Ubisoft Plays for Keeps in Montréal's Gaming Sector

Nearly 12 years after it opened, Ubisoft's Montréal location is one of the world's largest video game development studios. Since 1997, the French giant's biggest Canadian studio has created more than 55 titles that have sold in the tens of millions worldwide, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue.

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Yannis Mallat,
President and CEO,
Ubisoft Montréal

Initially developing games for children such as *Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers* and titles based on the Playmobil toy series, the studio helped position Montréal as a video game capital by launching Tom Clancy's *Splinter Cell* series in 2002. Many of its titles, such as *Assassin's Creed*, *Rainbow Six Vegas* and *Prince of Persia* have since been successful.

The Montréal studio, which had fewer than 100 people on staff when it was created, now employs almost 2,000 creative personnel. Ubisoft is pursuing its development strategy, with the objective of creating 1,000 jobs by 2013.

"Ubisoft continues to expand its presence in Canada, thanks to a very favourable business climate and the availability of a skilled workforce," says Yannis Mallat, President and CEO of Ubisoft Montréal. "Thus far, this expansion has materialized thanks to the establishment of a studio in Quebec in 2005, the creation of Ubisoft Digital Arts (UDA) in 2007 and the acquisition of Hybride Technologies, a specialist in creating visual effects for film, television and advertising, in 2008. We also recently set up operations on Canada's West Coast, with the acquisition of developer Action Pants Inc. in Vancouver. This studio, which presently has a staff of 110, specializes in sports games adapted for the Wii console."

An army of highly-trained workers

Ubisoft has been actively involved in developing genuine creative and technological know-how that has enabled Canada to establish its presence in a booming market. The studio can benefit from some 7,000 IT and multimedia graduates from leading Quebec universities.

Ubisoft also recruits from specialized educational colleges, such as the National Animation and Design Centre, Collège Bois de Boulogne for 3D training, Inter-Dec College for 2D/3D imaging and the Institut national de l'image et du son for music training.

In addition, since 2005 the Ubisoft Campus—created in collaboration with CEGEP du Vieux-Montréal, CEGEP de Matane, Dawson College, Université de Sherbrooke and Université de Montréal—has been offering college- and university-level training in programming, 3D animation, modeling and game design. Ubisoft Campus is the first Quebec initiative to combine college- and university-level curricula, leading to diplomas recognized by the Quebec Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sport (MELS). Students are required to collaborate on common study projects simulating the creation of a video game production, thus preparing them to enter the interactive entertainment industry.

A promising future for a dynamic and expanding industry

Even accounting for the current economic downturn, worldwide video game industry sales are expected to reach US$68.3 billion annually by 2012, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers. Ubisoft intends to stay at the forefront of independent publishers, by hiring the most qualified employees to develop truly innovative games that redefine industry standards. Its Canadian presence will help it attain that goal.