



**machinimag7**  
Machinima FilmFest Coverage    TheMovies DePlayed  
book review    FrankDellario    RIAA and RPGfilms.net  
Broadcasting    MachinimaOnTheNet





# welcome

# 7<sup>th</sup>

to the issue of the machinima online magazine.

After numerous delays, i'm most happy to finally deliver the next issue of the machinima online magazine.

And it was a tough one.

Machinimag is now one and a half years old and managed to get a couple of hundred downloads per month.

Looking at the way this magazine and the related website developed over the past months, i realize that there's a growing problem of me covering machinima aspects and being a filmmaker myself.

First of all, the time i invest in making machinimag is time that i miss in my own movie productions.

And second, i feel that oftentimes in order to give an independent view on a certain subject, it would need someone who is not himself a movie producer and thus affected by his own statements.

I try to do my best to keep machinimag clean of self references or plugs, as i feel that the medium needs some sort of objective news source, but as a matter of fact, i am always subject to my own reporting.

It's a dilemma that i feel is growing as the medium becomes more and more prominent.

Also, i believe that the lack of independent reviewers that are not filmmakers themselves tells us a lot about the long way to go until we reach an actual caring audience for our movies.

Yours truly,

Friedrich Kirschner

**7<sup>th</sup>**

the issue of the machinima online magazine has the following content:

**4** :Reviewing the new Machinima Book: **7** :Machinima

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night out at the movies:

enjoy



# Machinima

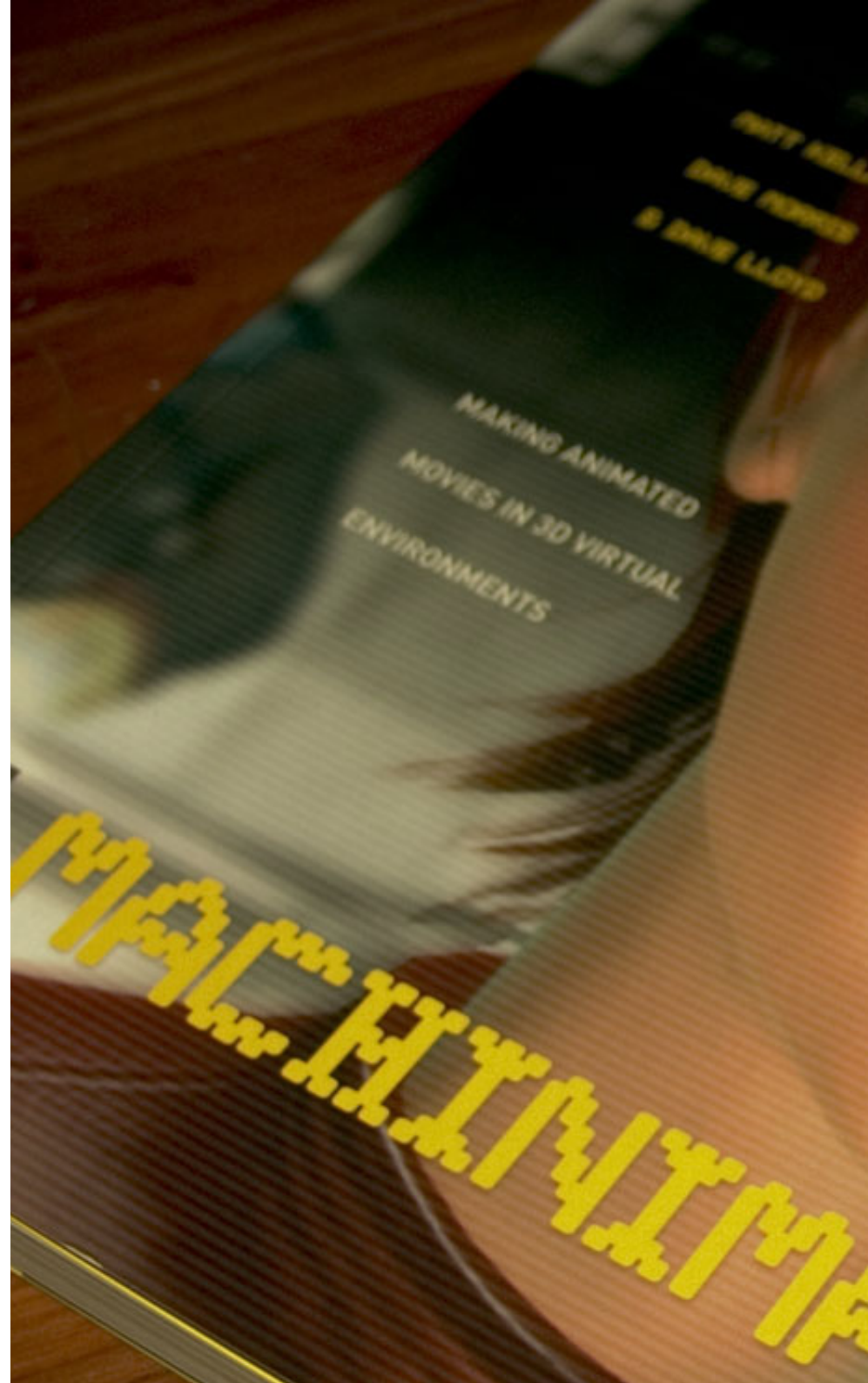
making  
animated  
movies  
in 3D virtual  
environments.

Enter the second book about machinima. Written by Matt Kelland, Dave Morris and Dave Lloyd and published by ILEX press, the book's focus is very visual and very much on explaining what machinima is all about.

There's no CD coming with the book and no tutorials on how to use any machinima tools.

You will get lots of pictures though, case studies and quotes from people in the business.

The book is divided into three parts, all of them printed in glossy color, giving it a rather high value look.







**Obviously it starts** with an introduction on what machinima is, namely “it puts the resources required to make exciting movies into the hands of literally millions of people worldwide.”

Small bits of text and lots of quotes and pictures lead you from one chapter to another, explain what a game modification is, what “game engine” means and compares machinima to conventional 3D animation or Live-Action movies.

All the technical terms are well explained and you have a feel for what machinima is all about.

The book illustrates machinima’s history in four chapters and provides information about some key personalities that got the whole thing rolling.

Lots of case studies nicely blend into the chapters and have a specific focus on one machinima movie, series or production company. They are well chosen and always relate to the chapter they’re in as an example and further explanation.

The book continues to describe machinima’s strengths and different uses for this new way of movie-making.

With chapters on “Machinima and Hollywood” and “Machinima on TV”, the presen-

ted works transcend the gaming background of machinima and put it in a fresh, new perspective.

**The second part** of the book really gets into the very guts of machinima, describing the different techniques used to produce films, like AI, puppeteering, scripting or recamming.

Arguably, it’s not so easy to tell the difference between AI and Scripting, but the book does good in dividing machinima into more than the standard two ways to produce it (live-action and scripted).



The case studies and illustrations help to understand the difference in technique and style you can achieve using the mentioned ways of shooting your movie.

Just to clarify, though, there is no explanation on how to actually work with a game to use these techniques. No tutorials.

Next is a quick chapter about using game assets and a following introduction to the legal aspects on machinima, before the book takes a closer look at the individual team positions machinima offers.

Ranging from Actors and Programmers all the way to the sound crew, Editors and Producers, you get some insight in what roles people play in machinima production and what influences they have on the final picture.

**The third part** of the book, named “The Machinimator’s Guide” is focused on general tips and structure of your next big machinima movie.

Again, there’s no hands-on information regarding any specific game or engine. It’s more about the overall production process and has some examples on how technical limitations can be bypassed, like a general heads up on what to think about when planning a machinima movie. It lacks some depth, especially a short intro to camera and editing techniques would have been helpful.

Though, there are some good creative examples on how to circumvent the many technical limitations that you might face.

**All in all** the book is a great introduction to the world of machinima. With its rich visual appeal and good writing, it offers insight to what machinima is about and adds lots of great examples. Also, the book stays away from being too technical and celebrates machinima more as a way of moviemaking than as a way of hacking a game engine.

Of course, a DVD with the case studies on it to watch would have been great, but that’s not possible for obvious copyright reasons.

The book actually manages to transport the emotion in machinima, its spirit if you will. Maybe it’s due to the pictures and quotes. Or maybe it’s just because of the diversity and showing respect to the various types of movies and works that are out there.

**A great book** that I recommend for everyone who’s into machinima or wants to get into it.

And a great way of showing to others what machinima actually is.



# on the net

Arguably, machinima's strongest point is its accessibility. Given that anyone can make movies out of game engines with varying time and effort to put into, a lot of game specific machinima sites have shown up on the world wide web recently.

Machinima's intention is to facilitate movie making and to get people to express themselves creatively. Although machinima is not a technique in itself, it can be seen as spirit, or movement that can be applied to almost any video game.

It's no wonder that new communities have formed out of that spirit, often enough not even knowing about the term machinima in the first place.

Tons of machinima movies are being submitted to sites other than machinima.com, being watched in game-specific communities with their own rating system, reviews and recommendations.

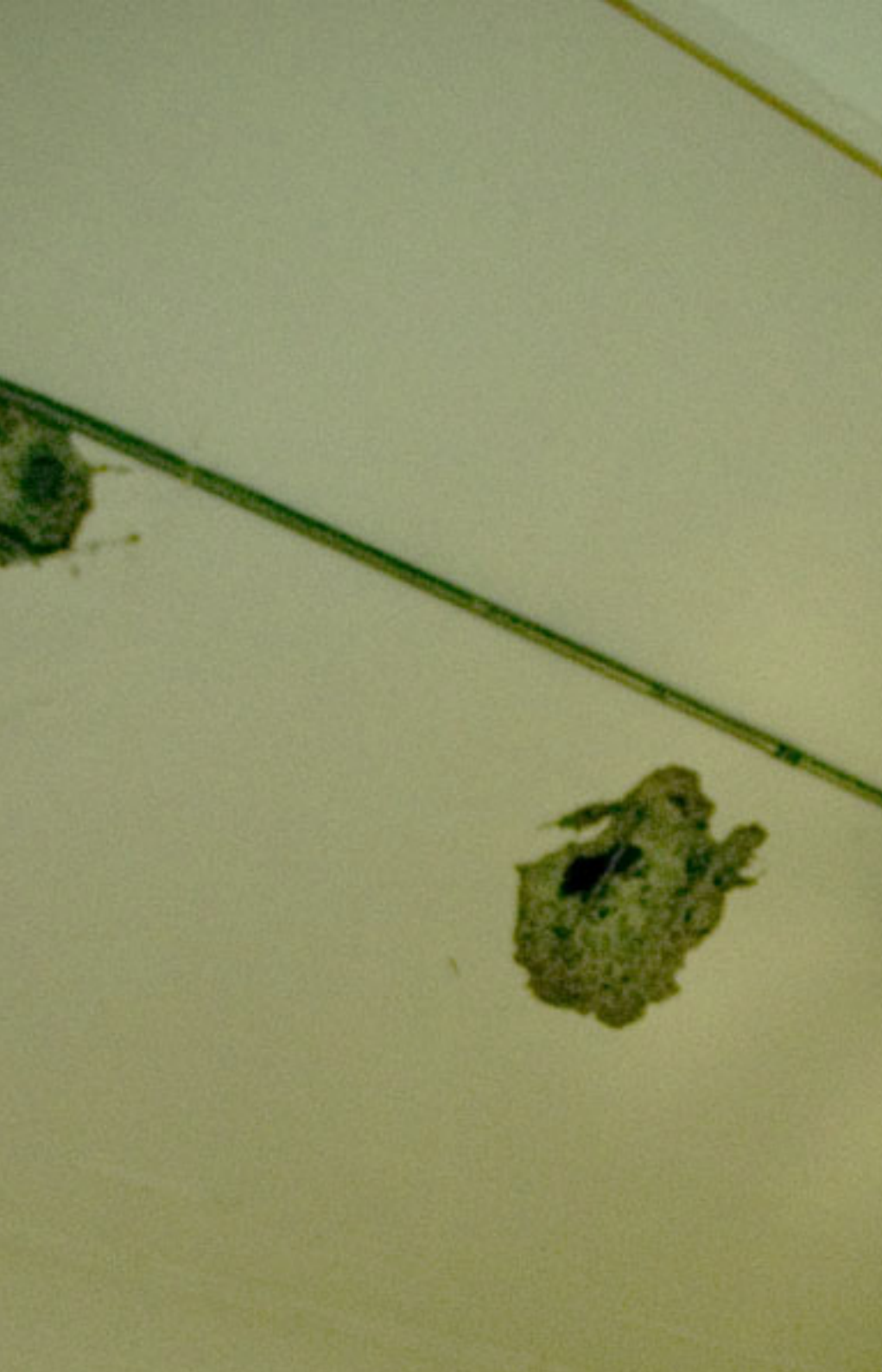
It is thus necessary to shift our focus away from one community site when talking about machinima, as it has already spread out into lots of different communities that all have their fair share of credit promoting machinima.

Just like in the film world, community sites slowly have to define themselves by more than just carrying the term "machinima". They have to provide more specific information, showcase movies they pick, have articles and interviews to cater to their audience.

And that audience is mostly defined by the games used for filming.

On the other hand, there's the websites of people that speak their thoughts on machinima. More and more people plotting theories about its future, voicing the need of features and tools to be able to make



A microscopic image showing a thin, green, filamentous structure running diagonally across the frame. Below the filament, there is a larger, irregular, greenish structure that appears to be a cell or a cluster of cells, possibly containing a darker, central component. The background is a light, off-white color.

more sophisticated movies or report on events and discussions going in different communities.

A bunch of weblogs more or less dedicated to machinima have arrived on the scene.

Let's take a look at the communities and weblogs that are out there, and some of their statistics that might surprise you.

A quick summary of the terms used in this article:

Visual appearance describes the overall look of the site and how appealing it was to the author.

Accessibility values the layout of information on the front page and the way in which information such as news or features are presented.

Useability measures overall navigation and participation in the site's features.

Community integration values the amount of impact you have on the site's content.

General machinima relevance gives an impression on how much you get out of the site if you're not into a specific game.

Movie-access describes the way you can download movies from the site.

Stats are some site specific statistics.

Let's start with the

# community sites:



# Warcraftmovies.com

Warcraftmovies is a site dedicated to movies filmed in Blizzard entertainments game "World of Warcraft".

It sports a a lot of statistics on the front page, like the 10 latest recommendations, HOT picks for this week or the latest site updates. The news as well as the forums are one click away.

Movies are divided into different genres spanning from gameplay movies and guild presentations to "story driven" and "music videos". The site even had its own contest recently.

Every movie has its own page with a small picture, user comments, a list of properties like author, runtime, language, downloads and avg. rating and comments just below the movie. Every registered user can cast a vote.

Link: <http://www.warcraftmovies.com>

Visual appearance: **good**

Accessibility: **good**

Useability: **great**

Community integration: **great**

General machinima relevance: **fair**

Movie access: **Filefront Mirror/Dedicated Mirror for Premium users**

Stats: **1361 registered users, 5808 articles, 3977 movies hosted**

MASSIVE ONLINE ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK

Choose a site...

Your Ad Here!  
Click For Info!

Ads by Google

Where U At?  
Boost Mobile.

Check out Blink 182,  
Fat Joe & Eve Boost  
Mobile Official Site.

[www.boostmobilepivotalmoment.com](http://www.boostmobilepivotalmoment.com)

Featured movie of the day! - Warcraftmovies.com Movie Awards 05 Winners!

Firetree - Veneratios Horde Cleansing by Farkal

This video is a fun PvP mpeg of the guild attacking multiple horde towns, as King Magni wishes!

Watch this movie

Latest 10 Recommendations	Date	What's HOT this week?	DLs/day
★ When Murlocs Fight Back!	12-09	Zinwrath Crew - Blizzcon 2005	4,294
★ Zinwrath Crew - Blizzcon 2005	12-07	(5) Rogues vs (1) Ironforge	2,593
★ Unknown III	12-05	5 man UBR5	2,430
★ Uadov & Voldigar to go BlizzCon T	12-03	Shadowpriest - Ragnaros without spa	2,188
★ Hunter - Over	12-03	Farming Furbolgs With Style	1,738
★ To be by your side	12-02	Onyxia owned in 10 man - Raid	1,664
★ Facing Evil - DM	11-30	When Murlocs Fight Back!	1,613
★ A Night In Blackwing Lair Part#2	11-29	Mary & Jane - Hunter PvP Movie	1,577
★ Internet is for Pom	11-29	How to get into old ironforge	1,172
		The Tesla Coil	926
		Skipper, Warlock PvP	893

Main

Log in!  
Register  
Forgot Password?

Home  
News  
Forum

Premium Content

Unapproved Movies  
Latest Exclusives

Category

PvP  
Battlegrounds  
PvE  
Guild  
Instances  
Story-Line  
Dance/Music  
Gold Farming  
Bug/Exploit  
Other

# Sims99.com

Visual appearance: fair

Accessibility: good

Useability: good

Community integration: good

General machinima relevance: good

Movie access: Author's download location.

Stats: 421 registered users, 30281 articles, 1979 movies in database

Sims99.com is a huge vault for movies produced within the Sims and the Sims2 games by Electronic Arts.

4 hot picks shine at the starting page and you can read the latest news snippets, linking to the main news section of the site.

The main navigation is to be found on the top of the page leading you to different lists of movies, defined by either Director, Name or Category plus a special button to take you to music videos, one for new movies and one for the monthly contest.

Every movie has its own page with a small picture, a description, category, average user rating and user reviews. Every registered user can review a movie either by using the site's 0-5 stars voting system or by writing a small text.

Movies have to be made available by the authors and are not hosted by sims99.com.

Sims99 also features a category for non-Sims machinima.

Link: <http://www.sims99.com>

**sims99.com** Machinima movies, reviews and ratings at sims99.com!

BBS FORUM DIRECTORS MOVIES (A-Z) CATEGORIES MUSIC VIDS NEW MOVIES FILM CONTEST

[user login] [register]

CONTACT SIMS99 ARTICLE FORUM

2048 Sims 99 movies!  
528 Sims 99 directors!  
3949 registered users!  
18636 movie reviews!  
31454 Sims 99 forum posts!  
22 movie fans now online!  
Most ever: 58 on 11-Sep-2005

Sims99 Users:  
[my favorites](#)  
[my ratings](#)  
[my profile](#)  
[edit profile](#)  
[edit movies](#)  
[add movies](#)  
[edit password](#)

NEW!  
[submit voice audition](#)

[browse for voice talent](#)

More Links:  
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**Hotpicks:** [more hot picks](#)

**Lestat: Part Two**  
**The Awakening Episode 2**  
**Sim Idol Ep. 1 - Auditions...**  
**Invasion Episode 1**

**Find Voice Actors For Your Films Through Sims99!**  
08-Dec-2005  
A brand new area of Sims99 allows you to find voice actors for your films, and also to add your own voice files to our.... [read more](#)

**2005 Machinima Festival winners announced!**  
15-Nov-2005  
Congratulations to Riot Films (Crack\_6K here at Sims99) for winning in the 2005 Machinima Awards (a 'Mackie') from the.... [read more](#)

**Nova Meets With Strange Company**  
09-Nov-2005  
Nova of Sims99 met today with Hugh Hancock and Johnny of Strange Company just a scant few days before they planned to leave.... [read more](#)

**Anniversary Movie Competition**  
07-Dec-2005  
We're going to be celebrating big style this January. And just ONE of the special things we have planned is a movie-making.... [read more](#)

Subscribe to our newsletter  
your email  
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Make Your Own!

<http://www.sims99.com>



# Machinima Premiere

Relatively new to the shiny world of machinima on the net is Machinima Premiere, a site dedicated to reviewing machinima movies no matter what engine.

Machinima related news form the body of the site with top rated movies on your left and Movie categories and Producers to your right.

Scrolling down reveals what happens on the forums and even general headline news from around the likes of BBC and Yahoo.

Each movie has its own page with its rating, a small description and comments. Movies are hosted by the authors themselves and not by Machinima Premiere.

Link: <http://www.mprem.com>

**Visual appearance: fair**

**Accessibility: good**

**Useability: fair**

**Community integration: good**

**General machinima relevance: good**

**Movie access: Author's download location.**

**Stats: 51 registered users, 221 posts, 34 movies in database**

The screenshot shows the Machinima Premiere website. At the top left is the logo "MACHINIMA PREMIERE Celebrating Machinima!". Navigation links include Home, FAQ, Top Ten, Hall of Fame, Submit News, Submit Movies, Submit Reviews, Forum, and Links. A "Top Rated Movies (by average score)" list is on the left, featuring titles like "Visiting Scrooge Pt1 & 2" (9.5) and "Visiting Scrooge - A Preview" (9.2). The main content area has a Christmas-themed banner with a tree, a house with "Peace on Earth" text, and a snowman. Below the banner is a welcome message and a link to the FAQ. A news item from "Ill Clan at Stanford University" is visible. On the right, there are lists for "Movies" and "Producers". The footer shows the page was posted by admin on Friday, 09 December 2005.

# Rooster Teeth

Visual appearance: **fair**

Accessibility: **good**

Useability: **good**

Community integration: **great**

General machinima relevance: **poor**

Movie access: **on site hosting.**

Stats: **315,563 registered users, 7,830,221 posts**

Not really a machinima community site per se, Roosterteeth is the production company behind the popular series Red vs. Blue, the Strangerhood and P.A.N.I.C.S..

The news pretty much cover their appearances in public media and server downtimes, but the sheer amount of people lingering around justifies a mention here.

Without doubt, the success of Red vs. Blue has far transcended its gaming roots and will ultimately lead to one of those honorary awards given out by the AMAS. Pure Prediction of course...

Link: <http://www.roosterteeth.com>

The screenshot shows the Rooster Teeth website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with "Rooster Teeth Productions" and sub-links for "Red Vs Blue", "The Strangerhood", and "PAINCS". A "Sign Up" and "Sign In" link is visible on the right. The main content area features a date "December 5th, 2005" and a section titled "Episode 68" for "Red vs Blue 'Getting All Misty'", with a link to the "video archive". Below this is a community update about holiday schedules. A "Featured User" section highlights "Squirly". A forum post from user "burnie" is shown, dated "December 1st, 2005", titled "Strangerhood 9: Detective Defective". The post text discusses plot twists and provides a download link. A small image of a car is included in the post. On the left sidebar, there are links for "Main", "News", "Videos", "Pics", "The Store", "Community", "The Forum", "Community Stats", "Find Members", "Members", "My Homepage", "Journal", "Messaging", "Settings", and "Info". A "NEW MERCH" banner for "I hate babies." is also visible.



# Machinima.com

It all started back in 2000 when machinima.com first saw the light of the net.

Machinima.com presents three featured shows with small pictures, a “new games” column, two top series and eight top shows. The latest forum discussions are displayed at the very prominent middle section just on top of the articles section, leaving the news headlines to the bottom right of the screen, next to some more shows and community links.

Each movie has its own page with a small picture, a description other movies by the same author and general movie recommendations. There is no ratings system in place. Movies are hosted on site but their availability is limited.

Link: <http://www.machinima.com>

Visual appearance: **fair**

Accessibility: **good**

Useability: **poor**

Community integration: **fair**

General machinima relevance: **great**

Movie access: **on site hosting/author's hosting**

Stats: **3304 registered users, 22788 posts**

The screenshot shows the Machinima.com website layout. At the top is the logo 'machinima.com' with a gear icon. Below it is a banner for 'Disney Rediscover its Legacy Through 3D Animation' featuring a character. A navigation bar includes links for home, shows, community, forums, articles, tools, news, producers, and shop. The main content area is divided into 'featured shows' and 'search'. The 'featured shows' section displays three video thumbnails: 'SSPH - Pre-Episode Part 2 [High-Res]' by 7Pandas Productions, 'I Got My Gmail [High-Res]' by Panda Productions, and 'SSPH - Pre-Episode Part 1 [High-Res]' by 7Pandas Productions. The 'search' section has a search bar and a 'find' button. To the right of the search bar is a 'stats' section showing 1,396 Shows, 2,625,406 Shows Viewed, 289 Articles, and 23,283 Comments. Below the stats is a 'newsletter' section with a 'Get Our Newsletter' button and a 'go' button. At the bottom, there is a 'game channels' section with a 'The Movies' channel by Lionhead, and a 'top discussions' section with three discussion items: 'Mu Productions presents "Just a Game"', 'Machinima LIVE! podcast coming soon to Machinima.com!', and 'New Sims2 Machinima'. A 'Click Here!' button is also visible in the bottom right area.



# Weblogs and news sites:

## Thinking Machinima

Paul Marino's weblog is a great news resource on machinima related discussions at rather big entertainment events like the game developer's conference. His mission is machinima, his thoughts and insights hint to new developments and arouse discussion

<http://blog.machinima.org>

## 3Dfilmmaker

Machinima producer Ken Thain's news site is one of the most reliable news source in and around mahcinima. Collecting stories from all over the community, 3dfilmmaker.com is often the first to report on press coverage, filmfestivals or industry developments.

<http://3dfilmmaker.com>



### Coyoterepublic.tv

Ingrid Moons website about Machinima is also the home of the “Short Tales” Machinima contest, a monthly competition to keep you in filmmaking shape. The site has its own forums that host Coyote’s moviemaking tips, a valuable archive of tips for directors who are about to enter the machinima world.

<http://coyoterepublic.tv>

### ILL Machinima

Frank Dellario, President and Co-founder of the ILL clan shares general thoughts about the medium itself on his weblog. Topics include an estimation on machinima’s future growth and a plea for more character customization tools.

<http://illclan.com/blog/illmachinima.html>

### Binarypictureshow

Doc Nemesis’ production company site also features interviews and machinima experiments interesting to the general public. The “Articles and Tutorials” section also has some rather interesting tutorials on Quake2 machinima moviemaking.

<http://www.binarypictureshow.com/web/>





# Non- English :

With machinima growing more and more popular there's a couple of local sites that are non-english but still do a great job of keeping you up to date and offer refreshing thoughts on the medium.

## Machinima France

Xavier Lardy put up this website about a year ago with the intention to establish a French machinima community. From that time on, the site got constantly updated with subtitled versions of popular machinima movies, interviews in both French and English and developed into an active and growing community that is even represented at gaming festivals and event in France.

You know, Ubisoft? They're french...

<http://www.machinima.fr>

## Machinima Deutschland

The German machinima hub keeps its readers informed of local events such as Television screenings and festivals and also hosts interviews and articles pinpointing important movies that came out. The site also hosts the one and only machinima WIKI, a valuable and young web resource for machinima filmmaking edited and updated by the community.

<http://www.machinimadeutschland.de>

<http://wikienglisch.machinimadeutschland.de>





## Regarde.org

Regarde.org is your general, all-purpose digital web news source in French. It features a blog on its own focussing on machinima and reports on new films, events and festivals. The rather long blog entries are a great read if you happen to have enough knowledge of the language and the site shows machinima's importance to other digital aspect of life in the very top section. Hey, it's almost as popular as "modding", but then again, "game culture" appears to be unbeatable...

<http://www.regarde.org/blog/category/machinima/>

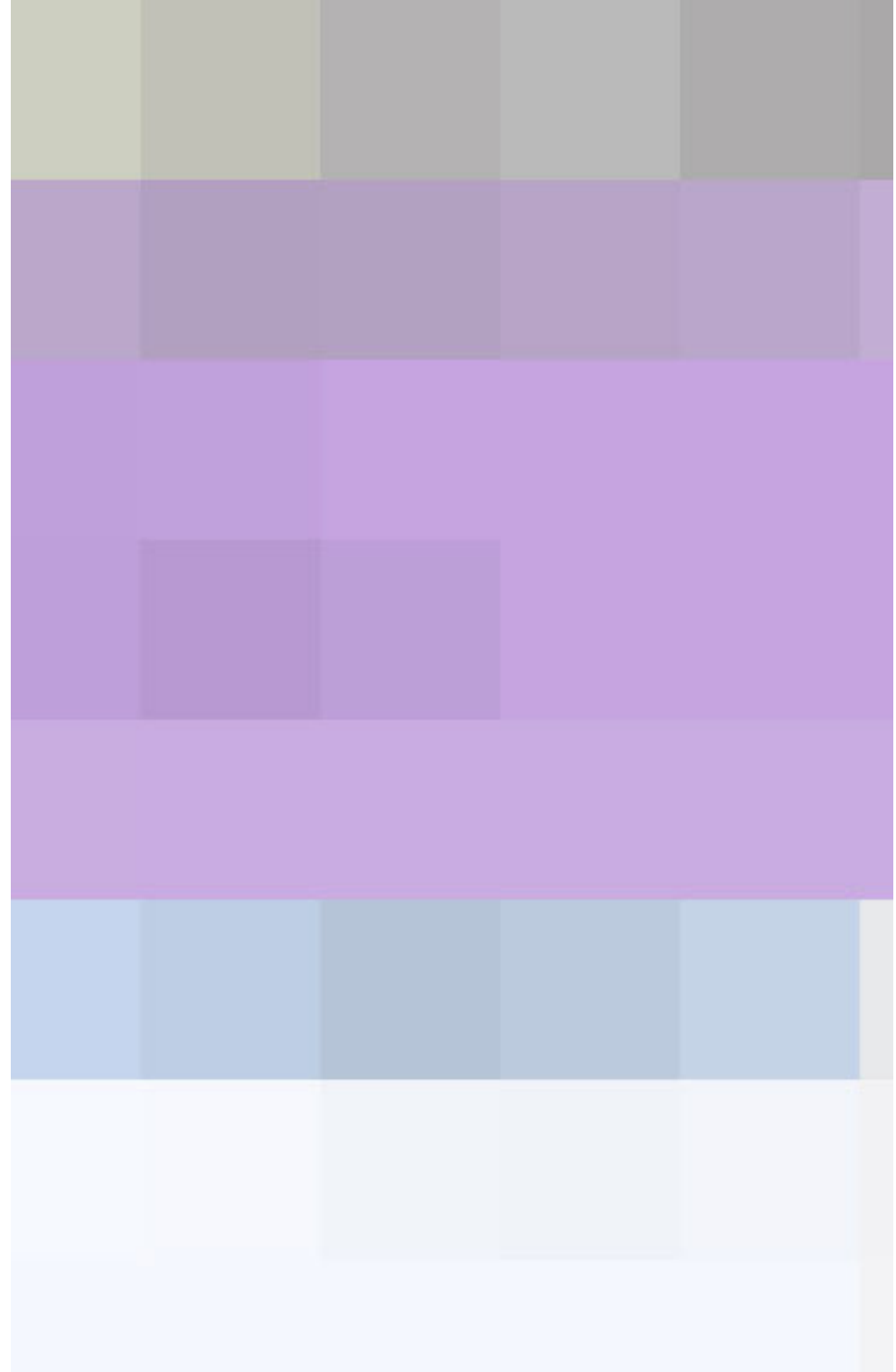
Also, there are a lot of machinima filmmakers that have individual weblogs and like to share their ideas on the medium or their movies and series.

If you run a site, or know of one that should have been mentioned here, please drop a comment on [machinimag.com](http://machinimag.com) or contact me, as I'm always on the lookout for machinima on the net.

# Broadcasting, as seen on TV.

Broadcasting machinima is something that most of us filmmakers would look forward to. As of right now, people still have to search the web for machinima or frequently visit sites like [sims99.com](http://sims99.com) or [machinima.com](http://machinima.com) to get a look at the latest and greatest of the art form.

But there must be an easier way to get your monthly dose of quality machinima.







**Video Podcasts**  
...  
...  
...  
...

**Advertising via Podcasts**  
...  
...  
...  
...

Take Apple's iTunes software for example. It lets you choose between huge amounts of recorded talkshows about almost everything (including two shows about machinima...) and now even supports video Podcasts.

Or another great application called DTV for the Mac (and soon for Windows too), that lets you subscribe to Internet TV RSS feeds and download them directly onto your harddrive.

All free, of course. Though some audio podcasts start to have sponsors to pay for the expenses and work it takes to produce them.

So why didn't machinima jump on the podcast train? Is it the legal thing again?

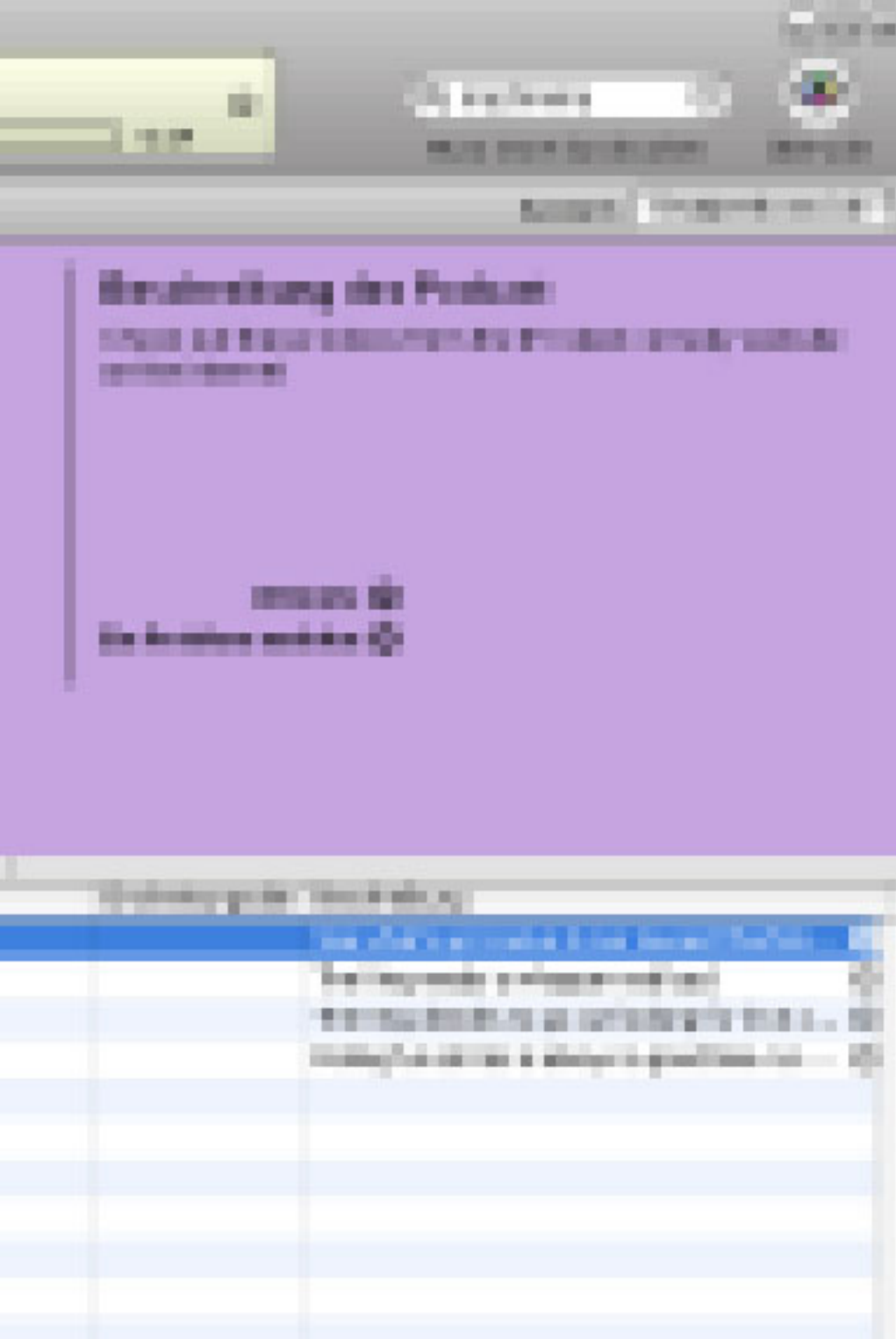
Obviously the record industry is all nuts about using copyrighted music in your movies, but if you don't, the only thing that would keep you from advertising your movie on, let's say a machinima podcast channel, would be the game companies not allowing you to publicly showing what you can do with the game.

But then again, they might just as well go and shut down machinima.com if that's really something they would not want you to do. After all, appearing on iTunes is nothing more but advertisement for the download location of your movie...

So why not create a machinima channel on the Video Podcasts section of iTunes? With only a handful of available videoCasts now, there's no better time to get started.

Especially for you series makers out there!

If bandwidth issues are dragging you down, try seeding your link via bittorrent and "Broadcastmachine". It's a program that seeds your series episodes as RSS feeds and enables users that use DTV, a simple, TiVo-like program to search for your show, download and watch it just like they would watch television.



Using the program BroadcastMachine you can create your own “channel” within DTV, complete with your own channel guide. People that just browse the channels will find it much easier to get to your show. Your audience will grow, especially outside the gaming community. Technology is here to help. If Heavy.com can do it, you can too!

DTV website:

<http://participatoryculture.org/>

useful tutorial for creating your own video podcast:

<http://www.dvcreators.net/discuss/showthread.php?t=10226>

video tutorials on how to capture video, compression and conversion to a video blog with RSS feed:

<http://www.freevlog.org/>

# RIAA versus RPGfilms.net

on July 26th 2005 the following notice appeared on Paul Marino's weblog, following a news item on BoingBoing.net:

„All the while we were looking at the Rockstar debacle, we're now faced with a more foreboding situation. Yesterday, the RIAA went after one of the more popular Machinima sites, RPGFilms.net. The site now displays the C&D letter it received from the RIAA, with the obligatory DMCA blah-blah-blah. [...]"

Read an interview with Chris Peterson aka Hadriel, the owner of RPGFilms.net.







Hi Chris, i hope you're well. Your site seems to be up and running again. Can you tell us when you established RPGfilms.net and what you originally had in mind when setting it up?

I started the site on 11/21/2002, which is going to sound weird because the domain hasn't been registered that long. However, when I started this, I contacted two major makers of Dark Age of Camelot videos, Malvision and Aladora because they were hosting their movies on a limited transfer host. So I offered private hosting to them on that date using spare space and bandwidth from my other web projects. Originally when I set it up, I offered them simple file hosting, link to the file, no transfer limits, and no size restrictions. Really just the freedom to get their creative works out to the growing player base of the game.

I had this idea to create an online community of movie makers, and I knew this had a large potential for a new medium of creative expression. I only found out recently how much larger the machinima world is.

Think of „myspace.com“ with how it works as far as the online community goes, and that would really sum up the entire vision of what

I wanted RPGFilms to be in regard to massive multiplayer online games. I hadn't thought of expanding it to many of the games people are using today to create machinima.

The other thing I wanted to eliminate was the idea that when you submit a movie it had to be liked by the site operators in order to get hosted, otherwise they didn't want to waste their bandwidth on it. Aladora became associated with a much larger DAOC community page and began making movies with them providing the distribution, but Malvision has always been there to bounce ideas off of, and to assist me with the site. Based off of these two movie makers the current RPGFilms.net is here today. It wasn't long after they started teaching others how to make the movies who also needed hosts, and that's when I registered the domain on 12/13/2002 and released a crude version shortly afterwards.

Have you been active in the machinima community before establishing the site? Are you making movies yourself?

I was not involved with machinima, and in fact I had no idea what

the term was or meant until late 2004 when my friend Malvision explained it to me. I had messed around with making videos, all of them in Dark Age of Camelot, and all for private viewing only. These were pre FRAPS and Gamecam days however. I learned from Aladora and Malvision how to use a lot of hardware to capture the movies. I used a device to change the video to a signal a TV could use and recorded all the footage on a VCR.

Then using a Dazzle I imported the video back into the computer and edited using Adobe products. I am very amazed at the technological advancements that have now allowed real time encoding and recording of these games, with minimal hit to performance.

**How many people visit RPGfilms.net? How many movies have been uploaded yet?**

Currently we see only 50-60 thousand people a month with around 700,000 page views. I am discounting the month where we became internet popular for a couple days. To day there are over 1,000 movies uploaded to my servers, taking about 125-130GB of space. On average I add 3 movies per day and we do about 12-15 terabytes of monthly transfer.

**What effect did the closing have on your site-statistics?**

Actually I was pretty shocked at the response to that. My visits that month were 35,000 higher then normal. The emails, the posts on message boards, and the phone calls became more then I could really handle, and I would like to give a big „Thank You“ to all those who sent the simple emails or messages saying how much they appreciated

the site. Some of the traffic has gone down since then. My traffic is content generated, based on the authors of the films that are released. Some of the more popular authors have moved on to new mediums, or new games which don't have a large online community, or their online community is shrinking in numbers. There are a couple of other sites that have a better interface that are marketed towards some of the newer online games that have come out.

**How exactly did you react when you received the eMail that supposedly came from the RIAA?**

My first reaction was panic. I knew the RIAA was a very powerful entity that had the money and the lawyers to do whatever they want to who ever they want. The worse part was that just a couple days before this someone sent me a email that had a link to an article that said the RIAA was targeting large movie files as a method to illegally distribute music. I didn't do anything at first with the site, I mainly just thought about what the consequences would be. I got on the phone and call my friend who works for a Minneapolis based collocation house. I asked him about how they receive take down notices and asked him if he could look this one over and get back to me. After he read the email, he said he felt it was a legit email and that I had two choices, take it down, or not take it down and face them if they decided to move on it. That is when my feelings went from scared to angry. I knew I didn't have the money or even the legal resources to take the RIAA on. It made me even more angry to know that I would be basing my decision on the facts that I knew about the RIAA in their previous dealings. They basically scare people into compliance based on the few who they have fined or tried to send to jail.

Did you fear that something like that would happen sooner or later?

Until the day I received the email, I never imagined them coming after me. I never questioned the legalities of the site.

What consequences did you take from then on? Did anything change in your site policy?

Nothing in the site policies changed. I called the RIAA multiple times, from numbers provided through their directory. When I left messages for the woman who made the statements that they weren't going after me or the site, I never heard back from her directly. I received only one phone call back from someone who claimed they worked for the RIAA, when I returned their call I got their personal assistant who said they were not available, and my call was never returned. The major consequence is doing all the clean up. Lots of people feel that I did the letter to make a sale of the website or to promote the site. Which boggles my mind because the site has never made a penny in profit.. (as of this date) Of course the next largest consequence is the fact that the enjoyment level of running the site, keeping it updated, and making sure I get movies posted in a timely manner has really diminished. It really showed me a lot of people enjoyed the site, it just seems that there are enough people, for whatever reason, who don't and that negative energy really gets to me.

After you closed down the site, people would contact the RIAA to ask what was going on and found that the eMail was a hoax. Could you describe in a bit more detail what was going on back then?

Was there any contact with Cory Doctorow from BoingBoing or any coordination in that move at all?

I am not able to describe what was going on because I don't know who or what prompted all the people to really start looking into it. I think what needs to be said is that the email was said to be fake by the RIAA, and I am not able to comment on anything beyond that at this point. The letter was very real in the aspects of impersonating the RIAA and I am exploring legal channels regarding this. I had no contact with Cory, or any media other than returning one person's phone call and telling them I had no idea what was going on. I believe it was New York Times Magazine who contacted me. It certainly wasn't a publicity stunt. I actually disagree with several of the opinions several of the websites/magazines choose to publish.

What feedback did you get from your site members or the machinima community regarding this incident?

I received mixed feedback. Several people went way overboard, writing letters and going on in great length about how evil the RIAA is because of this. Some told me they were glad I got taken down, and there was a general feeling of people being scared or concerned.

How important do you think the machinima community is nowadays? Do you think that we're still under the radar? And do you think that we can go on using copyrighted material like this forever?

I think machinima is pretty important. I personally think that its a great way to express artistic talent without making a really bad looking film. The models in the games are always professional as are the backdrops. It really lets people focus in on the story, the editing, and the voice acting. I think under the radar would imply we are doing something very illegal. If any film maker feels they are doing



something illegal by creating the content then I would just suggest changing the content or stop making films. My personal feeling is pay for the DVD to sample audio from if you are going to re-make a movie scene. Buy the game for the engine, and of course own the CD for the music you sample. It can only make things worse for authors to pirate the mediums which they sample from.

I would like to think we can go on using this material for free, and for the smaller films I don't think it will be a problem. I think where it will become a problem when people start charging to view or get movies on mediums other than the internet. I know an author who is making a full feature DVD machinima and then going to sell them for minimal cost.

I just think that is really going to blur the lines of copyright issues.

Chris contacted me after the interview to tell me that he might close down the site for monetary reasons. As of now, it seems that RPGfilms.net is open again and looking into ways to fund itself.

We wish Chris all the best of luck and hope he keeps his site up and running!



# The 2thousand5 Machinima Filmfestival

This year's Mackies certainly constitute one of the great machinima moments. With a full blown awards ceremony on the night before the festival and numerous panels, screenings and even Live-Performances, the festival was a celebration on what machinima is and will be.

The awards ceremony took place on a Friday night at a bar called "Crobar" in Chelsea, NYC. Numerous invited guests, including a whole bunch of machinima filmmakers who's films were nominated for an award gathered at around 7 pm to witness the handing out of the sought after 2005 machinima award trophies.



# The Winners of the 2005 Machinima Awards

## Best Picture

**Game On - Ethan Vogt/Furnace Media Group**

Game/Engine: Unreal Tournament 2004 (Epic Games)

## Best Direction

**Whiplash: The Movie - Jake Hughes**

Game/Engine: Whiplash (Crystal Dynamics)

## Best Virtual Performance

**A Few Good G-men - Randall Glass**

Game/Engine: Half-Life 2 (Valve)

## The IFC Award for Excellence in Machinima Screenwriting

**P.A.N.I.C.S. - Rooster Teeth Productions**

Game/Engine: F.E.A.R. (Monolith)

## Best Visual Design

**person2184 - Friedrich Kirschner**

Game/Engine: Unreal Tournament 2004 (Epic Games)

## Best Technical Achievement

**person2184 - Friedrich Kirschner**

Game/Engine: Unreal Tournament 2004 (Epic Games)

## Best Sound

**Only the Strong Survive - Jason Choi/Riot Films**

Game/Engine: Max Payne 2 (Remedy)

## Best Editing

**Strangerhood Studios - Rooster Teeth Productions**

Game/Engine: The Sims 2 (Maxis)

## Best Independent Machinima

**Red vs. Blue - Season 3 - Rooster Teeth Productions**

Game/Engine: Halo (Bungie)

## Best Commercial/Game Machinima

**Game: On - Ethan Vogt/Furnace Media Group**

Game/Engine: Unreal Tournament 2004 (Epic Games)

## Best Off the Shelf Machinima

**The Return - Terran Gregory & Ezra Ferguson**

Game/Engine: World of Warcraft (Blizzard)

## Best Machinima Series

**This Spartan Life - Chris Burke**

Game/Engine: Halo 2 (Bungie)

## Academy Honorary Award

**David „crt“ Wright - for developing KeyGrip for Quake**





Here is a quick transcript of what the Festival's panels and discussions were all about:

**Introduction to Machinima** presented by Paul Marino and Hugh Hancock.

A general introduction to what machinima is, how and why it started and how it became a new form of animated filmmaking. Paul and Hugh showed clips of the earlier days of machinima, introduced specific genres like dance movies and music videos and talked about the impact machinima has on filmmaking.

**Impact and Influence: Machinima and Digital Culture** presented by Carl Goodman with Beth Coleman (MIT Compartment Media Studies), Michael Nitsche (Georgia Institute of Technology), Alex Coletti (Producer, MTV Video Mods), and Damian Lacedaemeon (This Spartan Life).

As the name suggests, the panel discussed the impact machinima has on our culture, in a more general way. Alex Coletti started it off with a brief introduction to the show "Video Mods" on MTV2. He showed some of the video mods produced and talked about the creation process, asking the software companies to get the character models and sets and then use Motioncapture to record the animation for the actual video and kept using the term machinima, even though he stated that the final VideoMod was rendered in High Resolution using Maya.

Even though Coletti himself is not really a technical person (being the man behind the MTV show Unplugged) he stated that he believes in machinima's future and that Video Mods is encouraging people to create

Machinima music videos and send them in. He also added that Video Mods is trying to get more into storytelling in its next, third season.

The next panelist, Beth Coleman briefly related to machinima and compared the technological similarities between some of her realtime artwork and also elaborated on some basic research into virtual environments that include game engines and machinima's unique totally free way of moving a camera around.

Next up, Michael Nitsche of Georgia Tech explained machinima's relevance in modern internet culture. He showed the well known "Leroy" videoclip, depicting the adventures of a certain World of Warcraft guild whose well planned attempt to raid one of the high level dungeons fails because of the spontaneity of one of its members, Leroy Jenkins. The clip could be categorized as a new form of documentary, and furthermore as a new form of cultural expression within the world wide web.

Nitsche went on explaining some of the machinima related projects that students from Georgia Tech are working on, including a way of lipsyncing using a hand puppet. Machinima, it seemed, has found its way into education.

The last speaker tuned in Live from a small planet far away, in full green bump mapped armor, ready to fight some Covenant Aliens, or in this case, ready to explain what the show "this Spartan Life" is about and how it is produced. Machinima Award winner Chris

Burke acted as Damien Lacedaemion and was giving a Live introduction to his show. Chris was hidden somewhere, so the audience could fully engross in him being that Halo2 character on the big screen.

All the panelists agreed that machinima is a phenomenon that just starts to show its impact on modern society and that has a bright and interesting future to come.

**Who Are We Now? Machinima's Identity Crisis** moderated by Paul Marino, with Panelists Frank Dellario, Hugh Hancock and Friedrich Kirschner.

Machinima's identity crisis turned out to become more of a talk about machinima's future. The panelists agreed that there's a need of easy to use tools to create original movies. While there are already some elaborate toolsets on the market, relying solely on game development to push machinima forward is argueably suboptimal. Machinima needs its own R&D, but advancements in gaming technology and especially Mod tools will help to facilitate the process to create more original machinima. While there was some arguing whether or not the next machinima revolution will come from the game industry or another place, it was generally agreed upon the need for more sophisticated input devices and that there's too much emphasize on development of graphics.

And all agreed that machinima as a democratic way of filmmaking will grow, and maybe even make its way into school classrooms within the next 5 years.

**Machinimators Forum** moderated by Hugh Hancock, with Paul Marino, Matt Hullum, Geoff Fink, Ricard Gras, Frank Dellario, Terran Gregory, Joe Falcione and Friedrich Kirschner.

The individual filmmakers talked about their motivations to make machinima, their experience with their individual way of filmmaking and, surprisingly, about legal issues and how the filmmakers managed to get around them. It seems that most of the filmmakers on the panel got rather positive responses from the game companies, sometimes even though they are using the game's intellectual property in form of models or sets.

So game companies seem to be talkative after all, as long as you respect their intellectual property.





Gus Sorola and Matt Hullum (left to right) scored three Mackies with their Rooster Teeth productions





Chris Burke (right) and Team, winner of „Best Machinima Series“





Ethan Vogt (3rd from left) and Team celebrate their double Mackie winning





Two happy organizers smile for the camera





(left to right) Friedrich Kirschner (person2184), Joe Falcione (the Objective), Terran Gregory (the Return), Frank Dellario (ILL Clan), Ricard Gras (la.interactiva), Gfunk, Matt (both RoosterTeeth), Paul Marino (AMAS) and Hugh Hanock (M.com) at the Machinimators Forum



one of Saturday's speakers [Michael Nitsche](#), from Georgia Tech is still discussing Machinima





some of the [Neverending Nights](#) guys at the afterparty





(left to right) Ezra Fergusson, Terran Gregory from „the Return“, Hugh Hancock from Machinima.com, Frank Dellario from the ILL Clan





Nathan Moller ,aka MuNansen was one of the filmmakers who showed up for the festival





Frank Dellario and Tom Palmer discuss Life, World of Warcraft and Machinima





Ezra Fergusson and Terran Gregory walked all the way from JFK airport to the festival location in Queens (left to right)  
Hugh Hancock had a good time at the afterparty (mid-background)





Carl Goodman, Director of the Moving image and Ken Perlin (left to right) at the festival's afterparty



The evening of the festival began with a presentation of Bill van Buren, showing off some of the tools that Valve developed for setting up the drama in Half Life 2, including a demo of Face Poser and some spoiler heavy, in-game footage and finally, the “not ready for realtime” group performed was on stage.

They first showed off some realtime animation software and created a simple scene with two characters in a room. The whole process only took minutes and involved no actual animation software. Ken Perlin’s algorithms produce procedural animation that is adjustable by a number of different parameters and can thus be used to create animation on the fly, fitting whatever you like it to be.

What followed was a beautiful live-performance piece, played on midi keyboards that controlled two little big eyed characters that get romantically involved. The keyboards being the animation controls of the characters also provided the background music for the play.

After a cheering round of applause, the ILL Clan concluded the

festival with their new show “Trash Ta1k”, a talk show introducing their host ILL Will and Mal, the Missile, acting as a co-host. All live action, the ILL clan put on a great improvised show including the words cereal and dish-washing and also managed to have Gus Sorola from Red vs. Blue show up as a special guest star in form of a zombie.

All these words and pictures cannot quite grasp the atmosphere at the festival itself of course. Thanks to so many filmmakers coming all the way to Queens, New York, all the people who attended the festival and of course, a great organization and schedule, the event transformed into a great time for all involved and makes us want more of the same, next year.





# Interviewing Frank Dellario

Co-founder and President of the ILL-Clan and Co-organizer of the 2005 Machinima Film Festival.

We met Frank on a sunny winter Saturday in a cozy little cafe in Brooklyn, NY to talk about Life, Art and Machinima over brunch.





### How do you organize a machinima film festival?

Well, no different than a normal film festival. You have to get your sponsors, Paul generally takes care of that. I'm more into the production part of it. We tried to do something different this time and moved the awards ceremony to the night before. The festival itself took place at the Museum of the Moving Image, which is in queens and really provides a great spot. But there's always this concern that if you don't do something in Manhattan, you don't get as many people to attend. So that was one of the reasons to have the ceremony take place in Chelsea.

Though what we found out afterwards was that the press does not go anywhere on a Friday night.

Well they do if it was the Emmy's or the Oscar's obviously but we're not that.

### So what's your final take on the festival. Did everything run smooth?

I'm happy with how it went, I'm happy with how it has grown. Of course there's a couple of small things, choices that we made that we might reconsider for the next time. It might make more sense to have the awards being held in a theater and being more formal and if possible have it at a time when we can get more press there.

Otherwise, the Saturday part was great and we know we're going to make it two days next time.

The quality of the films were great, lots of filmmakers were actually at the festival. It was just great to meet a lot of the people that actually make the movies and hang out.

So it was a success and you want the festival to be an annual event event?

I think the festival was a success and there's definitely enough great work out there to justify an annual event.

Do you already have numbers on how many people attended the Festival?

We don't have numbers from the Museum yet, but there was quite a line in the morning for the Machinima101 presentation, so that was good.

It seems like we had more people attending than last time we had the festival. Pretty much everything was packed, especially upstairs. We also had a lot more films and nominees than two years ago.

Did you get lots of submissions? And who picked the nominees?

There's a top secret committee, that I wasn't of course, a part of, that selected the nominees and showcases. And there were a lot more submissions than last time. I think the number more than tripled.

It wasn't hard to get submissions. They just came right in.

You had the Independent Film channel as one of the main sponsors of this year's festival. Does that mean that broadcasting machinima becomes fashionable now?

Yes, definitely. Part of their interest was to air some of the films on IFC. Actually some of the films will be shown on IFC probably this month.

Will there be a DVD of the winning movies? Or is it a legal thing again?

I don't know yet but we're going to talk about that. One of the things AMAS is noticing is that we have to be more proactive about getting the rights or permissions to actually have people show their stuff. That includes software companies that make the game engines as well as figure something out about other issues such as music. We might not be able to solve those problems but we could provide some help, for example figure out how long it takes to get the rights and how much it would cost.

Well, I'm definitely looking forward to seeing what comes out of that. Apart from helping to organize the festival, you're also an active filmmaker together with the other members of the ILL clan. Some time ago, you told me that you're building your own production tools on top of the Torque engine from garage games. Are you thinking about publicly releasing them anytime soon?

We would love to release it, it's just nowhere near ready. Basically we just recreated the toolsets that we had in the modified version of quake2 that we used before switching to the Torque engine. That allows us to do our live stuff as well as the things we did for Audi and MTV2.

The idea was to do it in different phases and the third phase would be finishing the tools so they could actually be released and sold .



### How do your tools work? What can you do with them?

Just Torque itself has this great mission editor. In the middle of shooting, you can drop in objects and lights and adjust your shot. It's a really powerful tool. For us it's all about getting the shot and getting it as fast as possible. So being able to do those things in realtime without switching to another program or interrupting the filming process is just great.

Then we put in a system to teleport characters and cameras to pre-recorded positions and to perform skin-swapping on characters so we can animate their faces.

### So you still work through puppeteering characters? In a network?

Yes. Our puppeteers now have an interface so they can set up their characters, determine which emotions to use, bind them to keys and so on. So we still do everything live but there is a rudimentary path system built into torque and we're looking into it right now.

### Apart from the stuff for Audi or MTV2's "Video Mods", you still do live performances. How does that work?

Yes. Technically, it's just like when we shoot, we shoot the shot live, except here it's more like a play. So you just never call cut and the show needs a beginning, middle and an end.

We shoot it like a live multi-camera shoot. Like in a TV-studio set where you would have five or six different cameras all set up to get specific shots and cover what's going on. It's a play that's designed to be filmed and that's basically what we do.



One difference is I'm the only camera, so I jump around to those different positions that we define before hand as well as cut back and forth between actors.

And the characters can teleport to certain positions as well,.

It's a talk-show, so the cameras basically know where to look and what will happen next, even though there's a lot of improvising going on.

**You're doing a new show...**

Yes, TrashTalk with ILL Will.

**What's it about?**

There's two characters, ILL Will, who is the Host and a B level actor in computergames (he was up for the part of Barney in Half Life 2 but played Combine Solder #13 instead), and Mal the Missile, his sidekick and cohost, who's basically a Missile. From there it's your basic

talkshow except it focuses on whats up in the game community, what happened this week, sprinkled with some gamer gags.

. May also do game reviews but of really bad or obscure games.

It may also have "behind the scenes" of the show stuff.

We're pitching it around , trying to get it on-air. So we'll see.

**So no more Lenny and Larry?**

Well, yes for the time being. Maybe they'll come back later. We just wanted to move on and maybe become a little more game centric.

Because that's kind of what people want right now. They want shows that target the game market.

**Thank you very much for your time Frank. We're all excited to see your future productions.**





# A night out at the Movies

Lionheads latest game “the Movies” promises to be not only a tycoon game but also a production environment to shoot your own films in.

In this review, we’re focusing solely on the movie production possibilities of the game, not the game itself, beginning the game in Sandbox Mode, giving you the possibility to start with an almost indefinite amount of money and no wait time for set constructions. It also gives you instant access to the so called “advanced scriptwriting facility” that lets you actually take control of the movie making process.

Making Movies in the game is divided in the basic three steps that you find in real-life filmmaking.





assigning your lead roles in the advanced movie maker



you can select a basic structure of your movie to help you with the pacing and scene selections

### Pre-Production in the Movies.

In order to shoot your film, you must first acquire cast and crew and built a set on which to shoot your movie. The game itself lets you start in different time periods up to the 60s with appropriate costumes, sets and backdrops for that timeframe. Though, it is relatively easy to convince your windows-registry that you've already unlocked all the sets up to the year 2000 (more to that later).

So once you built your sets, trained some actors, extras and a director (their in-game skill levels have no impact on their in-movie performances), you can actually start putting together your movie.

And putting together it is.

### Production in the Movies:

The actual movie is being assembled using the Advanced Script-writing facility. After deciding on your cast, genre and structure,

you're presented with a Editing Program like screen that lets you add different sets and scenes. The interface is simple but very well laid out with a reasonable amount of buttons and options.

The way "the Movies" works is that it lets you choose different pre-configured shots. For example, you have a shot called "Group Enter" on the subway set, that has a bunch of people entering a subway station. All with pre-configured camera setup, editing and animation. All the shots are played out in the preview window with wooden figures representing possible actor roles. You can simply drag and drop your actors to one of the stick figures to assign them to this role. Unassigned roles can be hidden and won't appear in the finished movie.

There's a vast number of shots, most of them very compatible to one another, though it is not so easy to keep track of who's who when you're dealing with larger casts.

In addition, some shots let you specify certain properties, like the way they should be acted out, the backdrop scrolling speed.

Depending on your set, you can also put in Props, change the lighting or weather conditions, or you have access to some shots only available in that specific set (e.g. a sniper reticule in the war torn city set).

Most of the sets use backdrops that can be changed, letting you shoot a western movie with a space backdrop and so on.

After generally putting together your movie shot by shot and assigning your roles, you can customize your character's looks in the Make-over menu.

After finishing your Script, it's time to shoot your movie. Shooting the movie itself is an all automated process. Though, it gives you the possibility to review your shot selections and access different backdrops and the advanced options also found in the Advanced moviemaking tool. There's really no reason to go through all of that again, so the "Instant Shot" option at the very beginning of the sandbox setup comes in handy. Unfortunately, you cannot enable this option from within the game.

### Post-Production in the Movies:

Once your movie is shot, you can drag and drop it over to your post production facilities to start editing it. Again, the interface setup s



simple but well thought out. You can split scenes, rearrange them and add subtitles, sound effects and voices to your actors. The Movies has full lipsync functionality and the feature worked pretty well.

There's also an intro- and end-credit sequence added to your movie that you can customize to fit your movie's style. The only thing left to do is to choose your own soundtrack from the various prefabricated songs and tunes that fit most situations. Sound editing (apart from moving the tracks around) is not included though.

Once everything is in place, you can render your movie to a .wmv file in either high, medium or low resolution.

### All in all:

The Movies a fun program to play around and experiment with movie-making. Those who thought about using it for full scale production might be a bit disappointed by its inflexibility. After all, looking for that one shot you need to get your message across can be pretty frustrating.

The Movies caters to very simple, standardized stories and has enough assets to experiment within boundaries.

One of the great things about it, though, is its playful take on making a movie. Just clicking together a simple story is a lot of fun and works smooth and fast. The prefabricated scenes and shots have that one big advantage that they all look very cinematic and implement a certain degree of professionalism. Same goes for the sets, the props and the music.

With over 5000 movies uploaded in the first week, Lionhead sure stirred up quite some buzz around its game. Whether those films are worth downloading is a different story though...

### Sidenote:

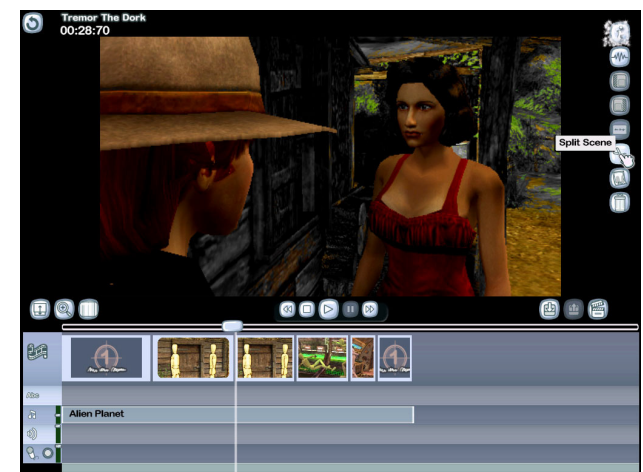
There's already a very active modding community developing for the game. For hints on how to unlock all sets, costumes and props in sandbox mode, or for tips to import custom backdrops and using the free-camera to record movies, go visit "The Movies Workshop" at <http://www.tmws.themoviesplanet.com/>



above: assembling your film out of predefined scenes



above: The „Makeover“ menu  
below: Non-linear editing in Postproduction





the end.