

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE SPECIAL REPORT

Maraizon software advances for building project simulation

SEBASTOPOL – Maraizon International, the computer graphics and multimedia developer that adapted video game technology into a building design and development tool, has moved beyond its original Quake III-based graphics software.

The company has developed its own proprietary engine that can simulate a much larger area, according to Maraizon Principal and Creative Director John Leo.

"We built the first application using Quake to work on the Railroad Square project for Kellogg & Associates and later for the City of Santa Rosa. But it had a couple of drawbacks," he said.

For one thing, viewers had to have a copy of Quake III Arena to access simulations. Also, the engine was limited in the geographical area that could be viewed in one segment.

"We had to show it in pieces, each comprising an area of not more than a third mile by a third mile. But our new engine is far more powerful," said Mr. Leo.

The new software has features a video game developer would drool over. Not only can a viewer zoom in and around an area six square miles or more, but Maraizon developers Brad Blanchard and Jorge Tellez built algorithms to calculate and simulate dense landscapes and cityscapes.

A recent project for SMUD showing a proposed reservoir in the Sierra foothills depicts 2.5 million trees.

"And one of the key benefits is a significant reduction in costs," said Mr. Leo.

The images can be viewed from the perspective of an airplane pilot, a pedestrian or the driver of a car. Interiors can be walked through.

Maraizon uses a combination of images – satellite maps, aerial and street-level photos and artist's renderings – to form its simulations.

"We can handle much larger projects now," said Mr. Leo.

And larger projects are coming his company's way. Maraizon is working with developers of the 85-acre Regency shopping center on East Washington Street in Petaluma.

A new national franchise headquartered in Texas is using the service to develop a chain of retail stores. Long Beach is interested in a city-wide simulation. Maraizon is becoming known in China, where construction is constant.

Most commercial development projects require placing a simulation of a finished building or build-

ings into an existing setting.

"Our initial work is with the engineers, architects or designers," said Mr. Leo. "As the project progresses, city and county design review and planning groups are shown the simulations. Then the design can be altered according to their suggestions."



Maraizon uses a combination of satellite maps, aerial and street-level photos and artist's renderings to form its simulations, such as this one at Eighth and Wilson in Santa Rosa.

Maraizon's simulations are very helpful in speeding the permitting process, he said. They also make effective tools when it comes to raising capital from banks and other investors.

Once the project is completed, the Maraizon material often is put to use in a marketing campaign.

The simulation of the Regency project, for example, highlights its green features: The solar system, wind turbines and recycled building materials are pointed out during a virtual tour.

According to Maraizon Principal and Director of Marketing Leigh Thorsen, the move to green projects will heighten demand for the company's animations, a long-standing offering.

"An animation of how green principles work can go a long way toward helping people understand their value," she said.

Maraizon has four to five projects going at a given time, said Mr. Leo, and although the staff is small – just five employees in its Sebastopol office – its revenues have been growing at about 50 percent a year.

For more information, visit www.maraizon.com.



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