Study recommends fix to digital disconnect ...

Study recommends fix to digital disconnect in U.S. education and workforce training

WASHINGTON, DC – Groundbreaking recommendations calling on government, educators, and business' to develop comprehensive strategies to use video games to strengthen U.S. education and workforce training will be released at a press briefing today, the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) and Entertainment Software Association (ESA) announced.

--Features of video and computer games teach skills in demand by present day employers--

--Breakfast Briefing Planned for Tuesday, 17 October--

Advanced copies of the report and interviews available upon request

WASHINGTON DC – Groundbreaking recommendations calling on government, educators, and business’ to develop comprehensive strategies to use video games to strengthen U.S. education and workforce training will be released at a press briefing today, the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) and Entertainment Software Association (ESA) announced.

The action plan identifies steps that the federal government, industry and education community can take to develop a comprehensive strategy to take advantage of the features of video games to address the increasing demand for high quality education and training, and commercialize educational games to help students and workers attain globally competitive skills in demand by employers.

“Many recent reports warning about declining U.S. competitiveness point to an urgent need to improve workforce skills and our system of education,” said Henry Kelly, FAS President. “Video games are engaging and can teach higher order skills, and they are especially attractive to today’s young digital natives who have grown up with digital technology. This plan outlines concrete actions we can take to put powerful tools for teaching and learning in the hands of educators and students at a time when the need for education improvement is great.”

America’s position in the world is increasingly dependent on its standing in the technological field. Summit participants agreed that features of video and computer games can make learning more effective and accessible by teaching players higher-order learning skills such as strategic thinking, interpretative analysis, problem solving, plan formulation and execution, and adaptation to rapid change – all skills very much in demand from present day employers.

“These findings communicate what we in the video game industry have known for years – that video games can make a significant contribution to educating our kids, enriching learning, and to preparing the workforce required for the high tech digital economy of today and tomorrow," said Doug Lowenstein, president of the ESA, the trade group representing U.S. computer and video games. “Video games are more than just great entertainment, they're having a positive impact on kids and adults alike in fields from education to health care, from the military to the workplace. We are grateful to the Federation of American Scientists for conducting this important study and look forward to working with them to implement the recommendations."

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The US spends about $700 billion on elementary through post-secondary education, and billions more on workforce training. Yet little is spent on R&D to improve the productivity and effectiveness of learning, and despite the potential of educational games, the digital technology has not been adopted by mainstream education or training industries. FAS calls for government research dollars to stimulate the experiments and developments needed to make breakthroughs in educational games and simulations, and to support meaningful evaluations of their efficacy.

The action plan is based on deliberations from the National Summit on Educational Games held on 25 October 2005 in Washington, D.C. The Summit brought together more than 100 experts to examine how to harness the power of video games for learning. Participants included executives from the video gaming industry and educational software publishers, researchers and experts on technology and pedagogy, game developers, representatives of user communities such as teachers and the U.S. military, R&D funders, and government policy makers. The Summit was sponsored by FAS, ESA, and the National Science Foundation. The report is believed to be the first time that U.S. business, education and government policy leaders have endorsed a comprehensive plan to address the future of American education and training.

--Advanced copies of the report and interviews available upon request--

NOTE TO REPORTERS –

The report will be released at a breakfast briefing on Tuesday, 17 October 2006, from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. in the First Amendment Room of the National Press Club in Washington, DC.

Breakfast will be available at 8:30 a.m.

To RSVP for this event, contact Monica Amarelo at mamarelo@fas.org or (202) 454-4680. Please include your name, title, and media affiliation in your response.

For an advance copy of the report please contact Monica Amarelo at 202-454-4680, mamarelo@fas.org.

Advance interviews with other briefing participants may be available upon request.

Speaking at the briefing are:

Henry Kelly, President, Federation of American Scientists

Doug Lowenstein, President, Entertainment Software Association

Don Blake, National Education Association

Jayfus Tucker Doswell, President and CEO, Juxtopia, LLC

Deborah L. Wince-Smith, President, Council on Competitiveness

To schedule an interview with Henry Kelly or Kay Howell of FAS, please contact Monica Amarelo at email mamarelo@fas.org or call 202-454-4680. Eugene Hickok, former Deputy Secretary of Education, will also be available for interviews.

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To speak with Doug Lowenstein of the ESA, please contact Stacey Wade at email swade@theesa.com or call 202-223-2400.

The Federation of American Scientists (www.fas.org) was formed in 1945 by atomic scientists from the Manhattan Project. Endorsed by nearly 60 Nobel Laureates in biology, chemistry, economics, medicine and physics as sponsors, the Federation has addressed a broad spectrum of national security issues in carrying out its mission to promote humanitarian uses of science and technology. Today, FAS projects study nuclear arms control and global security; conventional arms transfers; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; information technology for human health; and government information policy. The FAS Housing Technology Project combines the talents of engineers and energy specialists to develop new materials and design methods that will lead to safe, energy-efficient, affordable homes in the U.S. and abroad. The FAS Information Technologies Project works on strategies to harness the potential of emerging information technologies to improve how we teach and learn.

The Entertainment Software Association (www.theesa.com) is the U.S. association dedicated to serving the business and public affairs needs of the companies publishing interactive games for video game consoles, handheld devices, personal computers, and the Internet. ESA members collectively account for more than 90 percent of the $7 billion in entertainment software sales in the U.S. in 2005, and billions more in export sales of entertainment software.

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