



## Josee Lupien - Senior Animator

This may sound kind of funny but becoming an animator was never really what I wanted to do; it sort of ... happened!

I started my college studies in journalism/broadcasting in a small town in the province of Quebec, Canada. At the time I really wanted to be a journalist or a news reporter; I had great fun producing my class's yearbook on the computer, so I enrolled in journalism. But since I always had a passion for drawing, "visual art" and anything computer, this passion just could not go away, and I decided to stay in the same program but to switch to advertising and marketing instead.

As I was going through the 3-year program, the computer technologies were slowly becoming more and more sophisticated; back then we started hearing about 3-d graphics not only being used for the print media, but also used in cinema and television.

Our school decided to go ahead and acquire computers powerful enough to run software used in 3-d graphics; since Softimage was being developed in Montreal, we managed to get a few free copies.

Because 3-d was extensively used in advertising because it was more affordable, my school offered 3-d classes to advertising students, as well as television broadcasting students.

So there I was, hooked on the computer almost 24 hours-a-day! It was really addictive, and some folks who worked on the Jurassic Park movie came to visit us for a quick conference. I was so thrilled, this actually made me decide to carry on studying 3-d; the college I went to decided to open a school specializing in that particular field.

I was accepted and I move to Montreal to complete the one-year course. Everyone has their own particular strength; mine was animation. I just loved this notion of timing and expression, and had a good understanding of graphs and motion.

I got a job before the end of my course at Softimage as a tester. It was not the most glamorous job, but it allowed me to deepen my knowledge of the software. Before long I started to have itchy feet, and decided to leave Softimage to work as an animator on The Real Adventures of Johnny Quest television series for the Cartoon Network. Unfortunately this proved to be a little too complicated at the time, sending the data back and forth to California, it was simply easier to hire local people to finish the job so the project was cancelled. I went back to Softimage, but then I knew it was only a stepping stone to move elsewhere.

The Playstation had been launched during that period, and the hit game to support the launch was called WipeOut and being developed by Liverpool's Psygnosis Studios, later bought by Sony Computer Entertainment Europe.

A friend of mine with big contacts told me back then that the company had heard of the Montreal 3-d skilled people and were coming to recruit staff. I contacted the man responsible for this event, and got an interview with him, which went really well. Two weeks later I got a phone call from him: I had the job.

So in 1997 I set to move to England, and that was the start of a 7-year journey throughout the country, going from job to job, mainly in the games industry (SCEE Liverpool, SCEE Leeds, Warthog Games PLC, Cosgrove Hall Films).

The UK games industry underwent a tough time in the beginning of the millennium, and many companies had to close due to the strong competition between companies. So, I decided it was perhaps a good time to come explore the industry back in Montreal.

I knew of Ubisoft having grown very strong and steady. In fact, that was almost the only company with a worldwide reputation in the City. In 2004 I was hired to work on cinematics to be used in the game for storytelling and for marketing purposes.

Now I still work for Ubisoft, but I decided to work on in game cinematics, which are a little less cinematographic and more technical.

Having changed jobs so often forced me to adapt and to learn the tools I needed to know in order to perform in my job; now I can proudly say I know every big software used in the market; Max, XSI and Maya. I also learned that it was a good thing to extend your field of expertise, for example learning video editing, photography, image tracking. Even if you never end up doing this as a job, it can be useful in your work, and will always be useful to put a portfolio together.

