

# PITTSBURGH BUSINESSTIMES

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## CMU's video-game spin-offs expanding

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Two young Pittsburgh video game firms are growing into bigger office space, after landing new contracts and new clients.

**Schell Games**, which designs three-dimensional Internet gaming, is in the process of moving less than a block away from its 2,500-square-foot office on Sidney Street on the South Side into a new 7,500-square-foot headquarters on East Carson Street, space formerly occupied by radio station WYEP and the Pittsburgh Business Times.

Schell already has been working out of the former WYEP space and plans to take over the Business Times space as well, after the newspaper moves into new space at SouthSide Works early next year.

Also, Etcetera Edutainment, which designs computer training simulations for organizations such as **Alcoa Inc.** and **University of Pittsburgh Medical Center**, recently moved from its startup office within Carnegie Mellon University's Entertainment Technology Center in Hazelwood to new offices Downtown.

Etcetera set up shop in shared space with **iNetworks LLC**, which serves in an advisory role to Etcetera.

Both firms have direct ties with ETC, where gaming industry veteran Jesse Schell serves as an adjunct professor and Etcetera principal Jess Trybus serves as director of edutainment.

Schell said his company's move was prompted by the need to accommodate additional staff, as it undertakes its first seven-figure contract. Schell declined to disclose details regarding the client or the contract.

"The contract necessitated a move," he said. "It will easily keep a dozen people busy full time."

Schell Games launched out of ETC in 2004 with a staff of six. Now, the company has grown to 15 people and may grow to 20 as it works on both its new contract, as well as other projects, including development of games for the recently rolled out **Nintendo DS** platform.

Etcetera's growth has been perhaps more dramatic, as the company feels its way through a new category of business, using video game techniques and technology for training purposes.

While the company had only four employees this time last year, Etcetera now has 15 and has grown revenue by nearly 400 percent in the past year. It expects similar growth for the year ahead.

"I'm excited to be realizing the vision," Trybus said. "Everything is just so new and evolving that I'm trying to be conservative, and here we are at 15 people."

David Gurwin, chair of the entertainment and media group at Downtown law firm **Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC**, as well as an adjunct professor at the ETC, sees the two companies' moves as encouraging evidence of a gradually growing industry for gaming firms in Pittsburgh.

"It's not going to happen overnight," Gurwin said. "It's not going to be an instant explosion of growth. I think it has to be more organic than that."

Still, Schell already sees signs beyond the growth of his own company. While there were only two or three local companies a few years ago that could be considered game studios, there are now nearly 10. Attendance at meetings of the Pittsburgh chapter of the International Game Developers Association has grown from fewer than 20 participants to nearly 50, he added.

Trybus sees enough of a cluster of companies beginning to take root in Pittsburgh that she and Schell now may begin competing for staff in a city where such talent once had to leave to find work.

"If you would have said to somebody that we'd be competing to keep talent here in Pittsburgh, I'd say that's a good problem overall," Trybus said.

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Joe Wojcik  
Schell Games owner Jesse Schell will have more room for his unicycle, as the South Side video-game design firm is moving to a larger space.  
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