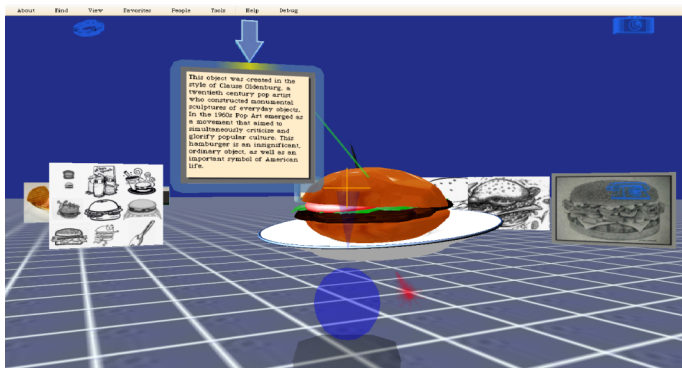In this issue:
- A busy year for Croquet at Wisconsin
- Croquet news outside of Wisconsin
- Howard Stearns joins Joshua Gargus at Croquet startup Qwaq, Inc.
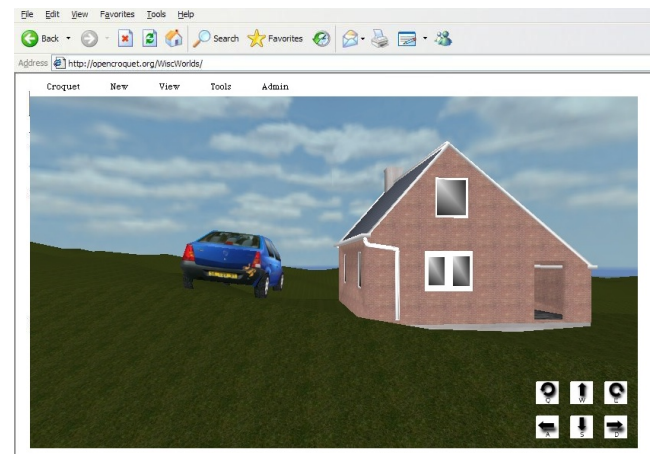
It has been a busy year for Croquet@UW!

A year ago we reported on the first sustained end-user explorations of Croquet worlds, and how they were rewarded with a campus Showcase award for "Most Interactive" presentation.

Since then:

April 2006 – Professor Michael Connors demonstrated the potential future of the artistic critique at the Southern Graphics Council Conference on printmaking. The demonstration of "Critiquet" was based on Prof. Connors' experimental classroom use of Croquet for critical discourse and ePortfolios.

June 2006 – We completed WiscWorlds, containing the multi-media 3D Wiki environment used for our projects to date (including Showcase, Critiquet, High-School Science and our second research contract with the Japanese National Institute of Information and Communications Technology). WiscWorlds also introduced application installers for Windows and Macintosh, and a browser plugin so that users could visit interactive editable worlds simply by visiting a Web page. Over the summer months, we unified WiscWorlds with the common code base of the Croquet public beta toolkit.

September 2006 – Our Lead and Senior Developers, Howard Stearns and Josh Gargus, formed the non-profit Collaborative for Croquet to house the WiscWorlds work that had begun at UW DoIT. They were joined in this by Preston Austin, then President of Clotho, Inc, which had participated in much of the work leading to

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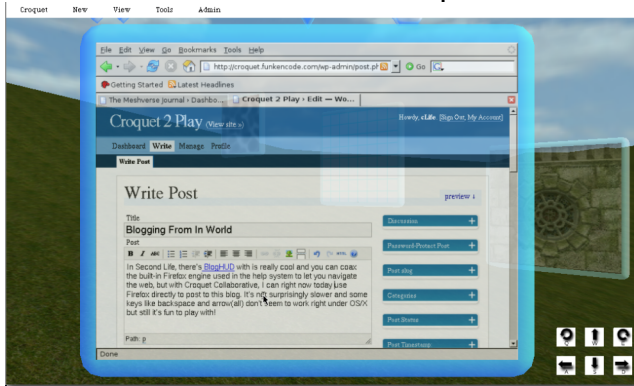
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WiscWorlds. In the next months, we developed mechanisms for persisting worlds between visits, and for hosting legacy applications on Unix such that they could be used from within Croquet.
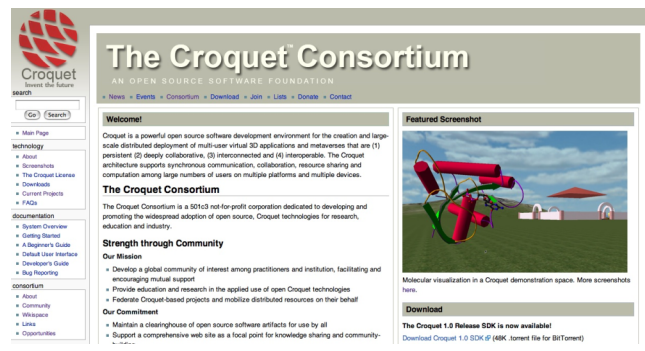

November 2006 – We demonstrated our work at the joint "Innovation" conference. High-end commercial Internet provider Supranet agreed to host the Collaborative, providing the first open Croquet connection point on the Internet. Over the next month, we made several improvements to speed wide-area network performance.

January 2007 – We released the Collaborative code and application (called the KAT). Over the next months, we had a flood of spontaneous users from around the world, while we made new developments in error recovery.

March 2007 – We joined with others in releasing the Croquet Software Developers' Kit 1.0, including the Collaborative code and demos. We completed the transfer of the Croquet Website from the University of Wisconsin to the newly formed Croquet Consortium.

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At the same time, there have been a number of other Croquet developments that Wisconsin has not been involved in:

July 2006 – Michael Kleiber defended the first Croquet thesis at the U. Magdeburg.

November 2006 – 3DSolve disclosed that has created a realtime operational data tool for the US Army.

February 2007 - Nikolay Suslov's realtime Croquet art installation opened an exhibition at the Russia State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

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March 2007 – The Croquet startup Qwaq came out of stealth mode with an [Enterprise-class collaborative workspace product](#) called Forums. (Customers were later revealed to include Stanford University and Big Oil.) The same month, Impara released a consumer-market [kids' 3D sketching product](#) based on Croquet.

April 2007 – The U. British Columbia, home of the Arts Metaverse project, joined Croquet Consortium founding members Duke U., U. Minnesota, Qwaq, 3dSolve and Hewlett-Packard as the first new [institutional member](#). Several more institutions and corporations have already committed to joining in their next fiscal year.

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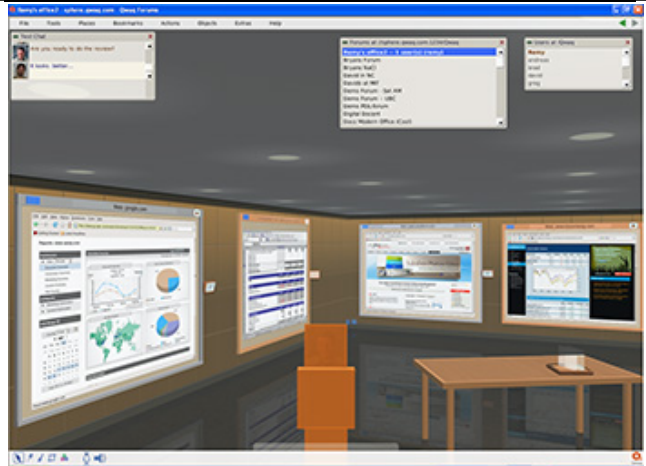Contact: Howard Stearns, stearns@alum.mit.edu, 608-658-2419

UW Croquet Lead Howard Stearns is leaving the university to join Joshua Gargus at Qwaq. Gargus has been at the Croquet startup for half a year.

Late last summer, Stearns had been assigned to provide full-time technical leadership to financial IT applications. "Administrative IT projects at the University have been a high priority in the news, but it has slowed our progress on Croquet. Now that the big system-wide Oracle application upgrade has been successfully completed, it's time to go back to Croquet full-time," Stearns says. Madison will continue to innovate in educational software by following such commercial products as iPods, Second Life, and clickers. "But I feel I can be of better service working directly where the most advanced technology is being created and used."

The pair join the open source project's core technical architects at Qwaq, as well as advisors Alan Kay and David Reed. Stearns says, "This is an unbelievable team at Qwaq, with experienced high-tech management and a great set of customers that are going to push us to do great things."

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