Committee Secretary

House of Representatives

Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts
Parliament House Canberra ACT 2600 AUSTRALIA

*** Executive summary ***

Two requests:

1) bandwidth

2) support for bringing multimedia & film & game skills together

*** The slightly more verbose version ***

I run a small multimedia company, focusing mainly on educational areas, but our work
crosses over into the animation and gaming areas. For instance, we currently have two
short animations in competition at Annecy in France, won an AEAF award last year, and
recently completed one of the games for the GameOn initiative, which is receiving a
quarter of a million hits per week.

So bearing in mind that while we're not precisely in the frame of the inquiry's reference, but
having a film background myself and contact with film, animation and gaming people, I
offer the following comments.

While there are certainly some large players in the industry, I think we represent a sizeable
niche of the Australian creative scene: small, lean companies doing interesting work that
gets international recognition. This presents both opportunities and challenges when
compared to the size and budgets of markets like the US.

I met a respected US multimedia developer at a conference in Sydney earlier this year, who
summarised this nicely: "Dude, I just found out, Australia's as big as the US, but you've
only got 20 million people, and you're still making kick-ass stuff!".

Amusing, but then when we noted that a project we'd done was only 90k to download, he
chuckled- the idea of worrying about making files so tiny was unknown in the bandwidth-
rich US. Which brings me to first point- Australia's lack of bandwidth is a major hurdle.
Knowing how to work lean is great (many film industry folk can create amazing work on
the smell of an oily rag), but it's restrictive and bodes badly for the future if it's your only
choice.

So first request: more bandwidth.

Secondly, one barrow I've been pushing is trying to use our web and interactive experience
to create engaging promotional sites for games and films. Now, this is self interest talking:
as the director of a small company I want to enjoy my work, and I love both games and
film. However, from a wider perspective, I also look at how much interest and fan support
is created by sites like the ones for the movies "The Matrix" and "Terminator 3", or the
games "Shinobi" and "Ratchet & Clank", and I feel this is something the Australian
industry is missing.

So far, we've had no luck with site creation for Aussie film or game- many producers see it
as just another cost, which it is- but obviously one that the American industry values and
can afford. (In fact, we've had more success with a site for a New Zealand film grip that's
just going through a second update!).

Thus, second request: government support to bring the expertise of interactive developers
to support the producers of films and games.

The provision of PS2 development kits was a great idea to support game producers, but there's nothing like creating a slavering fan interest in the lead-up to release of a title. This works for film too- I can remember sticking the promotional postcard for Reservoir Dogs on my fridge and counting down the days until its Australian release. That's the kind of devotion we need to build way before these titles reach the public.

Well, that's my 2 cents.

Minty Hunter

Director

Nectarine

www.nectarine.com.au