# The hero's hat

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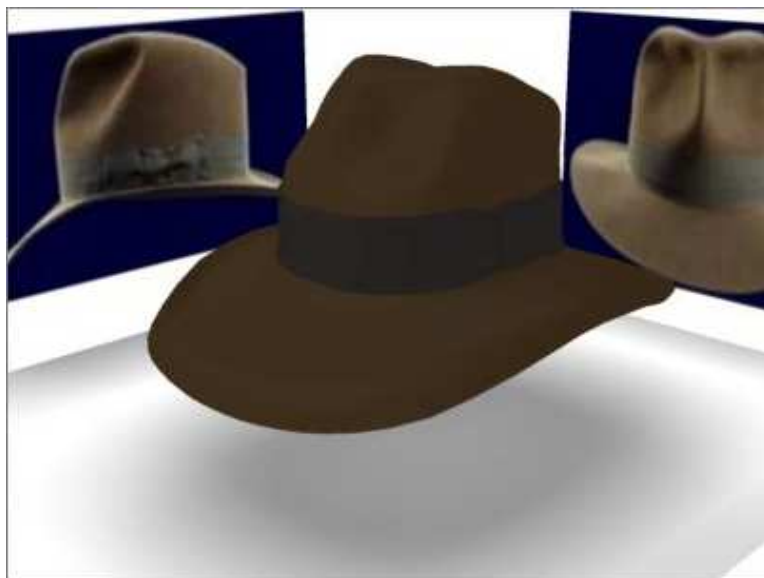
**FIG. 1:** *The hero's hat/Manuel SIABATO*

## Abstract

Created since a long time ago, 3D Real Time (3DRT) wasn't conceived at all for Internet streaming. Because of the demanding high band broadcast need and the lack on computer calculating power this technology was restricted from Internet use. Today things have changed and 3DRT on line use is evolving in unpredictable ways. From 3D virtual on line sex with Red Light Center to gigantic metaverses like Second Life and on line gaming with WOW, MMORPG are fastly gaining on line entertainment public around the world. This emerging use of 3DRT opens the minds of Internet users to experience with this technology in many different ways, a fact that allows us today to propose new kinds of communicating and promotion objects. One of the fields that could indeed benefit from this tendency is the film promotion. In this short paper we will try to explain why and how this could be done.

## 1 Introduction

On recent cinema history film promoting has become an essential part of the movie post-production step, very important to ensure film life on screens and as a cinematographic masterpiece as well. Without wanting to take sides on justifying film promotion importance, the aiming of this short paper is to propose new ways of communicating on films using Internet and to share the experience of looking under the hero's Hat.

But why do we have to interest ourselves on this kind of film promotion ? What interest can the promoting machine find on creating a movie web site ? What are the problems related to this kind of film marketing ?

First we will see some of today's different ways of promoting a film on Internet, we will briefly talk about the goodies and products related to the franchise of a film. We will take a look of the film web site evolution and how they continuously propose new kinds of services and products for web surfers.

Secondly we will interest ourselves on Indiana Jones saga, witch it's fourth episode will be premièring this year. This saga has been choose subjectively and merely motivated by aesthetic and personal reasons. Even if this choice respond to an arbitrary decision, it's the product of an analysis about the use we can give to 3d real time as a communication tool for internet. Choosing Indiana Jones can be justified by the obvious use of certain objects that have become cult among the saga fans and that make an immediate reference to this adventurer icon of an entire generation. Using a ludic and interactive object can without any doubt give richness to the story universe and create unimaginable links with the film. Both, film and promotion object will interact in order the give more completes and strong scenarios.

As a third point, it is capital to talk about the open source software Blender. This software, conceived in order to propose an alternative to the proprietary 3D soft, gives the chance to common people to develop ideas and concepts in a concrete and free way. Without de-

pending on proprietary soft, very often closed to new or simply too expensive, the Blender project sends a strong warning to those who want to keep to them selves knowledge and creativity : freedom to new ideas. The soft itself, it's without a doubt, the most complete open source software for 3D, 3D real time creation and video editing. The world community that grows day by day around it offers an even larger and wider field of possibilities for creation. Very briefly we will explain the path followed by this idea to become a concrete multimedia object.

To conclude we will try to make evident the ties that bound film promotion, 3DRT and all of the related products. We will explain why the next step on communication new technologies logic, must, without any hesitations be centred on virtual technologies. We will as well propose different clues for other 3DRT object film models and a step further on how a film scenario could be constructed, taking advantage from this technology.

## 2   The studio strategy

Among all entertainment industries, the film one has lived in a resent past enormous changes regarding his marketing strategies. This evolution can be followed and understand if we take a look into CGI's evolution and the clear influence video games have had over the past years on films, in an aesthetics way and as a narrative form too.

This merging phenomena is not only due to the use of computers at all levels of film production, but mostly because the tendency towards entertainment and all media is to be centralized on the computer[1]. To imagine the future of the film industry marketing one has to imagine Internet evolution first.

### 2.1   Past and present

To start talking about film promotion one has to think on the first posters as we know them today. At first films posters weren't suppose to be part of film promotion strategy, marketing or anything that could resemble to that.

Film poster was suppose to rapidly present the film before entering to the movie, so rapidly, that even sometimes they didn't had the actors or filmmakers names written on them. Before the 40's film posters where destroyed after use and even if the theater manager wanted to keep the poster, a studio policy will forced him to send them back[2,3].

Today things have change radically to the point that a big part of film budget is destined to pay advertisement and studios are getting more and more interested by promoting their films on the Internet. As quoted on Forbes.com by Louis Hau, Internet is becoming a precious milestone for studio advertising and if we believe on Dwight Caines, Columbia Tristar's executive vice president of worldwide digital marketing "The tools for people to use social networking and collaborative Web site building are now so commonplace that we have to find new ways to stay on top of those trends. We want to be on those Web sites, really getting into people's digital lifestyles, figuring out where they are communicating with friends and loved ones."[4]

### 2.2   The Internet film web site a movie fan idea

At first, web sites films where created by fans, that wanted to share with each other their passion for the films they love. Mostly non official and full of rumors and false information, these web sites represented no interest for studios at all.

But today film promotion has understand the importance of Internet, to communicate about a film, with news about the film shooting, downloadable posters, photos, fan forums, video games, thumbnails and even direct links to buy film related products like on the Star Wars Internet shop [5,6] where you can buy on line a vast palette of products, going from clothes to video games and toys.

Internet offers the possibility to fans to directly access to the movie universe and to keep a high interest on it and this continuously from all over the world. The content they propose doesn't limits itself to purchase products but to be part of a community that grows in relation to the film and everything related to it. Internet is becoming an essential part of film promotion strategy and money spend on this will increase over time in a significant way.

## 3   Choosing our character

Indiana Jones[7], besides being a multi generational hero and a modern icon of the adventurer is without a doubt an interesting subject to get inspiration from and to propose a new kind of communication film object. But why choose this saga, among other sagas or films ? Why is this hero so different and unique to explain as an example how to use 3DRT on line as a communication object ?

### 3.1   The objects and the saga

First is important to state that this hero, among other fiction heroes has particular characteristics that make him a good experimentation subject. Indiana Jones has a hat and a whip. These objects not only can be directly related to this fictional character, but they also can be modeled on a 3DRT on line applet that can be interactively manipulated on a web site.

Of course the idea is not just to make a 3D model, an exact replica of the actual hat or whip, but to go further on what these objects can tell us about their owner. The best way to understand this is to look into the character's saga to pick up passages of that missing information that could be delivered or revealed by our model. As a saga the film narrates different parts of Dr. Jones life and in the last film "The last crusade" we can see how his family enters on the film character universe taking an important role on the scenario. Regarding the iconic objects, the saga will enforce their significant value and relation to the character, becoming in some way an essential part of the story.

We can then, imagine what we could do if we had in our hands the real Indiana Jones hat, how can we can interact with it. The idea is not just to produce a photorealistic model of what we want, but to give clues of the untold parts of the story with this object.

### 3.2   The content

For our proposal, we could in fact look inside the hat, and discover things that the film, as a finished, non interactive media object can't tell. We could find inside this hat, a picture of his mother, a letter, a treasure map, a souvenir from his old adventures, we could find all the things that the movie doesn't tell and most important, the things that the filmmaker finds interesting for the audience to know, in order to enlarge the character universe and to keep public interest at it's highest level. This object could represent what all fans would like to see or hope to find and this is more details about their hero and it's fictional life ; the missing clues.
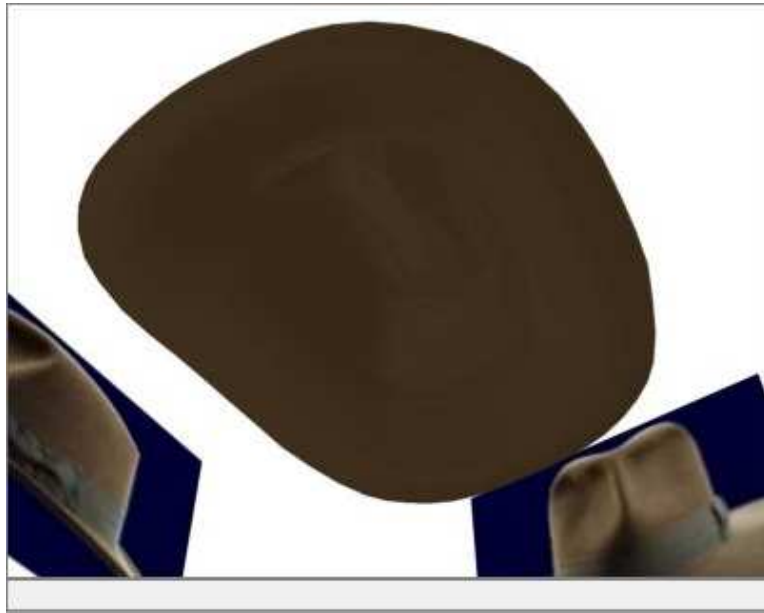
**FIG. 2:** *The hero's hat/Manuel SIABATO*

# 4 Blender as answer for business real world

Before concluding with this small introduction to what film promotion on INTERNET could be, we have to talk about Blender[10]. This software offers the possibility to develop ideas in a very free way. It's sharing knowledge freedom, starts by the soft itself and it's followed by the growing international community around it. It's amazing to a 3D soft user, used to the 3d proprietary soft on the market, to find a tool as complete and open as Blender. Imagine a software for modeling, animating, rendering, video editing and 3D real time creation, that opens the doors to others to develop new tools inside the software itself and all this for free, you just discovered Blender. To explain in detail how blender was the unique possible tool available to develop this project we have to talk about Phd candidates meeting business men.

## 4.1 The project path : the first step

In France, when you are a Phd candidate, you don't have too many choices to sponsor your 3 to 4 years thesis. You can win a scholarship, daddy can sponsor you or you can go sell your ideas to a business man who will receive of course some money from the government in order to pay you and thats what it's called CIFRE convention (Convention Industrielle de Formation par la Recherche)[11]. The only problem when you manage to get a CIFRE it's that very often business men are willing to take you, but don't have any money to develop your idea, and there's when Blender becomes unique.

The first motivation, was of course to create 3D interactive multimedia objects on line to promote products sold by the company, and this without any kind of proprietary soft. Blender community proposes a lot of features develop by programmers on their free time. A concrete example of this is the Softlime[12], which is a package for Blender that makes possible to export your objects to a .X3d format used then in a web page inside a 3D Java application.

The Softlime was a revelation for the project, but it's limits regarding final render and interactivity were a reason to keep sear-

ching for more complete and user friendly possibilities. Don't get me wrong, for my self Softlime was enough to keep on going, but when your boss ask you for more productivity and better results, you have to find another tool.

For my self , not being a programmer, it was really interesting to open the code and try to understand what it means, and how to change it, for my boss, we didn't have the time to waste on that.

## 4.2 The project path : round two

Next step was to find a soft with an interface that could aloud a faster and better production rhythm, but if you take some time to look over on the INTERNET you can find some interesting softs and ways to do what you want. Wirefusion [13] was the best reliable and usable software I could find in a small amount of time. Of course, you just cant use directly Wirefusion if you don't have the tools to correctly export your objects from Blender, and again I met the power of the community when I discovered the BS exporter for Blender [14]. Bitmanagement Software, BS, proposes among many things, a free VRML/X3D exporter for Blender, that you can later on use with the free edition of Wirefusion.

Finally I could propose to my boss a way to create interactive multimedia objects to promote products on websites without any expensive software investment and I started to produce at a really high cadence. After making a lot of products 3D real time models and test some features and possibilities regarding interaction and render, the idea of using this tool for other means started to growing up.

Being an audiovisuals and film Phd candidate, the willing to mix up all this things learned become more clear. 3D Real Time on the INTERNET, it's a field that has never been explored before, and it's possibilities are just unimaginable, but in order to explore this vast field, you'll need a cutting edge software that will give you all the tools to creation, and Blender is without any doubt, the best tool you can find.

# 5 Conclusion

After overseeing some of the different ways to promote films on Internet today and quote one of the top marketing digital studio executive opinion, regarding Internet promotion, a new interactive object has been proposed. Indiana Jones hat as a 3DRT communication object could in fact increase public interest about the film saga and the character universe. This example among many possible others shows why 3DRT technology should be placed in a centered place among other communication items proposed on web sites, like downloadable posters or thumbnails.

Virtual universes technologies[8] allows a direct link between public and films by creating new ways to approach the film scenario, giving richness to the content and proposing new narrative forms to writers and filmmakers. Indiana Jones hat it's just an example among many others, and if we take a deeper look into a film, any film, we could certainly always find an usable and exploitable object ; for example the Delorean car from Back to the Future, the compass of Jack Sparow, Freddy Krueger's glove, a magic ring and any other object that plays an important role on a movie scenario.

These 3DRT models are not just reserved to blockbuster movies or marketing strategy, because the virtual linking object can in fact be anything that is suggested on the scenario and if we push further it's logic, it could be a clue to understand more profoundly a story, any story told by the means of audiovisuals.

This model could in a near future be a part of the scenario itself, proposing to the public an indispensable key in order to understand the story and why not, be a part of it. We could imagine a movie that starts with the object promotion before the movie premier and that will play an important role on the scenario once the movie has been premiered. After the film visioning the public could return to the web site to interact with this object to get a more profound knowledge on the character story and background. For the television series, posting a new object could give clues about the future of the series heroes and maintain the interest for the story.

Regarding the reality of business, when it comes to creation and development, it's important to say that new ideas shouldn't be stopped by the lack of money or by the control over knowledge. Blender is a very complete and powerful tool that gives the chance to common people from all kinds of backgrounds to explore, in a concrete way, all sides and possibilities of 3D audiovisuals. Besides being the most complete 3D software available today, the Blender project proposes something that the proprietary soft will never had : freedom. A freedom that not only comes from the GPL [15] license, but from the fact that Blender evolution is decided by a community and not by a marketing strategy.

In a very humble way this proposal gets it's inspiration on the dream from the cinema creators, when they thought about a machine that could re-create the characters emotions and feelings when they lived the life they play on the screen ; the myth of the total cinema[9].

Maybe video game hasn't reach completely this dream because of his playing codes, gaming scenarios, and hardware restrictions, but we can be sure that one day 3DRT technology will fulfill this dream.

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