"Inventing the Future of Games" symposium unites academic and industry leaders

Sims creator Will Wright, Linden Lab CEO Rod Humble, and UC Santa Cruz's Michael Mateas to give keynote speeches at April 15 event in Silicon Valley

For Immediate Release

SANTA CRUZ, CA—Innovators in technology and design continually reimagine computer games. User-generated content for commercial games (Spore, Little Big Planet), social network games (Farmville), vast simulation worlds with their own economies (World of Warcraft), games using mobile phones to augment reality (Ghostwire)—ten years ago these were dreams, and now they're part of the cultural fabric. As the imagined becomes real, the question of "what's next?" confronts both academic researchers and the game industry.

"Inventing the Future of Games," a day-long symposium April 15 in Silicon Valley, aims to explore the possibilities of the next decade of gaming innovation and technology. Sponsored by the UC Santa Cruz Center for Games and Playable Media, the symposium will gather some of the brightest minds of academia and industry to discuss the advancement of game design and technology.

The inaugural symposium, which starts at 8:30 a.m. at the India Community Center in Milpitas, Calif., will feature keynote speeches by Sims creator Will Wright, Linden Lab CEO Rod Humble (Second Life), and Michael Mateas, co-creator of Facade and director of the UC Santa Cruz Center for Games and Playable Media. Tickets are $100 for the general public and $30 for UC Santa Cruz students.
"We're looking forward to starting conversations between academics and industry professionals on where the field of computer games might go," said Mateas, an associate professor of computer science in the Jack Baskin School of Engineering. "Moving toward games that truly pay attention to the player's actions and generate dynamic responses would allow games to create new types of experiences. It would open up new approaches in interactive storytelling. Multi-player missions and quests could be adapted to specific social play styles. A whole new world of games waits to be discovered."

The symposium will include four sessions: exploring the relationship between games and cinema, making self-generating games, the future of games and culture, and creating new forms of character and dialogue.

Session speakers will include Jordan Mechner (*Prince of Persia*), Emily Short (*Galatea*), Ian Bogost (Georgia Tech/*A Slow Year*), Tracey Fullerton (University of Southern California/*The Night Journey*), Robin Hunicke (thatgamecompany), and UC Santa Cruz game program faculty members Noah Wardrip-Fruin, Marilyn Walker, Arnav Jhala, and Jim Whitehead. UC Santa Cruz's John Funge, Warren Sack, Soraya Murray, and Sri Kurniawan will moderate the panels.

Keynote speaker Will Wright is the award-winning creator of *Spore*, *The Sims*, and *SimCity*. The head of the entertainment think tank Stupid Fun Club, Wright is widely acknowledged for creating the simulation video game genre.

Keynote speaker Rod Humble is the new CEO of Linden Lab, creators of the virtual world *Second Life*. Previously, he was an executive vice president at Electronic Arts, where he led the EA Play label.

Keynote speaker Michael Mateas is director of the UC Santa Cruz Center for Games and Playable Media and associate professor of computer science in the Baskin School of Engineering. Co-creator of the interactive drama *Facade*, his work explores artificial intelligence-based art and entertainment.
Additional symposium sponsors include the Baskin School of Engineering and the UC Center for Information Technology Research in the Interest of Society (CITRIS).

More information is available at games.soe.ucsc.edu/future2011.

**About the Center for Games and Playable Media**

The UC Santa Cruz Center for Games and Playable Media was formally established in 2010, building on work done since the Baskin School of Engineering began offering a degree in computer game design. The center houses the school’s five game-related research labs, including the Expressive Intelligence Studio, one of the largest technical game research groups in the world.

The center’s mission is to tackle core technology and design challenges to enable the games of the future. Addressing these challenges will help sustain the industry’s economic growth, make game authorship more broadly accessible, and dramatically expand the expressive power of games. The center is committed to furthering the impact of first-class game research by building relationships between its five research labs and industry; building and releasing research-driven experimental games; facilitating UC Santa Cruz game students in joining and changing the industry; and engaging the public and the media.

For more information, visit games.soe.ucsc.edu.

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**Note to reporters and editors:** Reporters may register for the symposium by contacting Jennifer Mahal at jkmahal@soe.ucsc.edu.

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