



A report by: Sameer S Sahasrabudhe

The dates: 23rd, 24th and 25th October 2009

The venue: DeBalie, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Agenda: The conference had a couple of important agendas: Blender development, Advances in Blender Gaming, and interaction with the video animation makers.

Important attendees (from our perspective)

Dr. Ton Roosendaal: Yes, now he is a recipient of an honorary doctorate from the University of Leeds. He is the founder of Blender, and also the Chairman of the Blender foundation. An ever energetic 'Open Source' evangelist, he never fails to inject the inspiration in you...!

Tom Musgrove: Head of Public Relations, of the Blender foundation. He is a enthusiastic person, participating in almost every activity of the foundation, (voluntarily) and especially in the area of Blender training.

Monica Zoppe': A biology researcher from Italy, who is using Blender for visualizing the Protiens! She is a perfect researcher, and has mastered the art of balancing the domain expertise versus imagination, and creativity offered by animation.

Peppe Ciroti: Head of the Video section in what can be termed as equivalent of CDEEP@IIT Bombay, in the University of Costa Rica. He also has been using Blender for some interesting reasons, especially to go beyond video, and show the intricacies of a process, object or a principle.

Fabian Fricke: Freelance programmer from Germany, and a avid gaming enthusiast. He was my room partner in the hostel I was staying. So we had a great night out discussing various issues in our VLE model, and solutions regarding the interactivity part.



The Conference Agenda:

This was the 8th year of the conference and the crowd was having a mixed expectation. The organisers had cleverly mixed the various topics, to suit everyone's expectations. There were talks on animation, gaming, software development and even about the Blender training. A small group which also got representation was of the Blender users for Academic purposes.

Ton 'kick started' the conference by an inspiring talk about the achievements last year. One of the highlights was Leeds University conferring 'Honorary Doctorate' to Ton. Participation in SIGGRAPH, and other conferences where Blender has been getting accolades were also presented. As expected while discussing the lineup for this years conference, talk by the 'Durian Team' was most awaited...!

After this was a series of presentations on a wide range of subjects. The details of the subjects and the speakers are as follows:

1. New Games: Super Yum Yum, Thorworks, Pokme, Foreign Legion,
2. Blender development: New smoke simulation, new interfaces, DCI standard film encoder, Interactive manipulation in the game engine, Photo batch processing, Video game prototyping, Character rigging...etc
3. Case studies: Blender scientific visualizations for tunnel safety, Digital puppetry, Protein expressions using Blender, iPhone applications, etc

I presented the Vapour Liquid Equilibrium experiment, in case studies category. The evenings were packed with the screenings of the entries for the Suzanne Film Festival.

Feedback about my presentation:

I had a 40 minutes slot for my presentation, which was enough for me to showcase our animation creation methodology. I explained Project OSCAR, and narrated the National Mission for ICT based learning in detail. I got immediate feedback from a couple of attendees, which was very positive. The details are given in the 'Important meetings' section.

After attending a couple of presentations, and speaking to other delegates, I realized that the way we have envisaged using Blender, is quite unique. Most of the Blender users are using it for gaming, animation films (entertainment), full length feature films (again entertainment), or as an encoding application. The few people who use it for the scientific visualizations are using it for eLearning, but with a very limited option of interactivity.

Important meetings: (from our perspective)

I met a couple of important delegates there, who can be useful in future, especially on the Blender development front. A few key people I met were:

Ton Roosendal: We met him and briefed about the eLearning animation activity we all are doing. We requested him to create a web space for us on Blender website, so that all such projects can be showcased there. He has agreed in principle, and is actually waiting for us to give him the list of such projects.

Monica Zoppe: Her animation on Protein expressions is one of the most applicable research for our domain. She has made it clear that she will help us in forming this group, and getting the required visibility from the Blender community.

Peppe Ciroti: He already has a list of the projects using Blender in education. We are in process of verifying it before we upload it on to Blender site.

Fabian Fricke: He has shown keen interest in helping us in our project.

On the whole I feel it was a nice conference, and I felt privileged to attend it. It has also enabled me to start a new chapter for 'Blender India'.