

WELCOME

Hello and welcome to issue three of the Rail Simulator Community Newsletter!

In this months edition, we have the final newsletter names as chosen by our team from all of your suggestions! We will be contacting a number of forums shortly to arrange polls to decide the final names! Watch out for an update email with links to the forums carrying the polls!

Also in this months edition we have an interview with Ian Baverstock (Business Development Director) and Jonathan Newth (Managing Director) about how Rail Simulator came about and their plans for the future.

Finally, this will be my last month running the community newsletter for Rail Simulator. From next month you will be in the capable hands of our new Product Manager; Sabrina Gasson.

All the best,



COMING SOON

In next months edition we will be taking a first look at one of the key features of our all new and improved Route Editor; Track Laying!

Also coming up next month, we announce the winner of the newsletter name competition and profile the site that made the winning suggestion!

In addition to this we will be taking a look at the research trip behind the stunning Black 5 model premiered this month.

NEWSLETTER COMPETITION

Thank you for all of your newsletter name suggestions!

The teams favourite suggestions are as follows:

- * Rail Times (<http://www.chistrains.nl>)
- * The Junction (<http://www.cpvirtual.org>)
- * The Community Whistle (<http://www.the-train.de>)
- * On the Rails (<http://www.uktrainsim.com>)
- * The Waiting Room (suggestion from the development team)

We will be in touch shortly with a number of sites that host forums to arrange final voting on the newsletter name. An update email will be sent out to the newsletter mailing list to let everyone know which forums are hosting the official polls.

RAIL SIMULATOR

KUJU



F R E E D O M T O D R I V E Y O U R R A I L W O R L D

INTERVIEW

This month we sat down with Ian Baverstock (Kuju's Business Development Director) and Jonathan Newth (Kuju's Managing Director) and got the inside story on how Rail Simulator came about and what their plans for the future are.

Kuju are known for creating quality simulations, but you haven't released any new simulators for some time now. How did Rail Simulator come about?

JN: Kuju's involvement in simulation goes back over 15 years; starting when, as Simis, we produced a series of world class flight simulations (Mig-29, Flight Sim Toolkit, AV8B Harrier etc). We have always had a passion for simulation, but with the rise of the games console in the mid '90s, Microsoft's domination of the civilian flight simulator market and the increasing cost of building military flights sims for a small market we saw that we had to change.

IB: Our first step was towards helicopter simulations and we pitched our initial game to a range of publishers including Microsoft; we got close to publishing the title through Microsoft, but they did their market research and decided that the market for helicopter sims was not quite big enough (we subsequently had good success with Team Apache through Mindscape and Team Alligator through GT Interactive/Infogrames).

JN: A while after initially pitching to Microsoft they came back to us with a proposal for a simulation in the railway marketplace, again having done their market research and deciding that this was a market they were interested in. We immediately saw the opportunity and leapt at it – resulting in Microsoft Train Simulator a couple of years later. I can not really discuss the reasons why MS Train 2 did not reach market – but suffice it to say Kuju has a clear vision for railway simulation and we are delighted to once again be on track (I could not resist one pun) and about to re-enter the rail sim. market with a set of strong partners.

IB The current development was kicked off by a chance conversation between me and one of the senior people at EA at a games conference in London. Kuju had been considering how it would get back into the Rail Sim arena but really needed a credible distribution partner; anyway I happened to be talking to this EA person about Kuju's history and mentioned that we had developed Microsoft Train Simulator. This immediately led to a conversation about how EA were very interested in titles like MSTs and that really got my attention! It became clear very quickly that there was a route through to Kuju creating a new simulator and from that moment on, the signing of the deal with EA finding the necessary finance became my top priority.

What are the advantages of financing the game using Fund4Games?

JN: Using a 3rd party financier allows Kuju to negotiate stronger terms with our selected publisher; most crucially we retain the intellectual property which is the basis of Rail Simulator. This allows us to control the long term future of the product and franchise - including editorial control of this newsletter!

RAIL SIMULATOR

KUJU



F R E E D O M T O D R I V E Y O U R R A I L W O R L D

INTERVIEW

What are the benefits of working with Electronic Arts?

JN: We look for two things in our publishing partner. Firstly they must have powerful marketing and distribution - there is no point putting your heart and soul into a product only to have it reach a handful of people! Secondly they must understand mass market games (and especially our game); there are a number of publishers who satisfy the first criteria, but a much smaller set who "get" games designed for an audience that is not predominantly late teen/early 20's males.

IB: EA is the strongest marketer/distributor in the world and not only do they demonstrably "get" mass market games (e.g. the Sims!). The production team we are working with at EA loves the game and it certainly helps that some of EA's most senior exec's are also rail enthusiasts.

What long term plans do you have for Rail Simulator?

IB: We are still absolutely focused on Rail Simulator v1.0 so its probably a bit premature to talk too much about longer term plans. We will be engaging with the community throughout the development of version 1 and as we approach completion will start talking about ideas for further versions - but there are some obvious targets for us :- more routes covering the rest of the world, integration of some functionality actively using the fact that a significant proportion of users will have broadband...

Why is working with the community so important to Kuju?

JN: Community is everything for Rail Simulator. I am personally a massive fan of titles that provide the ability for the users to create new content and mods and share them with others - both as a player and a creator. One of the first products we created back in 1992 (Flight Sim Toolkit) still has an active community creating and sharing content well over a decade after its release - I would like to think that Rail Simulator has as long a future and that will happen if we work together with our community to make the future.