



Silver Linings

by Brad Buchanan

The highlight of week 14 of the BarrelEye project was soft open. We set up Torch in the atrium of Electronic Arts and invited everyone who walked by to stop and try the game.

Actually, soft open was punctuated by some technical issues for us. In the dense wireless environment of EA's atrium we discovered that Torch might have a little trouble of a show floor. In spite of having a dedicated wireless router we were having very high latency on the game. We tried adjusting settings for a while, but eventually we had to bring down a laptop to use in place of the server phone.

After that things picked up, and we had a several people try the game. The response was great! People seem to recognize that Torch is a different experience, not just because it's running directly on the TV but because it changes the way they use a phone to play a game. Our goals of having a short experience that's easy to pick up really worked out, as our guests at soft open had no problem playing through the game and facing the boss at the end.

Unfortunately, we got some bad news this week when we were informed that Torch will not be shown at CES. In order to be shown, the game had to be ap-

proved by an exhibitor other than EA whose booth would host the game. After trying our demo, they decided against showing the game.

We are disappointed, and so is our client, but it's not all bad news – now we are free to submit Torch to other gaming competitions. We are currently searching for places we can submit Torch to give it the public attention we think it deserves.

The next couple of weeks will be devoted to some final cleanup on Torch, figuring out what we need to do to make it competition-ready, and preparing for our final presentation. See you next week!



necessity, and challenged us to reconsider a few of our design decisions from that point of view. He also emphasized the value of making the player feel silly, both in the context of the show floor and for players standing side-by-side. Jeff echoed this, reminding us to play with the social dynamics our game creates.

The rest of the week rushed by. We adjusted the Unity prototype in preparation for a playtest on Monday, and had a chance to show Drew Davidson our progress. We also kept exploring lwGame, putting together a load-test app to find out how many animated sprites the TV can render before we run into performance issues. Finally, several members of our team were out on Friday to attend IndieCade, the International Festival of Independent Games. We'll start next week with a guest playtest and by the end we'll be into our third sprint. Now it's back to work at BarrelEye...