

NEWS RELEASE

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Space expert wins top video games award

Research in space technology has led to an unexpected top prize for computer games for an expert at the University of Surrey.

The Royal Academy of Engineering has given its entrepreneur award to Dr Alexandre Pechev for the 'IKinema' computer games technology.

IKinema is a revolutionary new approach to computer animation which animates the whole body of any character or creature and automatically takes into account gravity and balance to produce lifelike movements.

Dr Pechev was working on ways to control space satellites when he saw a solution that could be extended to robotics and from there also to the way avatars move in computer games.

The award was announced at a worldwide conference for the games industry in California. The Game Developers Conference (GDC) is the world's largest professionals-only game industry event.

Held every spring in San Francisco, the conference is a forum for inspiration and networking for creators of computer, console, hand-held, mobile, and online games.

Dr Pechev's original research, at the Surrey Space Centre at the University, was on satellite control systems but it has the potential, recognised in this award, for unexpected and far reaching impacts on robotics and computer games and therefore more widely on the UK economy.

He said: "I feel deeply honoured to be recognised for this prestigious award. The support from the Royal Academy of Engineering and the ERA Foundation will be invaluable for IKinema and will help make the business a success.

"IKinema is yet another example of research carried out in our universities having a world-wide impact far beyond its original concept. I hope this award will inspire others to undertake similar steps in the commercial world."



Chris Snowden, Vice Chancellor, University of Surrey, said “The University of Surrey is very pleased that the Royal Academy of Engineering and the ERA Foundation have recognised the quality of Dr Pechev’s academic work and his significant entrepreneurial abilities with this prestigious award.

“I hope this award will inspire others to follow a similar entrepreneurial path. It perfectly illustrates how the University strives to support its staff in pursuing their ambitions and is a very good example of curiosity driven, EPSRC funded research with wide application outside its original field.”

The computer games industry employs over 28,000 people and contributes £1 billion to the UK economy.

In and around the University’s Research Park, in Guildford, there is one of the UK’s leading clusters of computer games companies, including Electronic Arts and Microsoft Games Studio, two of the world’s leaders.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

The GDC attracts over 17,000 attendees, and is the primary forum where programmers, artists, producers and game designers involved in the development of interactive games gather to shape the future of the industry.

Founded in 1976, The Royal Academy of Engineering promotes the Engineering and technological welfare of the country.

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The University of Surrey is one of the UK’s leading professional, scientific and technological universities with a world class research profile and a reputation for excellence in teaching and research. Ground-breaking research at the University is bringing direct benefit to all spheres of life – helping industry to maintain its competitive edge and creating improvements in the areas of health, medicine, space science, the environment, communications, defence and social policy. Programmes in science and technology have gained widespread recognition and it also boasts flourishing programmes in dance and music, social sciences, management and languages and law. In addition to the campus on 150 hectares just outside Guildford, Surrey, the University also owns and runs the Surrey Research Park, which provides facilities for 140 companies employing 2,700 staff.

The Sunday Times names Surrey as ‘The University for Jobs’ which underlines the university’s growing reputation for providing high quality, relevant degrees.

