

## Always On...

December 15, 2006

### *Wii and "immersion"*

*Any product that Earthling are using so vigorously to the point of developing sore elbows from extensive play is in good shape. Tennis elbow never stopped the advance of tennis and Wii elbow will not likely affect the Wii either! Great PR that money can't buy. Blackberry has had no problem with the arthritic sore issue. Carpel tunnel hasn't slowed the personal computer.*

Just left the New York City midtown Nintendo store...

Just left the Nintendo store in midtown NYC 30 minutes ago... if you don't own Nintendo the stock and you do own Sony the stock I suggest going and playing Wii at a local outlet!!!!!! You wont be able to buy one mind you unless you camp outside the store at 6am (or earlier)... at the flagship store they only get 100 a day and they are gone immediately.

BUT just play Wii... and bring your kids along if you hate video games yourself...

This is not a little thing. It is a big thing. But don't come for the graphics.

### **“ARE REALISTIC AND IMMERSIVE THE SAME THING? NO”**

More realistic does not necessarily mean more immersive.

Everyone is aiming for more and more immersive and that seems on target. Lots of articles written about immersive and in and of itself “immersive” is great. Immersive must be a good thing if you are in the business of generating an experience. . .

### **But I think many folks are messed up on what generates immersive.**

Brynne right now is soldiering through Marshall McLuhan's classic Understanding Media. Hot media and cold media were the terms he used to provide shorthand to suggest whether you could enjoy a media without paying full attention. In modern lingo, cold media are great for multi-tasking. Hot media demand full attention and might even be immersive.

### **Unfortunately...**

....a lot of the world thinks immersive is juuusst about surround sound and all (including the airlines that blast the safety message at higher volumes each and every year it seems in an attempt to immerse **you** – the result tends to be more irritation as

opposed to more immersion I think).

The problem is that “**realistic**” does not necessitate immersion. “Realistic” is neither a necessary or sufficient ingredient for immersion though it may contribute for certain.

When I think of deep immersion I think of my daughter Bailey watching international cartoon star Dora the Explorer– as she is at this moment. Is Dora realistic? Not at all. Is Dora immersive? To Bailey? Oh yeah... she is lost **in** Dora with the key word being “in”... I think the world of technology has gotten confused to miss Dora in favor of the CELL processor.

Bailey is so immersed in Dora that I have received the fallout of now knowing most of the characters, parts of a few songs and sayings like “Swiper no Swiping”. Bailey’s immersion even took us to see Dora live a couple years back at Radio City Music Hall with thousands of other immersed kids.

Great stories can be immersive. Children’s stories and the imagination can be very immersive -- though not realistic at all in the way the CELL processor attacks the market!

Sony seems to have gotten so many things wrong with the PS3 that a Harvard Case study must certainly await – the pinnacle of suffering in business perhaps. Among the long list of problems with PS3 is the seeming obsession with graphics that – when all is said and done – will have provided its chief rival Microsoft an 18-month lead as Sony fumbled with cutting edge technology.

### **IF.... (big if)...**

IF graphics and realism and ultimate immersion were linked then I might say “no problem”... when PS3 actually arrives in real quantities it will win out. Folks will marvel, folks will be immersed, folks will get out their credit card and toss the already purchased X boxes in the trash bin.

I am sure at times Sony management realized they might run the risk of delay in selecting cutting edge technology and decided to press ahead to reach nirvana before all others.

But I strongly suspect that a few years ago when plans were being crafted for PS3 say the Sony management never imagined that a goofy little product from Nintendo with in some cases cartoonish graphics would ever embarrass them so easily.

In gaming today: well, Wii is rocking with its mediocre graphics while PS3 seems to be getting a comparatively lackluster review for all its phenomenal realism. Wii not only invites immersion but demands it! The Wii controller demands you use your body as opposed to merely your thumbs. While your thumbs were previously immersed now you

are immersed.

From my colleague Helen's internal blog last week: "Nintendo – reading today on "problems" with the Wii....Apparently some people have smashed their TVs as a result of throwing their controllers (by accident) when playing with Wii! There is a wristband for the controllers but it breaks pretty easily.... Oh, and another good play on words. Someone has set up a website 'Wii Have a Problem' (go to: Wii Have A Problem <<http://www.wiihaveaproblem.com/>> ) which has photos of people who have broken things while playing with their Wii's."

Talk about immersive and more great free advertising? Most manufacturers would give their first born to create a product that was so immersive that it let slip and crashed into a TV set.

## Legendary stuff.

More free advertising. Congratulations on the broken TV sets.