MICROSOFT VISUAL BASIC HONORED AS AIAS TECHNICAL IMPACT AWARD RECIPIENT

Tribute Presented by Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences at 19th D.I.C.E. Awards

LOS ANGELES – February 10, 2016 – The Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences (AIAS) is pleased to announce Microsoft's Visual Basic as the recipient of this year's Technical Impact Award at the 19th D.I.C.E. Awards (#DICEAwards) ceremony on Thursday, Feb. 18, 2016, at The Mandalay Bay Convention Center. Microsoft's Visual Basic first launched in 1991, and was immediately recognized by the computer science engineering world as one of the most powerful programming languages ever created. It is thanks to this simple and impactful tool that burgeoning industries like the video game industry were able to take advantage of its user-friendly interface and rapid application development to experiment and develop game concepts quickly.

The Technical Impact Award celebrates unique innovations that contribute to the ongoing progress of interactive media in all its forms, and celebrates technical achievements that are expanding and redefining our industry. Honorees are selected from various facets of the industry, which may include software, hardware, and community. The 2016 Technical Impact Award will be presented to Microsoft Visual Basic by Rich Hilleman, member of the AIAS Board of Directors and chief creative director at Electronic Arts. Scott Ferguson, development lead and architect of the original Visual Basic will be accepting.

"The influence of Microsoft's Visual Basic extends beyond the programming and design features of this game-changing toolset," said Martin Rae, president, Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences. "Visual Basic inspired and spawned a new generation of coders and programmers thanks to its simplicity, laying the foundation for creative experimentation. Microsoft's philosophy to provide free access to all lowered the barriers of entry and inspired some of the most successful platforms today to similarly make their tools available without restrictions. It is this mentality that allows our industry to flourish, and much of it can be attributed to Microsoft Visual Basic."

 "Visual Basic had a huge impact on my early career as a developer and has helped countless PC and video game creators around the world bring their games to life," said Phil Spencer, head of Xbox. "I am incredibly proud the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences is recognizing the Microsoft Visual Basic team with the Technical Impact Award not only for their contribution to the art and science of computer programing, but ultimately for their significant impact on the gaming industry as a whole."

Alan Cooper, often regarded as the Father of Visual Basic, developed the drag-and-drop feature. His company, Tripod, was approached by Microsoft and Bill Gates to expand that feature into a form building application. Developed under the code name Ruby, it did not include a programming language so Microsoft decided to bundle it with the BASIC programming language. As a result, Visual Basic was born. Games like *Rattler Race* and *Rodent's Revenge* exploded into the scene, which laid the foundation for how games are created and developed today. Similarly, the Visual Basic team is humbled to see game engines like Unity and Unreal were inspired by this platform.

After many successful iterations from Visual Basic 1.0 to 6.0, Microsoft retired support in 2008 and in the meantime created the successor to this popular program, Visual Basic .NET. This program provided many enhancements, all ultimately focusing on what made Visual Basic popular: the rapid application development platform. In 2005 Microsoft also launched the Visual Basic 2005 Express which offered the tool for free for the first time, geared towards students, hobbyists and novices. Visual Basic in all its forms has been used by tens of millions of people across the globe.

The Technical Impact Award's previous and first inductee was the Apple App Store.

On-site registration for the 19th D.I.C.E. Awards and 2016 D.I.C.E. Summit is available. More information on the conference can be found here.

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