

## Nordic TD Forum – 2009 Conference

### Evaluation Report<sup>1</sup>

Friday 20st and Saturday 21nd of November (2009) the dark woods of Finland made room for the second *Nordic TD Forum*. 87 CG<sup>2</sup> industry professionals from the Nordic countries met for the annual occasion to learn, discuss and explore into the depths of fantastic imagery and seriously technical talks! We even had a few participants from outside the region. Which is an honest sign of *good news travel far*.

This year's program had been heavily inspired by the 2008 survey (enclosed in this evaluation). 2008 had been a great kick start for NTDF<sup>3</sup>, but the ambitions were to take the conference to the next level.

Specifically to put more focus on hardcore technical stuff and actual pipeline designing, directly involving Open Source<sup>4</sup> talks and taking that whole concept in mind.

We were happy to have our great moderator, John Carey, back for the 2009 conference. During both conferences John did a great job in keeping discussions alive and adding to any topic brought up. He constantly challenged the audience and the speakers, and inspired everyone at the conference. John Carey is one of the most experienced professionals in the CG industry worldwide. He has been in the industry from the very beginning and his experience and network is close to endless. The devotion and dedication shown by the Nordic participants at NTDF, the talent and strong ambition to break ground and create new things has connected us with John – and it is my sincere belief that having John on board it is of great value to us as association and professional network, but indeed also to the Nordic CG industry in general.

Apart from John Carey we had the pleasure of welcoming speakers from:

- Image Engine, Canada (“District 9” - feature film – Oscar nominee),
- Pixar, USA (“Partly Cloudy” - short film – Oscar nominee),
- Ghost, Denmark (Talk on Creature pipeline and other Open Source topics),
- Filmkameratene, Norway (“Max Manus” – feature film)
- Storm Studios, Norway (“Max Manus – feature film , “Skylappjenta” – short film)
- Remedy Entertainment, Finland (“Alan Wake”, Xbox 360 game)

This year's objectives were the following:

1. To have between *40-60 paying participants*. A smaller amount than in 2008, but deliberately scaled down to accommodate to two important facts:
  - Location had changed from Copenhagen to Helsinki which we expected to cause some decrease in numbers of participants. People have to get use to the traveling of the event, but from 2008 Survey we knew our audience supported this idea.
  - In the program we intentionally targeted more heavy technical topics something we also expected would to have a slight impact on numbers of participants, making us able to hit more clearly *on target* so to speak.
  
2. To have *participation from all 5 Nordic countries*.

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<sup>1</sup> To accommodate to the non-Danish speaking partners in Nordic TD Forum – as well as acknowledging the international interest the Nordic TD Forum already has received - the evaluation report is written in English.

<sup>2</sup> Computer Graphic

<sup>3</sup> Nordic Technical Directors Forum

<sup>4</sup> A main principle and practice of **Open Source** software development is [peer production](#) by [bartering](#) and [collaboration](#), with the end-product (and source-material) available at no cost to the public. For more info, please see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_source](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_source)

3. And to have an approximate split between Technical Directors, Art Directors/Directors and students as follow:
  - Technical Directors 80%,
  - Art Directors/Directors/Producers 10%,
  - Students 10%.
4. Last and indeed based on the survey results of 2008 we wanted to improve networking opportunities between the participants once the scheduled program was over for the day.

#### **The actual 2009 conference numbers turned out like this:**

- 49 paying participants
- Participation from all 5 Nordic countries + individual representatives from other European countries
- Great location with absolutely no internet connections which really brought people together and optimized the networking potential!
- The on-site sauna and direct access to icy sea water created the perfect Finnish environment for everyone to enjoy the event!
- Official start up of forum discussions (forum site officially opened at NTDF 2009 [www.tdforum.eu](http://www.tdforum.eu))
- Title split among the participants as follows
  - Technical Directors 79%,
  - Art Directors/Directors/Producers 21%,
  - Students 0%

The 2009 talks were tailored to the audience and gave an excellent professional basis to the event and the networking. Something the 2008 Survey had specifically asked for and which we were happy to provide. The MPC<sup>5</sup> speaker of last year, Jimmi Gravesen (Danish citizen, CV enclosed in evaluation report), has now relocated to Denmark and has been throwing a lot of energy and competences into lifting NTDF to the level of professionalism where we aim it to be.

With the experiences from 2008 our aim for the 2009 program was to get more technical talks. The 2009 participants were happy and encouraged to see how the technical level talks had been increased - and the general response from people attending has been *"see you next year in Oslo"*.

The 2009 conference fulfilled the expectations of our target audience! Personally, it completely exceeded my expectations in terms of networking, good discussions and very interesting and relevant talks directly usable in our individual daily work - and I can't wait to start funding and planning the coming years events! The 2010 dates have already been settled – *November 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>st</sup> in Oslo, Norway*.

Like the first year, we conducted survey of some 20 relevant questions. A couple of questions allowed for "free text" replies. The remaining questions had *yes/no/don't know* answers. 37 participants submitted their comments. Both survey results are included in this report as documentation.

Please note the following:

*Not all submissions included free text answers.*

*All submissions were anonymous.*

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<sup>5</sup> Moving Picture Company, UK

Below I have listed a selection of the direct reactions I received – and which I have been allowed to post on [www.tdforum.eu](http://www.tdforum.eu) - as well as use in reports like this.

I want to take the opportunity to thank all funds and organizations helping me realize this dream. Without your support and effort this could not have been done. I look forward to continuing developing NTDF with you in the forth-coming years. Please find the NTDF future plans described in a separate document in this evaluation report.

All the best,

Irene Sparre Hjorthøj

### **Quotes from speakers and participants at the Nordic TD Forum - 2000 Conference**

*...and thanks again for making this year's event happen so splendidly - everything seemed to work like a charm. :)*  
Santtu Huotilainen, Art Director, Frozenbyte Ltd., Finland

*Thanks for the Nordic TD forum last weekend (2009), it was great!... Thanks again and see you next year!*  
Antti Herva, TD, Fake Graphics Oy, Finland

*I had to leave before the end and did not have a chance to say proper thank you...  
Here are my thoughts about the NTDF 2009:  
Extremely well done! I was pleased to see and feel the passion of our Nordic 3D & VFX industry. I was personally very pleased to hear in many instances calls for closer co-operation. There are great opportunities in Europe, in USA, and definitely in the East (where we have been looking). We should all strengthen our own local co-operation but also make serious effort to launch Nordic wide ideas for advanced collaboration.*  
Tomi Nieminen, CEO, Generator Post Oy

*Thanks to Irene's tireless efforts, we have two solid successes upon which to build. I think that we may want to rethink the structure a bit... perhaps what we need is a "lab" where there can be maybe a half a dozen computers with the appropriate software where these techniques like the use of Cortex can be taught in hands on way. I think that will involve splitting the conference into two tracks, one more oriented towards production management. It is an exciting time in the history of the NTDF. Let's put some thought into trying to find the right balance for year three.*  
John Carey, Exec. TD, ex. Disney, US (speaker)

*...in my opinion it is really important that we in the Nordic area get similar/compatible pipelines, because we need and we want to work together. So let's courage people to use same tools.*  
Jani Kuronen, Supervising Technical Director, Anima Vitae, Finland