

Media Dojo Tear Sheet

Breakaway Ltd

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Summary: Breakaway develops games and game-based technologies for modeling, simulation and visualization. It works with the US military and other public institutions to apply gaming concepts and systems for training, experimentation and decision-making analysis.

The Problem being Attacked: Staff and decision makers need to train, simulate and experiment with real concepts and real situations---but without real consequences. Simulators for flight training or emergency medicine easily reach millions in cost.

The Approach to the Problem: Breakaway uses game development techniques and technologies to enable people to learn skills and concepts to solve real-world problems. Its sweet spot revolves around creating game-based solutions for simulations, modeling, and decision making analysis. Its signature product for military and homeland security clients is MOSBE (modeling and simulation builder for everyone). MOSBE puts a complete simulation toolkit on the desktop. It lets warfighters or peacekeepers develop and design custom simulations using actual geographic data to experiment with new concepts or tactics, set constraints and see how a simulation might play out before actually committing people and equipment. In the medical field, Breakaway partnered with Texas A&M and the office of Naval Research to create a fully immersive 3D environment to simulate emergency medical situations. The virtual patient displays realistic vital signs in response to injury. Drugs and techniques for keeping the patient alive are taken directly from the field.

Customer Base: Mostly government-based with heavy representation in military/homeland security and healthcare. Other areas include financial (eg. an auditor training game developed for FDIC). Private sector clients such as Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Booz Allen Hamilton typically have a heavy footprint in public work. Medical clients are schools such as Texas A&M, Medical College of Georgia.

Ownership: Privately held.

Unique Point: Breakaway is pioneering a new education category called Serious Games, which its CEO defines as "a game or game technology that is used for something other than entertainment". The game can be entertaining but it's got a specific purpose, typically associated with training, modeling or simulation. Henry Jenkins, formerly of MIT, said that the generation that grew up Super Mario has entered the workplace and politics. For them, games are just another form of communication.

Cloud Angle: In all areas of storage, processing and bandwidth, games will push cloud services just like games pushed hardware and software. The amount of data necessary for simulations is huge. Latency is a profound issue. And the fact that games require very sophisticated physics-based simulations means that processing gets hammered. Any cloud provider thinking that they can handle a gaming environment based on their experience scaling up e-commerce web sites is smoking something. It's a different animal.