

SIGGRAPH 2010 – Birds of a Feather Article

Written for the Los Angeles ACM SIGGRAPH

<http://la.siggraph.org/>

The People Behind the Pixels Flock together at SIGGRAPH 2010

There is something especially invigorating about meeting together with others who share your interests and enthusiasm. That is why so many folks flock to SIGGRAPH each year; because they thrive on the exchange of information and inspiration which is abundant throughout the conference. Whether you are a student or an expert in your field, you can learn a lot at SIGGRAPH, soak up some unique art and technology, and perhaps make crucial connections, as well.

Birds of a Feather at SIGGRAPH 2010

One of the best ways to expand your professional network while at the conference is to attend the [Birds of a Feather](#) meetings. This year these were held in private meeting rooms on the relatively quiet upper levels of the LA convention center. It is well worth taking a break from the bustling energy of the exhibition hall floor in order to attend one or more of these interest group meetings which are full of news and information and open to all.

To illustrate the range of topics to be found at the [Birds of a Feather](#) meetings, below is a smattering of notes and observations from a few which this author selected and attended out of the sixty-four [Birds of a Feather](#) meetings scheduled at the SIGGRAPH 2010 conference.

The Chapters Gather at SIGGRAPH 2010



LA ACM SIGGRAPH hosted an informal mixer on Sunday, July 25th from 2:00 to 3:30 PM in meeting room 301A. Local chapter Chair Carlye Archibeque (<mailto:carlye@siggraph.org>) led off with a slide presentation which highlighted the event calendar of general meetings from the past season and unveiled the schedule for the upcoming year, along with information about how to join and volunteer for the LA chapter. To support their theme of “To Live, Work and Play in LA,” additional speakers from local media and entertainment organizations were also invited to address the attendees. Marjorie Galas, Assistant Editor of 411 Publishing

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(<http://www.la411.com>), took the podium to talk about how LA411 helps local production companies find vendors, clients and services. Philip Sokoloski, Manager of Communications for FilmLA (<http://www.filmla.com>) spoke about the relevance of the computer graphics community in Los Angeles and the benefits his organization offers to local productions. The last hour was a social mixer with current and past Chapter Officers and Executive Council members available to answer questions and give more information about the benefits of joining the LA ACM SIGGRAPH Chapter. Delicious cookies were also provided, compliments of “Yam Good” bakery (www.yamgood.com).

Open Source Flocks to SIGGRAPH 2010

Animux Foundation, Inc. gave a presentation on Monday, July 26th from 11am to 1pm in meeting room 301A covering the topic of open source toolset projects. It focused on the free software options available to animators and the excellent results achieved through collaboration and volunteers from all over the globe.

Mark Puttnam (mark@animux.org) moderated the presentation which included general information about open source toolsets, specific project pipeline workflows, and the Animux mission statement of changing cultural dynamics through free software offerings. “The end goal is to have some sort of social benefit,” Mark stated. “Perhaps these tools will help someone start a studio.” Several high quality animation projects produced through the open source community were screened, such as the 48-hour film project “Grey Justice: The Puncher of Men,” “Big Buck Bunny” and the evolving “Prince Harming to Prince Charming”.

Free software solutions such as Blender, Alchemy, My Paint, Gimp and the Animux digital asset manager (ADAM) were discussed and explained. Mark emphasized the advantages of Animux, such as providing artists a free route to a strong portfolio with global visibility. He also pointed the audience to useful free resources such as the on-line training video library and the upcoming AnimuxTV (Dec. 2010) at <http://tv.animux.org/>.

Mark made clear that Animux does not subsidize nor bootleg commercial software. However, Maya users can import scripts and render from there. The render farm manager includes Dr. Queue templates which simplify the set up of master and slave render jobs. Only with Animux, an animator can automatically set up a render farm with zero knowledge of how the internals work.

Lastly, being a non-profit organization, Mark made clear that Animux runs on volunteership; so there was an appeal for volunteers in the following positions: animators, environmental and lighting artists, and bloggers. Volunteers can email info@animux.org. Everyone works independently and remotely on diverse platforms but within a tightly knit virtual team.

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Friends of COLLADA Take Flight at SIGGRAPH 2010



This BOF was hosted by the Khronos Group and took place on Tuesday, July 27th from 1 - 3PM in meeting room 402A. The COLLADA website (<http://collada.org>), says it is “a royalty-free XML schema that enables digital asset exchange within the interactive 3D industry”. There is no charge to read or use the specification, which is designed for the exchange of models and texture information and is moving toward lighting and animation functionalities, as well.

Presenters focused on DCC tools and applications for gaming, 3D web, and visualization, and artworks generated from COLLADA content-creation-supporting media. Existing features, methods and applications were outlined. Advances such as object animation capabilities were also presented.

X3D and HTML5 Flourish at SIGGRAPH 2010

On Tuesday, July 27th from 3:30- 5:00 PM these user groups gathered in Room 301B to discuss the progress and new initiatives on the X3D specification and proposed approaches to displaying an X3D scene inside an HTML page without a plug-in. The room was filled to capacity. The presentation covered all things related to X3D web content and included in-depth information about the standardization criteria for Web 3D and the world wide web consortium (W3C). Open geo-spatial applications and SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics) were also discussed, along with augmented reality possibilities resultant from X3D combined with Flash. Web3D Consortium, the hosts of the event, also provided additional information to attendees at booth 1024 on the exhibition floor.

California Educators Soar Together at SIGGRAPH 2010

On Wednesday July 28th from 4 – 6pm a group meeting was held in room 301B for pre-K-thru-post-graduate public/private educators. Kathleen Milnes (kmilnes@entertainmentecon.org) of the Entertainment Economy Institute and member of the Executive Council of LA ACM SIGGRAPH moderated the panel which included David Della-Rocca, Senior Education Business Development Manager of Autodesk Media & Entertainment, John Tarnoff of ACME Network and Daniel Nyiri of the California Community College System. Kathleen also presented updated employment projections for art and design careers in California and the U. S. After the presentation, there was a social mixer with catered beverages and snacks sponsored by Autodesk.

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The complete [Birds of a Feather](#) 2010 schedule can be found here:

http://www.siggraph.org/s2010/for_attendees/birds_feather

About SIGGRAPH 2010

For the 37th year, computer graphics and interactive technology professionals from around the world will gather to share information, network, and increase their knowledge about all things CG-centric. An expected 25,000 attendees and presenters from the art, animation, music, gaming, internet, interactive, educational, and scientific communities will convene at the Los Angeles Convention Center for the conference and exhibitions, which run July 25th - July 29th. More info here: www.siggraph.org/s2010

About ACM SIGRRAPH

The ACM Special Interest Group of Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques is a global group of users, researchers and developers from varied artistic, interactive and technical industries which utilize computer graphics. Through conferences, publications, and local professional and student chapters they serve to enrich and support the CG community by promoting the generation and dissemination of information about computer graphics and interactive techniques.

More info here: <http://www.siggraph.org/>

About ACM

ACM, the world's largest educational and scientific computing society, delivers resources that advance computing as a science and a profession. ACM provides the computing field's premier Digital Library and serves its members and the computing profession with leading-edge publications, conferences, and career resources.

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