone begins with an instructor creating a training scenario. A team of firefighters enters the virtual scenario with each firefighter situated at his/her computer. Using radios and "virtual" face-to-face communication, they work as a team to investigate the scene and guide civilians into the safe zone.

Community



Challenges & Opportunities

Marketing to New Audiences

- What does this audience respond to – what is their soft spot?
- Who are the forward thinkers? Reach out to them
- What is the right balance of flexibility and ease of use
- Include them in all levels of design, testing, evaluation and media



Challenges & Opportunities

Commercial Realities

- Games Cost Money
- Funding is Hard with Limited Market Size
- Pressure of Time & Capital
- Some Markets Move Slow



Challenges & Opportunities

Business Models that Work

- Freemium
- SAAS
- Addressing Multiple Market Segments
- Platform Approach
- Fast prototype (for product and business model) – while still in the lab!

Where do we head next?

Leveraging Casual & Social Games – Changing Dynamics for Games

- Social Game Platforms
 - Traditional – PC, Consoles
 - Mobile
 - Social Networks
 - Web portals
 - Web virality
- Budgets are dropping
- Development time is dropping
- Speed of reaching audiences is instantaneous

Where do we head next?

Tips & Tricks when building games

- Free development Platforms – don't waste time on infra-structure
- Decide on your audience & design based on needs
- Don't waste time on graphics if they are not important
- Test fast, test often
- Fail fast & often – better to build 4-5 quick designs
- Always revisit the goal
- Keep it simple!

Where do we head next?

The Future for Casual & Social Games

- Still in infancy
- Games are very simple in their design (this does not refer to graphics)
- There will be more emerging platforms and persistence between platforms
- A-synchronous multi-player interactions are the key to gaining virality (why is Facebook so popular)
- Personalization & Status
- Intersections with your real world – job, friends, family (Facebook has achieved this!)
- Renaissance in gaming! Timing + Technology = Fast, Low Budget Innovation

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New Generation of Learners and Workers

Trends:

- 50% of all Americans and 75% of American heads of households play computer and video games
- The average adult male spends 7.6 hours per week playing video games
- The average adult female spends 7.4 hours per week playing video games
- A new generation is entering high risk jobs with less than 5 years of job experience
- Games used for training are a mechanism for “Increasing the speed at which expertise is acquired and depth of understanding achieved;” (FAS)



Learning Statistics

Best Method for Student Retention:

- 10 percent of what they read
- 20 percent of what they hear
- 30 percent, if they see visuals related to what they are hearing;
- 50 percent, if they watch someone do something while explaining it;
- 90 percent, if they do the job themselves, even if only as a simulation