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VIDEO GAME COMPETITIONS TO EXPAND STEM LEARNING IN THE UNITED STATES

Organizations Support President Obama's Call to Promote STEM Education

November 23, 2009 – WASHINGTON, DC – Supporting President Obama's call for a renewed focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education, the Entertainment Software Association (ESA) and the Information Technology Industry Council (ITI), Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA), Microsoft Corporation, and the MacArthur Foundation today announced a suite of various efforts to engage and motivate students in STEM learning. The organizations will work to harness the excitement surrounding computer and video games through a series of STEM-related video game design competitions.

"Computer and video games are one of the most effective ways to reach America's children and encourage them to stay interested in vital STEM principles. We are honored to have President Obama recognize the unique ability of games to act as a catalyst in generating new areas of growth in education," said Michael D. Gallagher, president and CEO of the ESA, the trade association representing U.S. computer and video game publishers. "Our industry's lifeblood is the energy and innovation of new, emerging developers. To create the next generation's epic titles and incredibly immersive storylines, we need America's youth to have strategic and analytic thinking skills along with complex problem solving abilities. It is my hope that it will produce games that will have a lasting impact on the STEM skills our nation's students so desperately need."

"There is no better way to engage and motivate youth than to reach them with familiar imagery and activities they deeply enjoy," said Dean Garfield, president and CEO of ITI. "The information technology industries are the flagships of high tech innovation in the creative economy and a real-world manifestation of the importance of a quality STEM education program. The talents kids learn playing education video games today—such as problem-solving, strategic-thinking, and flexibility—are the very types of talents these soon-to-be adults are going to need to be successful in the 21st Century."

Two national video game competitions will be launched:

- **GAME CHANGERS:** This competition is a component of the 2010 Digital Media and Learning Competition, a \$2 million annual effort funded by the MacArthur Foundation that advances the most innovative approaches to learning through games, social networks and mobile devices. SCEA, in cooperation with ESA and ITIC, will team with MacArthur to support the competition which will result in the creation of new game play experiences that enhance STEM principles using new discoveries on an existing popular video game—*LittleBigPlanet™*—winner of numerous "game of the year" awards in 2008. Additionally, SCEA will donate 1,000 PlayStation®3 (PS3™) systems and copies of *LittleBigPlanet™* to libraries and community based organizations in low-income communities and make the winning levels available to game players at no cost.

Applications will be judged on criteria related to participatory learning, the support of learning related to science, technology, engineering and math, and the degree to which assessment of learning is integrated into the learning experience itself.

Proposals will be posted for public comment and multiple awards will be given, including a People's Choice Award, which will be decided by the public. Winners will be announced in 2010.

- **STEM NATIONAL VIDEO GAME COMPETITION:** ESA and ITI are also working with leading education stakeholders on the competition, including The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop, Games for Change, and E-Line Ventures. ESA, ITI and their partners will challenge America's best and brightest, including children, to enter the competition with ideas that can be designed into web-executable, browser-based, STEM-related computer and video games in three age-based categories: 4 to 8 year olds, 8 to 12 year olds and 12 to 16 year olds. In addition to funding, ESA, ITI and their member companies will provide judges, mentorship, and technical expertise to the winning teams to maximize their utility, outreach and effectiveness.

Prize winners will receive a total of \$300,000 and their games will be used in school and community settings, with a particular emphasis on reaching historically underserved populations including girls and minority students.

In early 2010, ESA, ITI and their partners will make a formal announcement of the competition's details including eligibility rules and entry procedures. Winners will be announced at the E3 Expo, the leading video game industry trade show event, which takes place June 15-17, 2010.

Organizers said rules and specific details on how to enter competition submissions for both competitions will be announced in the coming weeks.

The ESA is the U.S. association dedicated to serving the business and public affairs needs of companies publishing interactive games for video game consoles, handheld devices, personal computers, and the Internet. The ESA offers services to interactive entertainment software publishers including a global anti-piracy program, owning the E3 Expo, business and consumer research, federal and state government relations, First Amendment and intellectual property protection efforts. For more information, please visit www.theESA.com.

ITI is the premiere voice, advocate, and thought leader for the information and communications technology (ICT) industry. ITI is widely recognized as the tech industry's most effective advocacy organization in Washington DC, and in various foreign capitals around the world. For more information about ICT companies leading the charge on America's innovation economy visit <http://www.itic.org/governmentrelations/stem-education/>

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