

# Report on the PAX East 2013



## PAX East 2013

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The Penny Arcade Expo (PAX) is a series of gaming festivals held in Seattle, Boston, and Melbourne, Australia. PAX was created by Jerry Holkins and Mike Krahulik, the authors of the Penny Arcade webcomic, because they wanted to attend a show that gave equal attention to console gamers, computer gamers, and tabletop gamers. While the original PAX (now referred to as PAX Prime, held in Seattle) was created in 2004, its branch on the east coast, PAX East was first held in Boston in 2009. With an attendance of more than 70'000 participants over three days, PAX East and Prime are the two biggest game events in the US in terms of attendees (by comparison, the E3 in Los Angeles counts approximately 50'000 attendees, and the GDC in San Francisco has about 25'000 attendants). This meant, that not only major video game developers, such as Blizzard, Sony, Capcom, and others, were present, but also many other companies like Microsoft, nVidia, Asus, Razer. With a special area reserved for independent “*indie*” game developers, smaller companies could also showcase their latest creations. Furthermore, several game design schools (eg. Becker College) were present.

The PAX is usually accompanied by Concerts, video & tabletop tournaments and panel discussions (panels can be submitted by the general public, at <http://panels.paxsite.com/>). The panels cover a wide range of topics, from “*Parents as Characters*” over “*Rethinking Gaming Addiction*” to “*404ing It: Breaking (Down) the Internet*”.

The high level of the panels was confirmed by the two panels I was able to attend on Sunday. The first, titled “*The Future of Playing a Role in Videogame RPGs*” was a discussion and Q&A amongst industry leaders, such as Mike Laidlaw, the Creative Director of Dragon Age at Bioware; Ryan Dancey, CEO of Goblinworks and David Georgeson, Director of Development at EverQuest. The second panel on Serious Games, organized by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), with the title of “*Gaming in Support of National Security*” focused on using games to explore complex decision processes. Panelists included Andrew Weingart, Disaster Preparedness, MIT Lincoln Laboratory; Adam Norige, Homeland Protection, MIT Lincoln Laboratory; Erik Schlicht, Cognitive Science, MIT Lincoln Laboratory; Andy Wang, Decision Support, MIT Lincoln Laboratory; Nancy Crabtree, Cyber Defense, MIT Lincoln Laboratory and Tim Dasey, Group Leader, Decision Support Technologies, MIT Lincoln Laboratory.

