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Community**Product News****Metalepsis' New DVD-ROM Technology Bridges Movie-Game Gap**

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While studios and retailers debate the VHS/DVD battle for shelf space, software designer-cum-game/movie producer Joe Matheny has a new paradigm: DVD content in its present form is teetering on the brink of irrelevance.

You can almost hear the studio executives shout, "Blasphemy!"

But Matheny and partners hope their new interactive DVD-ROM movie will stand home entertainment on its ear.

"You are taking linear or narrative video and just adapting it to the new media," Matheny says. "The structure of the DVD specification allows for a lot more interactivity and one-to-one environmental stuff. What we are going to do is produce and develop content written for the DVD medium."

The pair, under the shingle Metalepsis, plans a December release for a DVD that includes two movies with multiple possible outcomes that the viewer/player determines. The movies constitute what is probably the first interactive DVD created for connected set-top DVD, computers with DVD-ROM and game consoles like Playstation 2 and Xbox.

The DVD will actually contain two different movies, one on each side of the disc. Matheny's *Game Over* "investigates the circumstances surrounding the shocking recent discovery of a parallel dimension during an experiment run by a rogue 'garage scientist' in the heart of Silicon Valley, during the Internet boom of the '90s," according to a release.

"The experiment leads to contact with a fourth-dimensional entity that uses a supercomputer and the bodies of the dispossessed to enter the realm and follows the ultimate conspiratorial fallout as shadow organizations take note of the experiment's results."

On the flipside, *Montauk Girl* is based on investigations of the top secret Montauk Project. According to "survivor" accounts, the Montauk Project was a series of space-time operations conducted by the US Office of Naval Intelligence during the 1970s and 1980s — which also supplied the premise for 1984's *The Philadelphia Experiment*. "A probe of the Montauk Project becomes an investigation of the architecture of reality itself," the promo promises.

After a long career as a designer at software and Internet powerhouses including Macromedia, Netscape and Adobe (not to mention as an Xbox developer), Matheny founded iMMERSION in 1999 to create the program that would let him fulfill his vision of home entertainment.

"Metalepsis really was my goal all along," he says. "Metalepsis will create new media. We created the channel that we are now going to fill with the content."

The result, Matheny promises, is "a DVD that enables viewers to see Internet content from within the movies themselves. The viewer can use the DVD disc to view live, streaming media on the Internet in conjunction with DVD-specific content or simply get caught up in the movies themselves."

Simple viewing is an option, but the real hook is interacting with the movie.

"What we're proposing is a new type of media," Matheny says. "The content itself is a movie/game hybrid designed specifically for an interactive medium. We don't have to worry so much about who we're targeting based on technology. It actually gives us a few more tentacles in the marketing arena."

This is something of a puzzle for retail. The details have yet to be worked out, but because the DVD is viewable on a variety of players, it presents opportunities to market at video stores, game outlets, variety chains and home entertainment stores.

"You've got DVD set-top players, DVD computers and the consoles supporting DVD," Matheny says. "If you can address all of those markets with a single product instead of 15 skus, it's one size fits all."

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While the expected \$40 price point is higher than most DVD releases, it's lower than the price of most games.

So why wait until holiday shoppers have filled most of their lists to introduce it?

"We want to wait for the Xbox [Nov. 8 release date]. We don't think it will have as great of an impact if we release it before or concurrent with the Xbox. After it comes out, consumers will be looking for new titles. We thought, if we throw the title out there before all the markets are ready, it would just sit there. If it sits in their warehouse for two months, they are going to send it back."

Meanwhile, Metalepsis is moving to Los Angeles soon to be nearer the traditional studios.

Matheny would not disclose details, but said Metalepsis is "in discussion with the studios about this new medium."

