

DICE Summit a chance for game creators to recharge, reflect

February 16 2016, by Derrik J. Lang



In this June 1, 2009 file photo, director Hideo Kojima, creator of "Metal Gear Solid" appears on stage to announce that the next chapter of the Metal Gear franchise, Metal Gear Solid: Rising, will be on the XBox platform, at the Microsoft Xbox 360 E3 2009 Media Briefing at the Galen Center in Los Angeles. For the attendees of the D.I.C.E. Summit, the annual gathering isn't merely only a chance for game industry veterans to schmooze at the poker table.

It's also an opportunity to address issues and innovations ranging from gender diversity to virtual reality. "Metal Gear Solid" creator Kojima and "Fallout" creative director Todd Howard are among the elite developers scheduled to attend this week's 15th annual summit on Feb. 16-18, 2016. (AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes, File)

For elite members of the video game industry, the D.I.C.E. Summit isn't merely a chance to schmooze at the poker table or on the golf course in Las Vegas. It's also an opportunity to address issues and innovations, ranging from gender diversity to virtual reality.

"It's really about people in the industry taking a break from what they're working on and re-engaging in this medium they're so passionate about," said Martin Rae, president of the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences, which organizes the D.I.C.E. Summit.

While the 15th annual gathering officially starts Tuesday with poker, golf and "Magic: The Gathering" tournaments, the serious business begins Wednesday morning, when the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences Foundation will unveil a new initiative to promote [gender diversity](#) in the [gaming industry](#).

According to the Electronic Software Association trade group, about 44 percent of gamers are woman, but only about 18 percent of game developers surveyed at last year's Game Developers Conference were female.

"We want to focus on helping women receive an education in games and get them integrated into the industry," said Rae. "Once they're engrained in the culture, game design will naturally move in new directions."

Unlike other gaming industry gatherings, such as the Electronic Entertainment Expo, the D.I.C.E. Summit—which stands for design, innovate, communicate and entertain—is more business-minded and features a guest list that's intentionally kept small. For this year's summit, organizers expect about 700 attendees at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center.



In this Dec. 10, 2011 file photo, Todd Howard, of Bethesda Game Studios, accepts the award for game of the year for The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim at Spike TV's Video Game Awards, in Culver City, Calif. For the attendees of the D.I.C.E. Summit on Feb. 16-18, 2016, the annual gathering isn't merely only a

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"I'm really looking forward to what conversations we'll be having because last year, everyone was talking about mobile and user-acquisition spending," said Min Kim, co-founder of Nexon America and the interactive academy's chairman. "I'm done with that. I'm looking forward to people talking about games like 'Hearthstone' and how that became so successful. It's not just marketing."

The conference invited such gaming industry veterans as "Civilization" creator Sid Meier, "Fallout" creative director Todd Howard, Electronic Arts chief creative officer Richard Hilleman and "Rise of the Tomb Raider" writer Rhianna Pratchett to present talks.

Randy Pitchford, the president and CEO of "Borderlands" publisher Gearbox Software, will be joined by magician Penn Jillette for a session Wednesday on the intersection of illusion and interactivity. The talk will conclude with the pair performing a magic trick that moves from the real world into [virtual reality](#).

"Metal Gear Solid" creator Hideo Kojima and "Pacific Rim" filmmaker Guillermo del Toro will appear on stage together Thursday for the first time since their top-secret collaboration "Silent Hills" was canceled by publisher Konami.



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"Kojima-san is being inducted into our hall of fame this year, and it was his idea to have del Toro on stage with him," said Rae. "We don't know where the conversation will go, but we thought it would be fascinating, and the audience would love it."

For the first time, much of the summit's mingling will take place behind closed doors in afternoon roundtable sessions where attendees will have an opportunity to freely discuss issues affecting the gaming industry, such as online betting. The new format was adapted from the European version of the D.I.C.E. Summit.

"I think most of us are interested in looking ahead," said Ted Price, president and CEO of "Ratchet & Clank" developer Insomniac Games and the interactive academy's vice chairman. "I think that's why we want to participate in the roundtables. When you're face to face with experts from all corners of the industry, it's incredibly valuable to gain insight into what might be coming."



This Dec. 10, 2011 file photo shows game producer Todd Howard onstage at Spike TV's Video Game Awards, in Los Angeles. For the attendees of the D.I.C.E. Summit on Feb. 16-18, 2016, the annual gathering isn't merely only a chance for game industry veterans to schmooze at the poker table. It's also an opportunity to address issues and innovations ranging from gender diversity to virtual reality. "Metal Gear Solid" creator Hideo Kojima and "Fallout" creative director Howard are among the elite developers scheduled to attend this week's 15th annual summit. (AP Photo/Chris Pizzello, File)

More information: www.dicesummit.org

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