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PERSPECTIVES ON A NEW GENERATION OF BUSINESS GAMES

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Rapid advances in the technologies available to business game designers have been made. The business gaming movement, from a technological standpoint, has moved through a number of logical transitions from its mainframe origins in the late-1950s to relatively administrator-friendly personal computers (PCs) in the mid-1980s (Wolfe and Teach, 1987). In their most recent incarnations various PC-based games have also attempted to capitalize on the computer's interactive qualities through the creation of "what-if" scenarios, "electronic spread-sheets" and sales and demand forecasting routines. While these efforts are admirable it is believed they fall far short of what can be accomplished through what has become the new standard in personal computing power.

In creating the next generation's business game, or the game of the future, a number of realms must be considered- the computer technology available but also practical given academic-level budgetary constraints, the populations involved from both faculty and student perspectives, and the reward structures existing within higher education and commercial publishing circles. The symposium presents the observations of three business gaming experts who have been deeply involved in the movement for a number of years. The first speaker, Irwin Rausch from Didactic Systems, critiques four management games, which purportedly teach management. These games can serve as base lines from which future management games may be launched with the belief the virtues of those games

should be retained while their vices should be corrected. The second speaker, David Fritzsche, will deal with the potential offered by the new technologies that are available as well as assessments of the degree the field's current structure and practices may or may not capitalize on this great potential. Alvin Burns, the session's last speaker, presents his view of the major trends evolving in the institutional education environment. In presenting the trends he feels are important Dr. Burns will couple those trends with their implications for those creating and teaching with games in this new environment of the early 21st century. The session ends with a summary presented by the moderator and the fielding of audience questions and responses by the panelists.

REFERENCE

- Wolfe, J. & Teach, R. (1987) Three downloaded mainframe business games: A review. Academy of Management Review, 12, 181-192.