If you want to know what the future will be in gaming and communications, the person to ask is alum Sean M. Cooley who graduated in 2000 with his degree in Computer Graphic Design. Unfortunately, depending on your security clearance, he may not be able to tell you much. That is because he is the Leader/Technical Director of Game-based Training Solutions for the Northrop Grumman Corporation at Fort Knox and much of his work cannot be discussed.

Today he spends most of his time attending conferences and supervising the development of Virtual Battlespace 2 (VBS2) for the company. The product is described as “a fully interactive, three-dimensional training system providing a premium synthetic environment suitable for a wide range of military (or similar) training and experimentation purposes.” During a recent interview, he offered some tantalizing clues as to what might be ahead. It can best be described as a confluence of mobile devices and augmented reality.

Alum Sean Cooley
Director of Game-based Training Solutions for the Northrop Grumman Corporation at Fort Knox

What is Mobile Augmented Reality?

Imagine you are meeting a friend downtown for lunch. You point your camera around you, including an open parking spot with 45 minutes left on the meter. A virtual coupon from the restaurant across the street arrives via text offering $10 off lunch for two. That future may be closer than you think. So how did Cooley make it to beyond the cutting edge of today’s technology? Simple. Hard work. But getting there wasn’t easy.

A springboard to his career

Prior to starting at Louisville Tech (now SCTD), Sean said he had already wasted nearly two years of his life at another school. Regular school work consumed much of his time but he understood that there may be future ideas not quite ready for the classroom. He remembers overhearing two instructors talking about bringing Flash animation into the classroom; wondering whether to teach something to students that wasn’t on the curriculum yet. Since the prospects and profits seemed bright for the new technology, Sean wanted in on the ground floortors, he was able to put together a skill-set that was then still ahead of its time. He has moved up through the company, proficiency in MSOffice and PowerPoint are also vital. The greatest misconception people have about his work with new game technology is that he gets to play video games all day. Today he spends more of his time doing administrative duties and less with the creative aspects of the job. When asked what skills he thinks tomorrow’s graduates will need, he said, without hesitation, “public speaking and C++ programming.”

A love of reading is also essential. Cooley has access to some private industry and academic white papers and Engadget, TechCrunch, and SmashingBuzz are a few of his favorite news sites.

What does the gaming future hold?
Alum Sean Cooley could answer

Catching up with alum and inventor Franklin Whitson

When Franklin Whitson graduated from Louisville Technical Institute (now Sullivan College of Technology and Design) in 1965, little did he know that he would become part of the cutting edge of technology. It didn’t start out that way.

Frank began his classes on the bottom floor of the Heyburn Building, downtown. His engineering ingenuity was put to the test from the first day since the makeshift classrooms had drafting tables whose positions were adjusted using bricks. Whitson recently got a chance to recall those early days when he attended the dedication of SCTD’s New Energy Technology Building on the school campus. Shortly before the ceremony he also had the opportunity to confirm for Chancellor Sullivan the stories he had heard over the years such as those cobbled-together tables and tuxedo graduations.

Whitson was impressed with surroundings and the program. Since retiring a few years ago he is putting his expertise to use as a licensed home inspector. See www.fwhomeinspection.com for more information.