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'WET': A2M Embraces Autodesk Middleware and Animation Tools to Boost Game Pipeline

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A2M's First Mature-Rated Game Title Combines Acrobatics, Swordplay and a Dual-Targeting System

SAN RAFAEL, Calif., Oct 06, 2009 /PRNewswire-FirstCall via COMTEX/ -- Autodesk, Inc. (Nasdaq: ADSK) has announced that Montreal-based game developer Artificial Mind & Movement (A2M) relied on several Autodesk software applications to facilitate creation of the new game title "WET." The game's characters and levels were built using Autodesk Maya and Autodesk MotionBuilder 3D animation software. Autodesk Kynapse middleware was used to implement artificial intelligence (AI) to drive the game's many nonplayable characters.

Rubi, the third-person shooter's main character, is a feisty problem fixer trying to figure out who double-crossed her and why. She is able to combine a unique mix of shooting, acrobatics and swordplay to combat enemies. The game's dual-targeting system lets players control one of Rubi's weapons and auto-targets the other.

With a combination of photoreal 3D and stylized graphic novel-type visuals, the game's gritty look and feel can be compared to such films as "Kill Bill," "Desperado" and "Sin City." In key moments, Rubi goes into "Rage Mode," giving players an entirely different experience. Rubi becomes faster and stronger, and the game's graphics transform to a minimalist color palette with enemies in contrasting colors.

Autodesk Kynapse Helps A2M Focus on Creativity and Game Play

Using Autodesk Kynapse enabled A2M to focus its development efforts on the creative look and feel of the game and high-level game-play interactions, rather than the time-consuming processes of path finding and location awareness.

"Our main philosophy with regards to development tools has always been that if it's good and it already exists with the right price tag, why reinvent it? That's why we chose to work with Kynapse as our AI engine for 'WET.' In the game, the player confronts a large number of enemies. We needed a path-finding and location awareness system to control decision making for these characters in a coherent manner," said Martin Walker, CTO, A2M. "Kynapse has a fantastic hide-and-shoot algorithm that was used to conceal and disperse the enemies in a natural way throughout environments."

Optimizing a Game Pipeline with Autodesk Maya and Autodesk MotionBuilder

Maintaining a stable and consistent pipeline from one title to the next is key for A2M. With a staff of 500 and a dozen projects a year, standardizing on reliable off-the-shelf tools like Maya is essential. MotionBuilder was also used heavily by the A2M team to help enhance motion-captured sequences. "MotionBuilder was used extensively to clean up motion capture data," said Walker. "Also, when we did our mo-cap, we weren't sure which villain would take on which moves. With MotionBuilder, we were able to retarget motion data onto different characters even if the skeletal data wasn't necessarily a perfect match. This saved a tremendous amount of time and allowed for experimentation."

"WET" is A2M's first mature-rated game title. "Titles like 'WET' are almost interactive films at this point, and the quality of the content is more important than ever. So if we can optimize our pipelines to enable more iterations at a faster pace, then we're ahead of the game. Tools like Autodesk Maya, MotionBuilder and Kynapse help us get there," said Walker.

Published by Bethesda Softworks, "WET" released on September 15, 2009. The game was written by Duppy Demetrius and actress Eliza Dushku ("Dollhouse" and "Buffy the Vampire Slayer") voices the game's main protagonist, Rubi Malone.

About Artificial Mind & Movement

Based in Montreal, Quebec, Artificial Mind & Movement (A2M) is Canada's leading independent game developer, employing 500 talented people in Montreal, Quebec and Santiago, Chile. Since 1992, the company has developed 119 titles across every game platform, including its highly-stylized third person shooter WET(TM). Our studios work with the industry's top publishers and licensors, including Activision Blizzard, Bethesda Softworks, Disney, Electronic Arts, Fox, Konami, LucasArts, Viacom and Warner. Artificial Mind & Movement is committed to producing unparalleled game experiences with original or licensed Intellectual Properties. From 2006 to 2008, the company has ranked simultaneously amongst the Deloitte Technology Fast 50(TM) and also as Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies(TM).

About Autodesk

Autodesk, Inc., is a world leader in 2D and *3D design* software for the manufacturing, building and construction, and media and entertainment markets. Since its introduction of AutoCAD software in 1982, Autodesk has developed the broadest portfolio of state-of-the-art *Digital Prototyping* solutions to help customers experience their ideas before they are real. Fortune 1000 companies rely on Autodesk for the tools to visualize, simulate and analyze real-world performance early in the design process to save time and money, enhance quality and foster innovation. For additional information about Autodesk, visit *www.autodesk.com*.

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