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Local News

NASA promotes virtues of online video gaming

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A NASA researcher came to Winnipeg on Thursday to promote the virtues of often-maligned online vi

Daniel Laughlin said rock 'n' roll and comic books were treated with as much suspicion in their day and corrupting youth. However, he believes video games hold the key to a resurgence in learning.

"Since 1993, violent crime in Canada and the U.S. has declined by 50 per cent and during that time the industry has exploded," Laughlin said. "If video games were really linked to crime, then we wouldn't h
in violence."

NASA's learning technologies project manager at the Goddard Space Flight Centre in Baltimore said vi
has been successfully used in training and simulation programs and NASA hopes to develop the most s
video game ever.

Laughlin detailed NASA's plans to a local group of academics, government officials and industry repre
the University of Manitoba's Smartpark for a half-day workshop on video-gaming technology and how
training environments.

Laughlin wasn't kidding about NASA wanting to develop an online video game that would rival some c
successful, like EverQuest, World of Warcraft and Dark Age of Camelot. In January, NASA issued a r
on how it could work with the gaming industry to develop a learning game. The space agency received
responses and, after reviewing them, *released at the end of April a formal request for proposals*. NASA
partner who would develop a fun and popular game that would help hone the science and mathematics
schoolers and college students -- and some really, really smart 12 to 14-year-olds.

"I'd love to see a space-based game where the players are placed in real careers -- astrophysicists, aeros
Laughlin said. "It would be a game where you need the expertise of real science to succeed."

Laughlin was speaking to about 100 people with a vested interest in online technology. The group inclu
from the health-care industry, software companies and game developers.

Laughlin said online video games are a \$40-billion annual industry seeing growth of between nine and
year.

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