

# Butterfly Effect, the new education program

At the beginning of September 2017, several Slovak well-known companies (i.e. Edufactory by Pixel Federation, Sygic, Leaf, HubHub) introduced an original project bearing the name "Butterfly effect". The term means that even a small change at one end can bring about a large change at another. The purpose is to prepare students and professionals to conquer one of the most competitive arenas, known as digital business.

The program is founded and hosted by top experts from three main fields: graphic design, programming and business, from international companies and successful start-ups. They will share their know-how and teach students in the Games lab to develop games, and in the Apps lab to improve their business solutions via mobile platforms and to work on their own apps. The main partners are thinking about the future of Slovakia in the digital world. They emphasize that the program will be focused on real case studies, workshops and discussions with experts to inspire the future generation. There is so much one can learn and take from this: from a great network, through a new community of like-minded people, to advanced craftsmanship in the wire-framed world.

Eight Slovak universities have joined this education program and the following three universities have offered support to their students: the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava, the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Informatics in Košice and the Faculty of Mass Media Communication in Trnava. The best students from the Faculty of Mass Media Communication, who apply for a full time educational program lasting 6-12 months starting January 2018, can receive financial support from the university. In order not to miss out on the academic year, students are offered a special individual study program. The Dean of the Faculty, doc PhDr. Petranová, PhD. said, that success is granted to those who study hard and undertake research in the areas of digital games and digital marketing. The aim is to enable students to develop the skills and knowledge which they have acquired during their studies at our Faculty.

Butterfly effect is a completely new and attractive program of practical education for digital business to educate talented students from Slovakia.

## Central and Eastern European Game Studies Conference Digital Games Life & Afterlife

The Central and Eastern European Game Studies Conference 2017 was held in Trnava, Slovakia at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Faculty of Mass Media Communication on September 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>. It aimed to integrate the community of Central and Eastern European game scholars and professionals and served as a platform for academic exchange and networking. The conference was a continuation of the events hosted by Masaryk University in Brno in 2014, Jagiellonian University in Kraków in 2015, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin in 2016. Its purpose was to establish a platform for game

studies scholars from and beyond the region and to facilitate the emergence of a unique perspective into the international arena of game studies.

The theme of the CEEGS Conference 2017 was Digital Games' Life and Afterlife. A wide variety of topics were presented by 70 leading university scholars from 15 countries. A range of differences between digital games and other media, history, life and the viability of digital games at the present time and in society were thoroughly discussed. Two high-quality workshops were held, one bearing the title, Games and Monstrosity (J. Švelch, University of Bergen and D. Vella, University of Malta) and the other, Digital Games Markets in Post-Socialist Countries (S. Buček, University Ss. Cyril and Methodius, T. Z. Majkowski, Jagiellonian University)

Conference participants had the opportunity to hear from some fantastic keynote speakers and many other presenters. Melanie Swalwell from Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia captivated listeners totally with her lecture entitled Practice makes persistent: On history, temporality and memory. She sought to bring the contemporary moment into dialogue with the past, tracing the ways in which some microcomputer users were deploying their deep knowledge of – and love for – 'obsolete' systems and coding routines. In her keynote speech, the author and journalist Tristan Donovan reflected interestingly on the process of writing and researching his 2010 book, called Replay: "The History of Video Games. Back to Reality". Espen Aarseth from IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark presented his paper, entitled "Back to reality": The case against ludo – fictionalism.

The CEEGS Conference 2017 was held in Trnava at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Slovakia and the place of the next conference will be announced soon.

## UniCon

The Unicon Games Festival, which is organized yearly by teachers and students of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius, Trnava champions and showcases the cultural power of interactive entertainment. In February 2017, it attracted over 1000 people. This year's Games Festival takes place between Friday, 13 April and Sunday, 15 April. The Games Conference, the leading event of the festival will announce the Call for Papers.

The 2017 festival started with a welcome event, where game fans played an old game called "Maxihra" and enjoyed the wit of the two entertaining game commentators Andrej Bičan and Didiana. It was complemented with an abundance of interesting and diverse activities, so much to do for everyone, great for gamers, kids and adults alike. The mascot of the Festival was Crash Bandicoot.

A series of panel discussions were held on the following topics: "Roleplay vs. Cosplay, Games in Education and Esports Events in Europe". At the same time, three workshops were being realized with expert guidance. The Virtual Reality workshop introduced HTC Vive, Microsoft HoloLens, Samsung Gear and PlayStation VR. The Retro Games workshop presented old computers and consoles including PlayStation 2, but also offered PS4 and Xbox One. The Gaming Keep workshop presented board and social games. It was all filled with hands-on opportunities for all visitors, who tried out many new and old games.

Digital game tournaments were also hosted by the Festival over a two day span. A Cosplay contest was prepared as well, offering the opportunity to enjoy some iconic game characters and designs. The Unicon Games Festival in Trnava offered an exciting and diverse array of events, explored the positive power of digital games and virtual technologies over three days of keynotes, panels, tournaments and workshops. The Festival will return this year and will provide many new surprises to be announced soon.