

FAST TALK

Interviews by Kate Rockwood

Photographs by Drew Kelly

Nicole Lazzaro
> Founder and President
XEODESIGN
> OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

> Game On

The iPhone and iPod Touch are creating new superheroes in the \$57 billion video-game business—to the peril of traditional powers Sony, Microsoft, and EA.

The Wonder Woman

NICOLE LAZZARO, 44, has studied emotion and player experiences in video games for 20 years and is the designer of Tilt, the first iPhone accelerometer game. Her firm helps the likes of Sega and Ubisoft create games that resonate with iPhone users.

"Hard-core gamers are very into challenges and obstacles. They want to feel frustrated right up to the point of throwing the controller, then have a breakthrough. With the iPhone, there's a completely different emotional profile. Users on average will play for just 5 or 10 minutes at a time, but they'll snack on games all week. There's a lot of curiosity, wonder, and surprise, which is very powerful because wonder is a hard emotion for adults to feel.

We encourage companies to build iPhone games that tap into these emotions. It's a mistake to assume that the iPhone is mostly about the accelerometer and single-person experiences. The potential for social games around caretaking is enormous, because personal gestures—stroking, pinching, tapping—are mapped to the control set for the device. That's the brilliance of the platform."

The Green Lanterns

NEIL YOUNG, 39, AND ALAN YU, 36, left Electronic Arts to start Ngmoco, a company focused exclusively on iPhone games. Every Ngmoco title has charted in the App Store's top 50. Its social network, Plus, creates new revenue streams for game developers.

YOUNG: "The iPhone's incredible capability—and more important, its usability—creates something you can really monetize. Most apps earn revenue solely from downloads, but when you have users playing iPhone games more than 20 minutes a day on average, you can monetize their usage as well."

YU: "The App Store—which has more than 20,000 games right

now—is a very crowded, competitive place. Plus allows developers to add functionality, offer global scoreboards, and integrate with Twitter and Facebook."

YOUNG: "Plus is free for developers, but we take a piece of the additional revenue streams that it creates: steering players to download new games; selling points that are earned, bought, and used in games; and advertising on the network embedded in Plus. Our network has been on 2 million devices."

YU: "Plus enables our vision to make great games for this device because we can measure everything. We can see that people are getting stuck on level four of *Topple* and then tweak the game so people are playing longer."

Neil Young
Alan Yu
> Cofounders
NGMOCO
> SAN FRANCISCO,
CALIFORNIA

