

Diversity the Invisible Hurdle GDC review

By Joseph Saulter edited Gustavo White

Action Items

1. Diversity Mailing List
2. Board of Advisors: Committee Search
3. Exposure : Immediate Press Release for visibility
4. Diverse Group of Head Hunters: Growth and Talent: Search the Diverse community to identify talent
5. Younger Accessibility : Focus on Science and Math)
6. Embrace the Game Technology Academic Community

Diversity is not a Black thing it is not a White thing it is not a women thing or a disability thing it is not a Latin thing it is not gay thing it is the **Right Thing**. It is right for your companies' bottom line for the survival of the game industry or any other industry it has been proven by researchers across the universe from Harvard to MIT to Stanford and throughout our planet. The choice is simple, so why is it such a difficult challenge for our industry? These are the issues that have been addressed at the Game Developers Conference, IGDA roundtable: **Diversity the Invisible Hurdle** and we have come up with some compelling answers.

We have a collective of people from across the universe and together we see the big picture. We know the issues and we have looked the dragon in the eye. We have felt his heated breath and we are confident and dedicated to change, and a change is "gonna come." I believe it will come swiftly for the game industry because there is really no one in our way. No one is trying to stop the movement with dogs or fire hoses. No one holding signs, no picket lines, no politician's telling you lies. No bombs, no lynching, no opposition; just white males working endlessly. Working so hard the quality of life issue is staring them in the face. White males making more money then ever imagined in an industry that has moved beyond anyone's financial and technological understanding. How can we become a part of an industry that is dedicated to perfection in code for the programmer, a polygon for the 3D animator, line for the artist, color for the shaders its SoftImage XSi 4.2, 3D studio Max, Maya and a host of other applications its ZBrush? If we can modify the polygons then we can surely get a piece of the financial rewards.

It is the universal cry of every teenager, high school student and college student across the world. Universities throughout the country have research development initiatives, curriculum development projects and government contracts, all for interactive media. There is not a person in their right mind that does not want to know more about the Game Technology phenomena. Every financial institution is diversifying in the game industry and nobody really knows just how much cash has changed hands. Non-disclosure agreements between publishers and game developers hide the actual financial statistics. If a baseball player is signed you know the details; however, when a development company signs a deal with a publisher the silence unbearable.

I am excited to be one of the first African-American game developers in the USA. I am excited because you just cannot be a game developer in this industry no matter how much money you have. You cannot, I said, you cannot develop the type of relationships in the game industry necessary for a successful career unless you pay your dues. You must be willing to study harder to develop the skills and understanding necessary for all applications, but most of all collectively collaborate. You know in the game industry sleep is for the weak. To be on the cutting edge of technology and adapt to the ever changing milieu takes a lifetime of dedication. The challenge is to increase the force of diversity and that will take organizing and education. It will not happen over night, but it will happen. For those of you African-American, Latin-American, Caribbean, Asian women and men, we have to rise to the occasion and become professionally visible. We need a legion of educated young people to dedicate themselves to perfection.

I feel the pure essence of a nation in transition, an industry waiting to fuse creativity and technology for the next generation console that is just around the corner. The mobile interactive game industry is exploding as well as the international market. Content, content and more content, whose will it be? I said it before, and I will say it again, the urbanization of the game industry is just around the corner. There is only one thing missing, and that is soul; not just a ballplayer, an athlete or a ghetto thug, but a three-dimensional human being. I want to know what is a black man's "Final Fantasy" and a woman's "Half Life," what threatens the individual who is physically challenged and how can he his/her experience into a compelling game that we all can learn from.

The United States Armed Forces spend billions of dollars on creative simulations to save our soldiers. It is a proven fact that the games they play are serious and they are challenging the academic world to research the physical, cognitive and constructive teaching practices each game player experiences. How can we develop educational games that change the containment camp mentality of our current public education system? The real challenge is to save our children who are dropping out of school at an alarming number across these United States of America. The latest number is a dismal one third of our nation's young adults of all races are dropping out of the school system. That tells me that African-American, Latin-American, and other minority school students face a terrifying future. Our greatest fear is yet to come in terms of education, leaving our nation at risk.

Diversity across the board is a challenge we cannot afford to over look. Like I said earlier, diversity is not a black thing it is not a White thing it is the **Right Thing**. Hey, that sounds like a new song, Huh?

As co-chair of the Diversity Advisory Board with Sheri Ray Garner and the Women in Gaming Movement, I formally invite all in the movement to join forces. Collectively, we can swiftly change the sensitivity and colorization of an industry in dire need of our creativity. I would like to thank the IGDA for a great experience. We need an email list of people who want to support our goals.