



Ross Dannenberg handles a wide-range of intellectual property issues, with experience in Internet, e-commerce, telecommunications, and computer software-related issues. With a background in computer science, Ross has prepared and prosecuted hundreds of patent applications in a variety of technical fields, including mobile and traditional telecommunications, computer software, video games, and Internet and business method inventions. He also has experience with intellectual property protection of video games, including patent and copyright protection, copyright clearance, and licensing, and has experience with entertainment, copyright, trademark and domain name related matters.



FRONTLINES: Q&A WITH ROSS A. DANNENBERG

IGDA Perspectives recently spoke with Ross Dannenberg, Principal Shareholder at Banner & Witcoff Ltd. of Washington D.C. Ross was recently named to the Steering Committee of the Intellectual Property Rights Committee. The Intellectual Property Rights Committee's mission is to support the understanding and proper use and protection of intellectual property in game development.

What do you see as the future of the game industry and how will the legal community help define our future?

The fun part about the game industry is that it's very difficult to predict the future or where it's going. When a new technology is developed, the laws often don't catch up for years. As attorneys, it's our responsibility to make existing laws work with new technologies (and vice versa) in a manner conducive to continued development and business success.

Describe your role as Steering Committee member on the IGDA Intellectual Property Rights Committee.

Well I'm new to the position so I'm still getting settled in. But it's not too unlike my position as Chair of the American Bar Association's IP Sec-

“I’m somewhat addicted to social gaming...”

tion Committee on Computer Games and Virtual Worlds. We're advisors, coordinators, and thought leaders, and are a resource for committee members as well. We're half sounding board, half activist.

“It’s great to say involved... and find out what is coming down the pike...”



Ross Dannenberg
Banner & Witcoff Ltd.

What do you hope to accomplish?

I think one big item is to update the IP resources that are available to IGDA members.

What makes you excited about your involvement?

Before becoming an attorney I was in software development. It's great to stay involved with game development and find out what is coming down the pike—both from a business perspective but I also like finding out what the new games will be!

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What's the most interesting trend you are seeing in Game Development?

Well there's always a latest trend. I'm currently fascinated by mob-based games, where decisions are made by the masses,

and individual decisions are constantly beyond your reach. That, and I'm somewhat addicted to social gaming—from Mafia Wars to Xbox Live (my gamertag is just "Aviator"—I was in the beta test way back when).

“IGDA is a great resource and network.”

Where do you go to get industry information?

I read various legal blogs (including my www.patentarcade.com), Gamasutra.com, wired.com, and just generally scan the news sites daily. I also monitor newly filed lawsuits on a daily basis.

What tools do you use to help you in your job?

My tools are very different from developer's tools. For example, I use RFCexpress.com to monitor video game lawsuits. Otherwise, as an attorney, it's pretty mundane stuff.

What advice would you give to someone who wanted to do what you do?

Don't expect success overnight, but don't give up either. I ran my blog for at least two years with very little acknowledgment before things started

to happen professionally as a result. Then I was appointed to the ABA committee chair position, I started getting invited to speak at conferences, etc. It takes time to build something meaningful.

Why is the IGDA community important?

IGDA is a great resource and network. Even as we rely more and more on technology, never forget that business is based on personal relationships and an element of trust. IGDA provides a venue for building both. 



IGDA MEMBERSHIP

Membership in IGDA is vitally important as it helps the association build three interrelated areas which directly support the industry and all who work within:

- o Community
- o Professional Development
- o Advocacy

Write for Us!
We are accepting articles for the following sections:

- “From the Field”
Member Profiles
- “In the News”
Industry Notices
- Press Releases
- “Members on the Move”
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- “Studio Spotlight”

Please submit articles and press releases electronically to news@igda.org