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The Specialist Games And Gaming Business Magazine

May 2006



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MARKET REPORT
052006
JAPAN

NEWS
052006
ITALY

**JAPAN: WHERE ARCADES
MAKE MONEY**

SHOW REPORT
052006
BAR
BAR
CASAZARIS

SHOW REPORT
052006
DUBAI

NEWS
052006
US

PLUS:
News
Products
LAI interview

ALSO

GERMAN SPECIAL ISSUE

International ROUND-UP



US: ROXOR'S John Cooney told *InterGame* that his stand enjoyed a steady flow of visitors from outside the US at the Chicago show. "Our meat and potatoes products are our dancing games." A new, bespoke cabinet for dancing game In The Groove 2 was certainly drawing a lot of attention from visitors. "We didn't have to hire anyone to dance on these," Cooney pointed out.

Cooney wants to broaden Roxor's scope outside of the coin-op industry and has already made inroads into other areas, especially with In The Groove 2. Fitness studios have placed orders for the game and schools have hired it as part of an anti-obesity initiative. More impressively, however, 'machine dancers' now exist in 70 countries. North America has already hosted a tournament to find the best In The Groove 2 dancer, but from August 9-12, a tournament in Hamburg, Germany, is set to attract machine dancers from Japan, US, Chile and Brazil. Cooney is confident that the event will be 'the biggest dance tournament ever.'

Machine dance has been recognised by the International Dance Organisation.

In the Groove 2's new bespoke unit has welded back boards and a new polymer blend for floor panels. To support the game, online forums are available for player feedback. Cooney said: "We're closely aligned with Andamiro. It's obvious by looking at the coinbox how great the game is. We've built a rugged, stable platform that's going to last. If anything, we've tried to overbuild it."

ITG2 is manufactured in China and distributed by What's Next and Worldwide Video in the US, UDC in the UK and Positive Gaming in Scandinavia.

UK: ESD brought the same range of pool table coin slots to ASI that it displayed at the London ATEI. The company's Amy Gitlin told *InterGame* that the firm was in Chicago to support its US distributors.

US: NSM's ASI offering had a similar feel to that of last year, with its

Evolution kit that converts old CD jukeboxes into digital jukeboxes taking pride of place. "Eighty per cent of our sales are kits," confirmed NSM Music's Tony Lantz, whose jukeboxes are powered by the Ecast platform. Lantz admitted that the AMOA in Vegas proves more lucrative than the Chicago show, although ASI does give NSM the chance to see customers face-to-face. He was 'quite happy' with the position of the stand at the Hyatt Regency as it was at the foot of a staircase and two escalators.

US: STERN Pinball showed a new board system for its World Poker Tour game in Chicago recently and explained to visitors how the new memory card works in conjunction with it. In addition to World Poker Tour, Stern showed a new Simpsons redemption game and revealed that it would be making more units of The Sopranos. Gary Stern pointed out that as the ASI was close to Stern's factory it was a good opportunity for not just customers but also employees to visit the show and see how much people were enjoying the fruits of their labours.

CANADA: IN addition to revealing the concept behind its ground-breaking 'audition booth' featured in last month's Red Hot news, Take 1 showed *InterGame* a multimedia machine, My Memory Maker, at the ASI. The kiosk in question can record two minutes of live video footage, send video emails, print out pictures and more. Vancouver-based Take 1 recently loaned a number of the kiosks to Daimler/Chrysler for a 26-city promotional tour of the US. President Wilson Cheng (pictured) explained that Take 1 was in the throes of sourcing a more efficient printer for the machine and that he hoped malls and theatres would be receptive to his kiosk's charms.



US: LOS Angeles doctors pronounced Ethan Myers brain dead after a car accident dealt the 9-year-old a severe brain injury in 2002. After he miraculously awoke from a near month-long coma, doctors declared he would never again eat on his own, walk or talk, report www.localnewsleader.com.

Yet, thanks partly to a video game system, Myers has caught up with his peers in school.

"I'm doing the exact same things as them," says Myers, who had relearned to walk and was reading at a second-grade level before his video game therapy began in May 2004.

Myers can now fully open his right hand, which paralysis had curled closed. Myers and his parents attribute his most recent progress to neuro-feedback training on the CyberLearning Technology LLC system, which is often used to play car racing video games.

Neuro-feedback is a form of conditioning that rewards people for producing specific brain waves such as those that appear when a person is relaxed or paying attention.

While this form of treatment has been around for decades, incorporating video games marks a new frontier that taps young people's fascination with animation and electronics to sweeten often frightening, lengthy and tedious medical treatments.

Video games are being used to help sick children manage pain and anxiety during hospital stays.

A young leukemia patient inspired Ben's Game, which let him fight the cancer cells invading his body. A private island called Brigadoon in Linden Lab's Second Life virtual world is open only to people with Asperger's syndrome and autism.

West Virginia's public schools are battling obesity by making Dance Dance Revolution part of the curriculum, while Nintendo has made a splash with its new Brain Age mind-exercising game.

CyberLearning's SMART BrainGames system, which Myers still uses, targets symptoms arising from brain injuries, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and learning disabilities.

Users wear a helmet with built-in sensors that measure brain waves. That data is relayed to a neuro-feedback system that affects the game controller.

Car racing games work best with the system, which rewards users by telling the controller to allow them to go fast and steer with control, doctors said. When patients' brain waves aren't in 'the zone' the controller makes it harder to accelerate and steer.

Steven Stockdale, the licensed psychologist in Colorado Springs, Colorado, who treats Ethan Myers said: "Kids can become less agitated, more calm and less angry. It's much more engaging."

Exposure EXPOSÉ

US: AT the ASI show in Chicago, Betson organised a tournament for people wanting to prove their skills on new four-player video game The Fast and the Furious Super Bikes. Successful competitors won T-shirts and the winner of each day's play pocketed \$100. The game proved popular throughout the three-day event, which might have been helped by the presence of two ladies not wearing very much.

ARGENTINA: COIN Tech has a new, 'strong' redemption system, which has been developed especially for places where tickets are in use rather than cards.

US: PLUSH outfit Sadie's Toy Box from Minneapolis, US, specialises in supplying licensed, high-quality merchandise for redemption machines. Included in Sadie's current range is Hello Kitty, licensed American football memorabilia, Monopoly (including the new Family Guy version), small Sony electronic gifts and a new line of balloons which co-ordinate with punchballs. Lee Ann Howell, owner, explained that one of the secrets of her firm's success was establishing a good rapport with customers, while knowing 'what's hot and what's not' in terms of sports, TV, magazine and movie trends. "You have to develop a feel for what's going to be hot before it happens," she told *InterGame*. "We've also got good relations with manufacturers. They're on the ball and work with me the way I like."

Sadie's Toy Box provides licensed merchandise to operators in Puerto Rico, through its relationship with Namco, and to Canada.

CANADA: JOHN Lotz from Triotech had a pragmatic view of the Chicago show: "The traffic's the same as last year. We're seeing the right people – we don't need hordes of people, we just need to see the right ones."



AUSTIN ON WAY UP

BY his own admission, it is the only way John Austin can get to the top! This was taken on the summit of Tryfan (3,002ft) in the Snowdonia National Park, Wales, in March. Austin and his party ascended the mountain by the North Ridge and descended by the South Ridge and moved on to Glyder Fach, which is 3,261ft, by what is known as Bristly Ridge



DANCE ON

ROXOR'S Dance Away dance machine in The Groove 2 captured the imagination at Rimini



SADIE'S TOY BOX

LEE Ann Howell shows off her latest range in Chicago

Triotech promoted a new software programme for its motion theatre where 10 movies can be shown in the same theatre. "Although the show returns to Vegas next year, I'd be happy to go to Orlando or San Antonio, to give people from the north east of the US a chance to attend."

Lotz confirmed that Triotech will exhibit in Dubai and Mexico – where the firm has 'been doing a fair amount of business' - later this year as part of a show tour. "We'd like to do more business around the Pacific Rim," he added. Currently, however, Triotech is focusing on the Middle East and Asia.

US: INTERCARD has recently opened a second location with Gillian's in Kentucky. The self-styled 'one card solution' company provides customer loyalty cards to all six of Dallas' Main Event Entertainment FEC/bowling locations. Furthermore, two Brunswick game centres have the installed the InterCard system and Funstation has committed to using InterCard in multiple locations. Vice president Paul Schulte told *InterGame*: "We have the most technologically advanced card system – operators can manage a number of sites from a single location using our debut cards, gift cards and loyalty cards."

Schulte added that InterCard uses standard ethernet and internet communications. Anyone with internet access can dial in at any time.

UK: GRAHAM Wilson and Oscar Thomas (see 'Golf Tourists' picture) are representing the UK at the Global VR EA Sports PGA Tour World Championships in Las Vegas Nevada in May this year. These top two Englishmen will be playing off against more than 70 golfers from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa as well as the host nation, US, in a series of elimination matches for the top prize of US\$15,000, from a prize pool of \$100,000.



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