

Business

EA Tiburon embraces online gaming

Golf swing: Electronic Arts announced at the E3 video-game expo in L.A. that it's developing Tiger Woods PGA Tour Online. OrlandoSentinel.com/etanontech

Local firm signs merger, B7

Market watch

Stocks kick off June with a big rally, thanks to another wave of encouraging economic data Monday.

▲ **Dow**
+221.11
+2.60%
8,721.44

▲ **S&P 500**
+23.73
+2.58%
942.87

▲ **NYSE**
+165.00
+2.75%
6,169.07

▲ **NASDAQ**
+54.35
+3.06%
1,828.68

▲ **Oil**
+\$2.27
+3.42%
\$68.58

Company news

Cisco Systems advanced 5.4% to \$19.50. The computer networking hardware maker will replace General Motors in the 30-company Dow Jones industrial average on June 8.

Travelers Cos. added 3.1% to \$41.91. The property and casualty insurer will replace Citigroup in the Dow 30.

Walt Disney Co. gained 3.3% to \$25.03 after the entertainment company's 3-D feature film *Up* opened as the top moneymaker at the box office this past weekend.



The Florida Virtual School and 360Ed developed Conspiracy Code, a video game that teaches American history.

Playing in the past

Interactive video game offers innovative way to garner lessons about history

By Etan Horowitz
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Students who have trouble staying awake in history class now have a new way to learn about the Civil War and other topics: an interactive video game where they try to stop a band of evildoers from changing the past.

The game, called Conspiracy Code, was jointly developed by The Florida Virtual School and 360Ed, an Orlando company that makes education video games and software. The game officially launched Monday, although the two companies have been testing it with students and teachers since earlier this year.

"They are not memorizing facts, they are experiencing history," said Andy Ross, vice president of Global Services for the Florida Virtual School, which is based in Orlando and provides online courses to more than 60,000 students. "It's a different way of learning, and it's really engaging a lot of elements that kids look at today."

In the past couple of years, schools across the country have been incorporating video games and multimedia tools into lesson

plans, using technologies students are familiar with the engage and entertain them.

This is the second major "edutainment" product from 360Ed, which is staffed by recent graduates of the University of Central Florida and run by Ben Noel, the director of UCF's graduate school of video game design and development and a former executive at Electronic Arts' Tiburon studio in Maitland. In September, 360Ed released Burn Center, a game that simulates an explosion at a theme park to make sure doctors and nurses can treat burn victims.

In Conspiracy Code, students control two characters charged with uncovering a conspiracy to rewrite American history. To do this, the students progress through 10 missions where they collect clues that help them advance while teaching them history.

Each of the missions represents a chapter in a history book and built into the game are several ways for instructors to make sure students are retaining the information. This is done through essay questions, assignments where the students have to create a multimedia project such as a PowerPoint presentation or a video as well as through frequent phone conversations with the teacher.

The game is designed to replace an entire year of a high school American history course, and students can complete it at their own pace.

"I thought it was better [than a traditional class] because you get to go search for the clues and you don't want to stop looking for them," said Zachery Cox, 16, of Lakeland, one of the students who participated in the test of Conspiracy Code. "There are times when I just wanted to keep playing it."

NBA's impact

Magical finals bring big bucks to town

By Jim Stratton and Sara K. Clarke
SENTINEL STAFF WRITERS

Don't get Pat Nadiak wrong: She wants the Orlando Magic to win the NBA championship.

But if the longtime owner of Hoops Tavern were writing the script, the Magic's march to victory would last seven games — because every extra game means money in Nadiak's pocket.

"Last week against the [Cleveland] Cavs, we did triple the business we normally do," said Nadiak, who's run the blue-collar grill on Amelia Street for almost 20 years. "Let's hope next week it's quadrupled."

As the Magic gear up for their first NBA finals bid in 14 years, Central Florida businesses are hoping to cash in on the fans who descend on downtown and the global publicity that comes with making it this far.

The games will be beamed into 200 countries, giving millions of viewers a look at what Orlando has to offer. Like the Olympics and World Cup soccer, the series against the Los Angeles Lakers will serve as an extended commercial for Central Florida.

Count on seeing lots of sparkling images of Lake Eola and the downtown skyline, a feature or two on the new arena and regular shots of rowdy fans packing local watering holes.

"The playoffs represent an opportunity to showcase the region to a national audience," said Sean Snaith, an economist with the University of Central Florida. "As long as the coverage is positive, it is a boost for the region and may plant the seed for people and businesses who may be considering relocating to Central Florida."

During the run-up to the finals, fans have streamed into downtown Orlando pumping cash into an economy badly in need of some love. With each win, the crowds became bigger and less dependent on whether the

PLEASE SEE **MAGIC, B7**