

Exec form interactive concern

By Andy Marx

A consortium of executives from a number of established multimedia companies, including Electronic Arts, has banded together to launch Creative Insights Inc., a new venture devoted to developing multimedia and interactive products.

Based on two existing powerhouse multimedia companies-Ybarra Prods. And Monty Designs – the new outfit is being partially funded by Singapore based Creative Technology Ltd., whose U.S. subsidiary, Creative Labs, is a leader in the multimedia hardware industry with their line of computer soundboards.

Because of its close ties to Creative Labs, the launching of Creative Insights was seen by Silicon Valley observers as a way for each company to exploit the other's strengths in the multimedia arena. It is expected that Creative Labs will now have more software product to bundle with its multimedia hardware products, while products developed by Creative Insights will have the benefit of Creative Labs far-reaching distribution network.

The key players in Creative Insights are chairman and CEO Ed Esber, formerly president and COO of Creative Labs; Rich Mellman, one of the founders of Electronic Arts; Joe Ybarra, a veteran of Electronic Arts & Activision and considered one of the foremost game designers; Chuck Monty, the inventor of the interactive Miracle Piano; Rob Sears, another EA. executive; and well-known advertising executive Larry Belling.

According to Esber, it is Belling, with his wealth of contacts in the entertainment industry, who will serve as the company's point man in Hollywood,

"There's a lot of synergy between content, writing and production and the creative talent in Hollywood," Esber said. With his contacts, we can leverage some of this talent and intellectual property for use in our products."

Esber added, "We're going to provide multimedia titles in a number of areas, including games and educational titles." Esber also said the company would utilize the talents of Monty and Belling for developing products in that area.

Unlike Media Vision, one of Creative Labs' competitors which manufactures both multimedia hardware and software under one company, the move to start a separate company was seen as a way to avoid some of the pitfalls that Media Vision is now experiencing.

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