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GDC Reflections – IGDA Scholar: Lars de Wildt

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Some say GDC is a beast. It houses 30,000 people from all over the global games industry for a full 5 days, and manages to exhaust almost every one of them. If GDC is a beast, the Moscone Centre could not house it. Judging from my first experience, as an IGDA Scholar no less, GDC is a bug. It is a virus: tiny and reproducing immeasurably quickly. It gets under people's skins, it makes them get up – each day more tired than the last – compelled to spread itself further. Its hosts gravitate back to Moscone as if controlled by one of the mind-controlling viruses (admittedly, a fungal infection) of The Last of Us.

I have begun to call GDC a bug not just because I think it fits better how GDC works and spreads. That is: unknowingly, ever-increasingly; almost in spite of its hosts, which are doomed to return each year.

Instead, I have only definitely decided to call GDC a bug d
This bug became apparent only as numerous tweets craw
missed homes in the wake of GDC. Indeed, I myself write
frying and frosty, on a plane back from San Francisco, a full five days after the event ended. What was meant to be an opportunistic chance to explore a dreamier San Francisco – free from the swarming hordes of the GDC-bug – became a fever nightmare. I have been stung by the bug of GDC itself.

GDC has not only literally infected me, of course. Yes, I am worn down by a strict tempo of early Q&A's (a Scholar's privilege) book-ended by late parties. Only to be compelled the very next morning to meet up for 7 am network breakfasts and move into another 8.45 Q&A session – rinse, repeat, repeat, repeat. Yes, I am also worn down by endless repetitions and explanations – who am I, what am I interested in – more than at any conference I have ever attended. Yes, I am worn down by, I must admit it, the lure of quick food around Moscone; and fair amounts of alcoholic beverages to support the irreplaceable chances to meet mere percentages of people (and their games) in attendance to parties, networking events and casual get-togethers.

Infectious, furthermore, were certain calls for action from the GDC hive mind. As I attended the superbly well-organized Black Developers Matter Roundtable; the Muslim Game Developers Roundtable; and the Union talks, GDC seemed nothing more than to be buzzing with energy and a productive will toward the future. Here is a bug which continues to mutate, improve and evolve in accordance with the needs of the industry it supports; for its workers as much as its queen bee.

Through it all, GDC has lodged itself within me meaningfully. Nowhere else could I hope to enter such a central hive of buzzing industriousness. No place on earth drives together so many separate nests of designers from Montréal to Melbourne, Massachusetts, Madagascar and elsewhere. To be there to witness it is worth being stung – and I can only thank the IGDA for trusting me to be infected.

– Lars de Wildt

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