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What I saw at PAX 2006 – Day 1



Welcome to Penny Arcade Expo. This huge banner hung on the 4th floor of the building. It was a large event with much to do and much to see. I had an opportunity to check it out before the doors were open and was able to see a few things without the attendees crowding over me.



There was a ton of prizes given away during the different tournaments that were held. They had both Console and PC Tournaments. I started thinking I should enter, but I'm not as good as some of these crazed gamers.



And here they all are. We had almost 20,000 people attend this year's event. It was unbelievable to see the line that it took to get in. I felt bad because my friend came with me with a red badge and no chance to get in at the beginning.



Here we all are waiting to watch the first keynote of the day from Alex St. John (CEO of [WildTangent](#)) I was able to get a good seat and met with one of the writers from [Kotaku](#), Brian Crecente. I also saw my friend Steve from [XBL Radio](#). I was so happy to see him here having as much fun as I was.



So here he is. He was a very interesting guy. He first brought out his daughters to show how proud he was at them taking summer game classes at DigiPen. (I won't link to them. Personal reasons) The also started to send out coins that would redeem games at WildTangent's Arcade and then some ping pong balls. Then the big exercise balls came out. One in particular was the "Blue Ball" which had its own story this year. Finally he got to business talking about his work at Microsoft on DirectX.

Some of the stories he talked about were about the work on DirectX 1 and some of the crazy parties he did to thank the developers who made games in DirectX at that time. One story talked about a haunted house that had a heavy metal band and other things that assured him he had gone over the line. Another story was about some of Microsoft employees being held hostage in a hanger. Another story about a fake Bill Gates with a game developer who use to be in porn movies for a skit in a conference and a story of Bill Gates in the game DOOM. Here is the actual video of Bill Gates thanking developers for working on DirectX.

Bill Gates Doom





This shirt he showed to the audience is the shirt that the development team wore who worked on DirectX 1.0. It was for the Armageddon party as the code name for DirectX at the time was “The Manhattan Project”. He also got flack from Microsoft over using the Roman numeral “II” instead of “2” for the DirectX 2.0 shirt. He also got in trouble for smoking that cigar too as Washington State Law won’t let you smoke indoors.

At the end of the talk, he gave away a computer to a lucky gamer with a white ping pong ball. Unfortunately, Jason Ocampo from [GameSpot](#) had the ball. He decided to throw the ping pong ball to the audience and some lucky gamer did get a top of the line Gateway computer.

PAX Ball Game



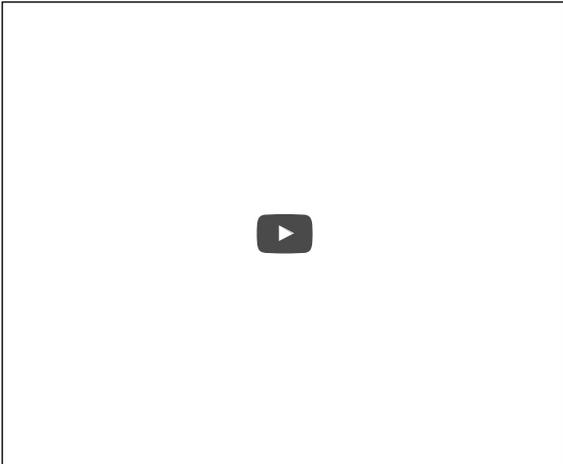
Now while we were waiting for the first Penny Arcade panel with the creators of the online comic, someone had taken the “Blue Ball” from the keynote and was using as a game. I guess some of us are easily amused or were just having too much fun at PAX because this went on for 10 – 15 minutes. It came to an end when the fire marshal had enough with the size of the crowd and when somebody finally got it stuck on the forth floor. Even the Bean Bags that came out next couldn’t get back the thunderous noise of the ball.



Now we wait once again for the Penny Arcade Q & A panel and it was amazing to see the whole place packed for all the events I was impressed that some were even in the back just standing for the entire event.



Here is Mike Krahulik and Jerry Holkins (*left to right*) They both talked on many of the aspects of the gaming industry, Jack Thompson, the online comic, and other interesting questions (Alien vs. Predator?) So I was just happy to enjoy my time there and see the guys in person. I think a lot of other people felt the same way.



It looks like a marriage proposal is tradition at PAX and it looks like it continued with this one. I am not sure if a non-gaming girl would like to be asked to be married at an expo but... C'est la vie. (that's life)

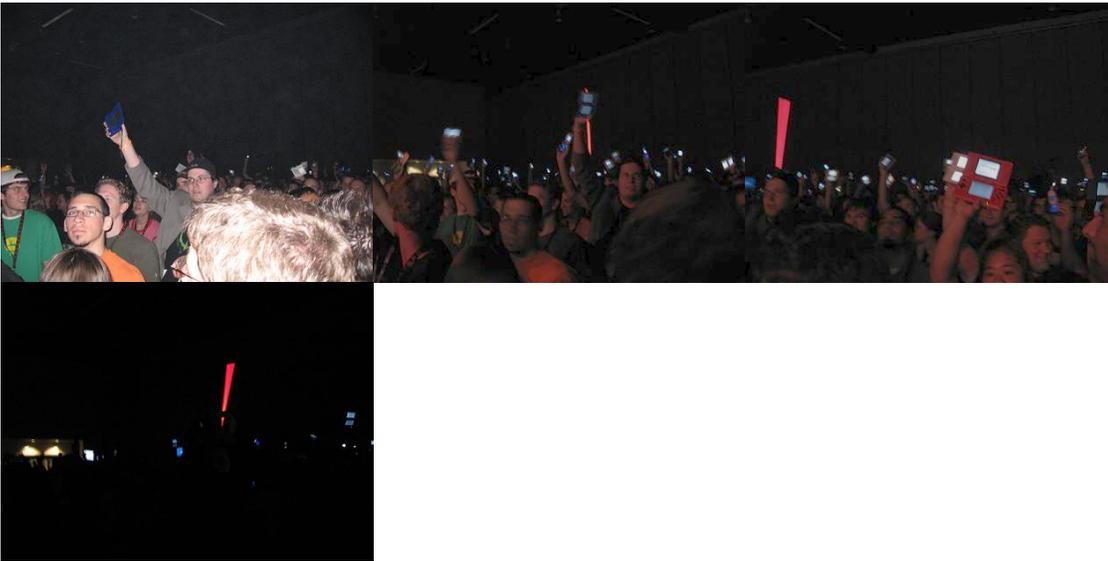


This is the LAN Area of PAX. It will probably be bigger and crazier in the Event Center next year. I was impressed that it was never too too hot in there. I also got to meet up with some developers working on a great car action game. Fun stuff all around.



Martin Leung (aka The [Video Game Pianist](#)) was the first person to come up and play. Tommy Tallarico (famous video game music composer) introduced him. If you don't know, both Martin and Tommy are a part of [Video Games Live](#) which is a wonderful video game concert that even non-gamers would love. Everyone enjoyed the concert. I even got a small clip of the recreation of the YouTube video that made him famous.

Video Game Pianist at PAX 2006



The crowd really got into the songs. It was hilarious that no one had lighters so they started to use ds lite's, ds's, and cell phones for dramatics. I was so impressed by the crowd for the appreciation that they had for the video game music in piano and a little classical music in there too.



Well the last group I was able to see due to the time and getting an interview with is [Optimus Rhyme](#). They are a local band that was really rocking the party and it seemed everyone was getting into the music.

I left day 1 with thoughts of how big day 2 was and wondering if I should get 3 hours of sleep in or just stay up all night. I went to bed. Smart Idea.

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