

Week 2: Building Assets

Overview:

This week the Action in Motion team was extended the unbelievable opportunity to visit Microsoft Studios. Thanks to our host Arnold Blinn, we were able to meet in depth with several key engineers, technical animators, and creative directors behind the most advanced Kinect motion control systems in the industry. The experiences they shared with us regarding motion augmentation in the upcoming title Kinect Star Wars have given us design and tech insights of inestimable value - we hit the ground running on Wednesday with new perspective and purpose.

Look Development:

After returning from Microsoft, the art team has been using the rest of the short week in pure asset production. The default enemy Rigg now has a full compliment of basic animations including walking, running, strafing, attacking, blocking, and death. The concepts for the "Hero" Rigg are also underway, and modeling for the player character's avatar will begin next week.

Code Development:

The programmers successfully implemented the Kinect wrapper and imported the enemy Rigg to test the Kinect skeleton's tracking and mapping. Additionally they constructed the core state machine framework that governs the player character's control behavior and animation. The visit to Microsoft provided a number of key technical insights, pointing towards a gesture recognition system with several layers of triggers of varying sensitivity, and the use of several concurrent intertwined state machines for limb motion.

Coming Up Next Week:

Next week will mark the beginning of the first round of prototypes for the project. The team will shift focus to developing a prototype for movement and dodging, while a separate prototype will explore strategies for augmenting basic combat. Next week will also be the last before quarters, so time will be taken to prepare for guests the following Monday.



(Top) The team with Arnold Blinn, taken on a lake in Seattle.
(Bottom) In-Progress concepts for the player character's "Hero" Rigg.

