

**Erik Huey Remarks
to the Third Annual Globaloria Colloquium
Charleston, WV
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Hello My Name is Erik Huey. I'm the Senior Vice President of Government Relations with the Entertainment Software Association—the ESA. The ESA is the U.S. trade association exclusively dedicated to serving the business, public relations, and government affairs needs of companies that publish computer and video games for video game consoles, personal computers, and the Internet.

Thank you for inviting the entertainment software industry to speak at the Globaloria Leadership Colloquium today—we're proud to support this groundbreaking program here in West Virginia through our philanthropic arm, the ESA Foundation.

As someone who grew up in Morgantown as the product of West Virginia public schools, I am thrilled to be back home in the Mountain State today to salute educational innovation with such a committed group of policymakers and educational professionals. First Lady Gayle Manchin, Governor Gaston Caperton, State Superintendent of Schools Dr. Steven Paine, former Senator Lloyd Jackson, Tom Heywood, all of the educational leaders from throughout the state, and of course, World Wide Workshop President and Founder Idit Caperton—on behalf of the entertainment software industry, I'd like to thank you all for this opportunity.

Entertainment software is one of the fastest growing industries in the U.S. economy. In 1996, the U.S. entertainment software industry accounted for a modest 74.1 million units sold and \$2.6 billion in sales revenue. Thirteen years later, computer and video game companies sold 273.5 million units, leading to an astounding \$10.5 billion in software revenue and \$20 billion overall. And that's just in the U.S.; worldwide industry revenues exceed \$55 billion. In fact, from 2005 to 2009, the industry's real annual growth rate was more than seven times the real annual growth rate for the entire economy.

We've been able to grow at this rate because we've been able to expand the demographics of who plays video games. 40% of all players are female, and women over 18 are one of the industry's fastest growing demographics. 25% of game players are over the age of 50. 68% of American households play computer or video games, and 42% of homes in America have video game console. The average video game player is 35 years.

As ESA President and CEO Mike Gallagher likes to say, "video games are changing the interface between humans and machines." This is evidenced by consoles such as the Nintendo Wii, the Sony PlayStation Move, and the Microsoft Kinect, along with the exciting new software designed for these revolutionary platforms.

The U.S. entertainment software industry also continues to function as a vital source of employment. Currently computer and video game companies directly and indirectly employ more than 120,000 people in 34 states. The average compensation for direct employees is \$89,781. Since interest in entertainment software as a career path is growing, more than 300 American colleges, universities, and technical schools are now offering video game development as part of their curriculum. Graduates of Universities majoring in video game design starting salaries are double those of other graduates starting salaries.

All of which points to the fact that, from programmers and animators to designers and writers, the video game industry is an engine for 21st Century Creative Economy jobs.

Currently, California, Texas, Washington, New York and Massachusetts are the leading states for video game development. There is no reason that West Virginia can't be in the forefront of entertainment software innovation. In fact, the state is already undertaking creative programs in this sphere.

- In December 2009, the West Virginia Department of Education's Teach West Virginia program developed a unique and groundbreaking virtual world on Second Life that allows educators and administrators to interact and share information.
- At Marshall University, video game technology is being developed to improve mine safety and to train miners in real-world situations, without them ever having to step foot underground.
- Konami's *Dance Dance Revolution* is part of the physical education curriculum in all of West Virginia's public schools, serving as a critical tool in fighting childhood obesity and promoting healthy living. In June of this year, the West Virginia Dance Dance Revolution Championship brought together almost 40 elementary, middle and high school students to the State Capitol in Charleston to compete, and college scholarships were awarded to the winners.

And of course, there is the Globaloria Program, which is why we're all here today. I'd like to say that what you and your team have been able to create and sustain and scale in such a short span of time is truly inspiring. This program invests in West Virginia students across a range of ages, demographics, and levels of achievement by using technology to engage them in critical disciplines such as science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). The Globaloria Program helps to stimulate economic and social development, foster job creation, and position the state as a leader in 21st Century Education. This combination of inspiration, innovation, and investment is vital not only for individual student success, but also for the future economic success of states like West Virginia and the United States as a whole.

As leaders in the education sector who have been open to embracing such an innovative program, you are to be applauded. You are utilizing 21st Century technology to teach using 21st century methods, and prepare your students for the 21st Century workforce, and we applaud your vision and commitment. What you are doing matters.

It is important that West Virginia catch up, not fall behind, in this race to be competitive in an industry that is expanding and creating the jobs of tomorrow. Globaloria is not just investing in students, it's simultaneously not *disinvesting* in students. Globaloria is not just pioneering new ways to reach students and teach core subjects, it's preparing a work force and creating a talent base for companies looking for a place to invest and people to invest in. In other words, it's not just an effective teaching tool, it is a state economic development vehicle.

We at the Entertainment Software Association are pleased to invest in the continued success of Globaloria by sponsoring, through the ESA Foundation, the Globaloria Inspiration Awards to recognize and amplify the efforts of key educators—superintendants and principals—to incorporate this important program into school curriculums.

So I would say to everyone here today—policy makers, administrators, educators—when it comes to Globaloria and programs like it, keep innovating, keep investing and keep true to the bold audacity of your educational vision. Because there's a bright future out there. And for the Students of West Virginia, you are the gateway to that future.