



newsletter from the faculty of professional studies and performing arts | trinity western university

## Not Just Playing Around

A collection of computer games highlights a new course

This Christmas, the X-Box 360 may be the newest computer gaming system to hit store shelves, but Kevin Schut's tastes go much farther back than the latest and greatest.

Kevin, a communications professor, owns an archive of 'historic' computer game systems. Well, as historic as computer games can be. His oldest? A clone of the Atari PONG game dating to 1976. He also has an Atari 2600—one of the earliest cartridge game systems ever made—and a Commodore 64.

"As a kid I was fascinated by computer games," says Kevin. "My family got our first home computer in 1983—and we got one game with the system. My Dad and I played games like crazy."

Soon his interest turned into a fascination with video game arcades and computer strategy games. He ended up completing his PhD studies on fantasy role-playing in computer games.

His collection of roughly 300 games and systems—which he mostly purchased through EBay—will be used to teach a new communications course on gaming in the spring 2006 semester.

The class will have access to this archive. "These games will allow students to experience and play these old games themselves," he says. "I hope to show them that gaming is more than just graphics and sound."

The course will also set computer games in context. "Gaming is one of the few cultural phenomena where you get your hands on the actual technology from the beginning to the present, so the archive provides a great resource to show the continuity and history of games," he adds.

## Connecting the Faculty

FPSPA's website offers a virtual community

What you hold in your hand—the printed edition of The Outpost—has an online cousin. Both formats act as ways to disseminate news and events about FPSPA.

But the online version supports this activity in ways that only it can. If you visit [www.the-outpost.ca](http://www.the-outpost.ca) (the official FPSPA website), you'll find content on departments, faculty, staff, current projects, conferences—as well as a host of student activity. Soon students will be able to host their own web pages on this site.

The site also promotes the use of the POD, the FPSPA's media art facility located in Neufeld Science Centre. You'll discover information about accessing and booking equipment in the Equipment + Facilities section.

As well, each department has compiled some recommended links, and the Resources section highlights new (and old!) books, artist DVDs, sound art and other resources which will help faculty and staff to engage with local and international arts practice, events and listings.

This online version of The Outpost aims to be the virtual focus for the FPSPA and will continue to develop relevant, current and adaptable tools for the faculty's internal and external needs. Please look around the site and offer your feedback to [lperth@the-outpost.ca](mailto:lperth@the-outpost.ca)

## A Music Building Update

Okay, so the music faculty has still not moved into its new digs. Turns out a small part for the sprinkler system is on back order, which holds up all of the building inspections needed to gain occupancy. The latest word is that things will be set up for the start of the spring semester. Pray for it to be so.

## What's the POD?

Look in any dictionary and you'll find several definitions for 'pod.' It can be a vessel that contains seeds. Or a number of animals clustered together. In the computing world, it can refer to a Piece Of Data. Of course, it can be a detachable container of fuel on an airplane.

But to the FPSPA, the POD is a media art facility. This room of eight Macs and a collection of recording equipment has been around for a year. While still a new concept, it has managed to provide access to industry standard software for FPSPA classes such as fine art, film and art classes. In January 2006, two more classes will use the facility to support the integration of contemporary arts practice into the school.

If you want to gain access to the POD, you'll need to complete a 20-minute induction program, which then entitles you to a pass card. Please contact Gareth Griffiths ([g.griffiths@the-outpost.ca](mailto:g.griffiths@the-outpost.ca)) for more information.

## The Fine Print

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