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Use of Video Game Technology in the Workplace Increasing

Study Finds 70 Percent of Major Employers Use Interactive Computer Training That Includes Game-like Simulations

JUNE 23, 2008 – WASHINGTON, DC – Seventy percent of major employers utilize interactive software and games to train employees according to a new study released today by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA). The study data also showed that more than 75 percent of businesses and non-profits already offering video game-based training plan to expand their usage in the next three to five years. And more than three-quarters (78%) of organizations not utilizing this technology today are likely to offer it in the next five years.

“Businesses across the spectrum, from automobile manufacturers to financial service providers, are utilizing entertainment software to help educate their employees to better serve their customers and improve their bottom lines,” said Michael D. Gallagher, CEO of the ESA, the U.S. association representing computer and video game publishers. “Interactive technology is a valuable tool in workforce development and this study underscores the fact that video games have become a mass medium helping Americans live, work and of course play.”

The top uses of video game-based training by major American employers include: compliance training; training for specific job functions; IT training; management training and customer service training. Seventy-seven percent of these training programs tested employee knowledge and 55 percent included interactive role playing.

The survey found a vast majority of organizations offering video game-based training were satisfied with the results and sophistication of the training. Respondents said the biggest advantages of video game-based training are:

- a reduction in costs;
- more efficient and faster training;
- the ability to apply consistent training across all parts of an organization;
- the ease of measuring employee participation; and,
- better information retention.

Managers of three in four companies also said their employees like video game-based training more or the same as traditional training and their employees found the convenience and ability to learn at their own speed particularly attractive.

"The demand for training games is definitely rising as managers look for new ways to train their employees that are both effective and more compelling than the standard eLearning fare," said Marc Prensky, founder of Games2train, a company created in 1999 to serve the growing demand for corporate game-based training. "In my experience, computer, video and, increasingly, cell phone based training games are more successful than traditional training methods, because employees find them more engaging, thereby increasing the likelihood of completion of the training and retention of the required information and concepts. In addition, simulation-based games allow employees to learn and practice needed physical and mental skills, and thus be more effective when they get on the job."

Games2train (www.games2train.com) created more than 50 software games for companies such as American Express, Bank of America, Charles Schwab & Co., Estée Lauder Companies, Inc., JP Morgan Chase & Co., Nokia Corporation and Pfizer Inc., as well as training games for the US military.

Canon U.S.A., for example, uses a video game to train new copier technicians. To play, technicians must drag and drop parts into the right spot on a virtual copier. IBM developed "Innov8," a role playing game that is said to teach graduate students a combination of business and IT skills. The Hilton Garden Inn, meanwhile, introduced the first training game for the hospitality industry, which places employees in a virtual hotel, interfacing with customers and fielding typical guest requests.

The national poll, conducted for the ESA by KRC Research, surveyed the management of 150 large U.S. companies and non-profits between March 17 and April 2, 2008.

The ESA is the U.S. association dedicated to serving the business and public affairs needs of companies publishing interactive games for video game consoles, handheld devices, personal computers, and the Internet. The ESA offers services to interactive entertainment software publishers including a global anti-piracy program, owning the E3 Media & Business Summit, business and consumer research, federal and state government relations, First Amendment and intellectual property protection efforts. For more information, please visit www.theESA.com.

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