



## Flying Lab Software Backgrounder

Flying Lab Software is a Seattle-based game development studio founded in 1998 by Paul Canniff and Russell Williams. The two principals, along with investor Richard Saada, privately hold the company. Flying Lab is based in downtown Seattle.

We employ sixty five people along with seven external contractors. The core team of designers, developers, and producers has been retained over the years, providing a consistency to approach and execution.

Our developers have a wealth of enterprise application experience, including *Microsoft Word for DOS*, *Microsoft LAN Manager*, *Microsoft NT 4.0*, *Microsoft Windows 95*, *Microsoft Exchange*, TCP/IP stacks for HP's Printer division, *Adobe Illustrator*, and *NeXT OS* as well as consumer focused projects such as *Microsoft Money*, *Microsoft Golf 3.0/95*, *Microsoft Encarta*, *Humongous' Backyard Sports* series, and *Xbox Live*. Our developers are seasoned professionals combining over 100 man-years of experience between them.

This kind of track record is critical for MMOs. Unlike single-player game development, where content can be carefully structured to avoid problems with the architecture, MMOs are extremely open-ended environments that can't rely on dictating the player's progress. Companies entering the MMO market without this kind of serious software engineering experience often fail, as in the cases of *Dragon Empires*, the original *Warhammer* MMO, and *Wish*. Every year, schools turn out plenty of coders who can write shaders and move polygons around, but bulletproof client/server architecture is well beyond their skills. We hire accomplished developers who know their business.

Likewise, our artists are not just greenhorn 3D modelers. We look for people with fine arts experience, strong technical knowledge, and proven versatility in other genres. The value of this approach can be seen at a glance in *Pirates of the Burning Sea's* look. Its bright, bold, illustrative art direction sets it apart from the pack and earns numerous awards. Our art director is a veteran illustrator from magazines such as *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Omni Magazine*, and *The Washington Post*, and was honored at the White House for his work. We also employ artists from the feature film world, with credits including *Batman Begins*, *Constantine*, *The Ring 2*, *Fantastic 4*, and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.



Flying Lab's first title, *Rails Across America*, was released in Fall 2001. This PC strategy game garnered strong reviews and several awards, including two Editor's Choice awards (4.5 stars in *Computer Gaming World* and 5 stars from *Computer Games Magazine*) and Multiplayer Game of the Year from *Computer Games Magazine*. *Rails Across America* was published by Strategy First and distributed in North America by Infogrames USA. Vision Park and Nobilis distribute the game internationally. Our second title, *Delta Green*, was an innovative tactical squad combat game for the Xbox based on a licensed IP. We pioneered squad gameplay and normal mapping technology back in 2002 with this project, but postponed it indefinitely to move into the MMO genre. *Pirates of the Burning Sea*, Flying Lab's current project, is a massively multiplayer online roleplaying game of swashbuckling action and adventure set in the churning waters of the Burning Sea where valiant naval captains, savvy merchants, and treacherous pirates battle it out for riches and reputation. *Pirates of the Burning Sea* has already won awards, including Best Graphics in an MMO at E3 2005, and is *Computer Games Magazine's* Most Anticipated MMO for 2006. For the *Pirates of the Burning Sea* project, Flying Lab is organized along functional group lines on a three level hierarchy, with leads for Design, Development, Art, Content, Testing, Community, Operations, and Marketing all reporting to the Lead Producer for the project.

*Pirates of the Burning Sea* has been in development for five years when it ships this June. Its schedule was expanded from three to four years in order to accommodate both a feature expansion (Avatars), and a reboot of the game design, moving from a one world continuous system to an instanced-based approach. *Flying Lab Software Confidential Company Overview Page 3 of 20 3/26/2007*

### **Russell Williams –CEO**

Russell Williams was program manager for international best sellers *Microsoft Exchange*, the *Microsoft Golf* series, and of course, *Rails Across America*. Before that he worked on the very first Windows email program, *DaVinci eMail*. A devoted computer game fanatic, he is proud to contribute to the interactive entertainment community through his membership in the *Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences*, and has an extensive collection of games going all the way back to the Apple II.