

FUTURE VISION

NORDIC TECHNICAL DIRECTORS FORUM

2010 NTDF Oslo, Norway, November 19th and 20th

2011 NTDF Reykjavik, Iceland, November 18th and 19th

Structure improvements

Currently NTDF has a SIGGRAPH¹ sketch style format and that doesn't lend itself to these more technical presentations. As we want to aim more towards actual hand-on sessions we have been discussing how to improve the structure of future events.

Perhaps what NTDF needs is a temporary "lab" with maybe half a dozen computers with the appropriate software where specific techniques like the use of Cortex² can be taught in a hands-on way. Execution of such a workshop would require additional time, and would not be relevant to all attendees. The way to solve these two issues would be to have workshop attendees bring their own laptops with all necessary software pre-installed, and to have the workshop taking place in the days leading up to the actual 2 days of NTDF (see workshop section below).

Another overall consideration for future NTDFs is to run two parallel tracks... one directly targeting the tech.stuff as originally planned. And one new addition oriented towards production management issues (see producers forum below).

NTDF 2009 introduced the form *Fast Forward Session*. This session was entirely based on participants work, and presentations were all done by participants themselves. The FFS slot should be an opportunity to present one's own work/achievements. Everybody needs and wants to have some PR/present their work, and FFS was tested as suitable frame for such a glimpse into people's own work files. And we learned an opportunity for such presentations is definitely needed!

Introduction of 2 new types of sessions

To clearly separate promotion of studios from presentations of cool stuff and great achievements we will for future conferences work with 2 types of slots:

- **Showoff** = 2 min. slots with studio show reels only. This to give a quick glance into what goes on in the region.
- **Sketch session** = 10 min. slots for brief presentations of one's own work... cool achievements and special tasks and accomplishments etc. During future Sketch sessions we will specifically try to incorporate Open Source³ releases done and achieved by our participants.

Naming convention

Naming individual sessions correctly is important. It gives each of them more of an individual character. And helps specify if the talk is purely technical or more general (like Cortex vs. Eye Candy stuff⁴). This brings advantages to both a tech.audience as well a producers'/directors' audience.

Identify NTDF target audience

Prior to 2009 conference all speakers were informed about the NTDF audience in terms of technical level and experience. However, people tend to not always believe that kind of information to actually be true and technical level of talks could therefore have been taken even higher!

¹ www.siggraph.org

² <http://code.google.com/p/cortex-vfx/>

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_source

⁴ Presentation of beautiful imagery... like the typical VFX omelet where you don't get details but only general info.

We will work on getting our different tracks clearly identified.

We need to present guidelines to speakers about *what* the audience expects – in writing and prior to the conference.

And we will continue asking speakers for an abstract to be printed in the program. Again something which helps eliminate problems like a talk being labeled one thing and then in practice being something quite different.

Workshop

From 2008 it has been the long term ambition of NTDF to organize actual workshops. Up until now it has – due to various priorities - not been fully pursued. But based on 2009 experience and the fact that the Nordic participants are now asking for workshop to really get into the depths of code/programs etc. we have decided to organize a handful of specific workshops leading up to NTDF 2010. The workshops will be based on additional time and additional payment - and people are willing to go that way!

Producers' forum

The initial idea about NTDF was to create a forum for Technical Directors to work, learn and develop within. But that was always "just" the start. TDs, Directors and Producers all over the region work closely together to create the best environment for their projects. One cannot make it without the other. Getting Nordic TDs to talk, learn and exchange knowledge is now in the process. And it is time to open up NTDF for a specific producers' forum. Extracting relevant info and networking opportunities for CG producers in order to plan and finance new and better Nordic productions. The final form is yet to be explored, but we think in terms of forum or think-tank with focus on producer side of VFX and 3D Animation. Such a forum will depend on a high level of transparency and trust among the participating producers. The long term ambition with such a Nordic Producers' Forum (NPF) would be to be able to offer "Nordic Solutions" to film makers around the world!

We also are considering topics covering funding schemes. These are all complex legal frameworks to figure out and makes the cost too high for one studio alone to bear. And since the co-work culture is so well established among the Nordic studios we feel it could be the right thing to join forces on this one and start co-working already in financing.

Practical stuff

The sauna part really created great environment for networking and casual continuation of discussions at the 2009 conference.

From direct feed-back during the 2009 event and from 2009 survey it has now become *a request to build saunas in Norway* to prepare for NTDF 2010. Thanks to Norwegian outdoor culture there are tons of saunas in Norway, and we will definitely try and find a location with sauna for this year's event too. Truly Nordic, and truly a success among our participants!

Also the rural location of 2009 (<http://www.elisanet.fi/poliisienkesakoti/>) gave a perfect setting for the 2009 event. It is our ambition to find a similar location for future events. No network connection as in the case of Polisiin indeed opens up for intense and improved social interaction and discussions among participants! And people actually really enjoyed it.

2010 - Specific suggestions for program

Houdini – master class + work shop prior to conference

There is a growing interest in this software throughout the Nordic region. We have contacts to the developers of Houdini and are considering inviting them over for NTDF 2010 to do a 2 days master class + workshop. From the 2009 survey we know there is a genuine interest in such a master class. Here is a small quote from one of the (few) Houdini users of the region:

We also just acquired one license (Houdini). It's wonderful things what you can do with it and it's just one guy!
Jani Kuronen, Supervising TD, Anima Vitae

RED - master class + work shop prior to conference

In depth master class on the workflow with RED material. Nowadays almost all projects tend to have at least some RED material incorporated, and cinematographers as well as TDs don't always know enough about the

workflow and mistakes are often made. Mistakes cost time and time is money. Master class should be followed by a hands-on workshop.

Linear workflow (render) – talk + work shop during conference

In depth master class about linear workflow (linear to light, relevant to render set-ups on a given Cg production) would be also great, because generally speaking not many of TDs even know what it means and also it is a bit of a philosophical issue also.

Possible speakers on this topic:

Håkan Andersson aka Mr. Zap (Swedish, Shading Specialist at MentalRay)

Bill Sptizak (US)

Charles Poynton (Canada)

Basic colour theory – talk + work shop during conference

During 2009 it became clear there is a lot of confusion about basic colour theory and we believe a general talk on that topic, maybe an hour in duration, would benefit both technical as well as non technical conference attendees. Good color management will reduce your production costs, will eliminate some rendering and compositing problems and will minimize others. Fewer problems means less labor expended to fix them and that all means less production cost. And that is why you want good color management.

Colour Management – talk + work shop during conference

Session on Colour Management taught by actual experts giving people the tools to implement, manage and sustain a rational and effective colour management process themselves.

People have an intuitive understanding of colour - and it is almost universally wrong! To overcome that initial problem effectively, any discussion of colour has to start with first principles... what is colour and how do we see it?

Secondly, what are colour models? What is colour space? And how does the mathematics of digital colour actually work with regard to the phenomena of colour itself.

Getting these basics in place we can start discussing actual colour management on production. And start aiming for better results and higher cost efficiency.

Other relevant topics we might want to add to the program:

- Motion Capture
- Stereoscopic filmmaking
- Character Rigging

Thank you for the first two years!

And looking forward to continue exploring the wonders of digital imagery with you.

On behalf of the association Nordic TD Forum

Irene Sparre Hjorthøj
Co-founder & Administrator
Nordic TD Forum