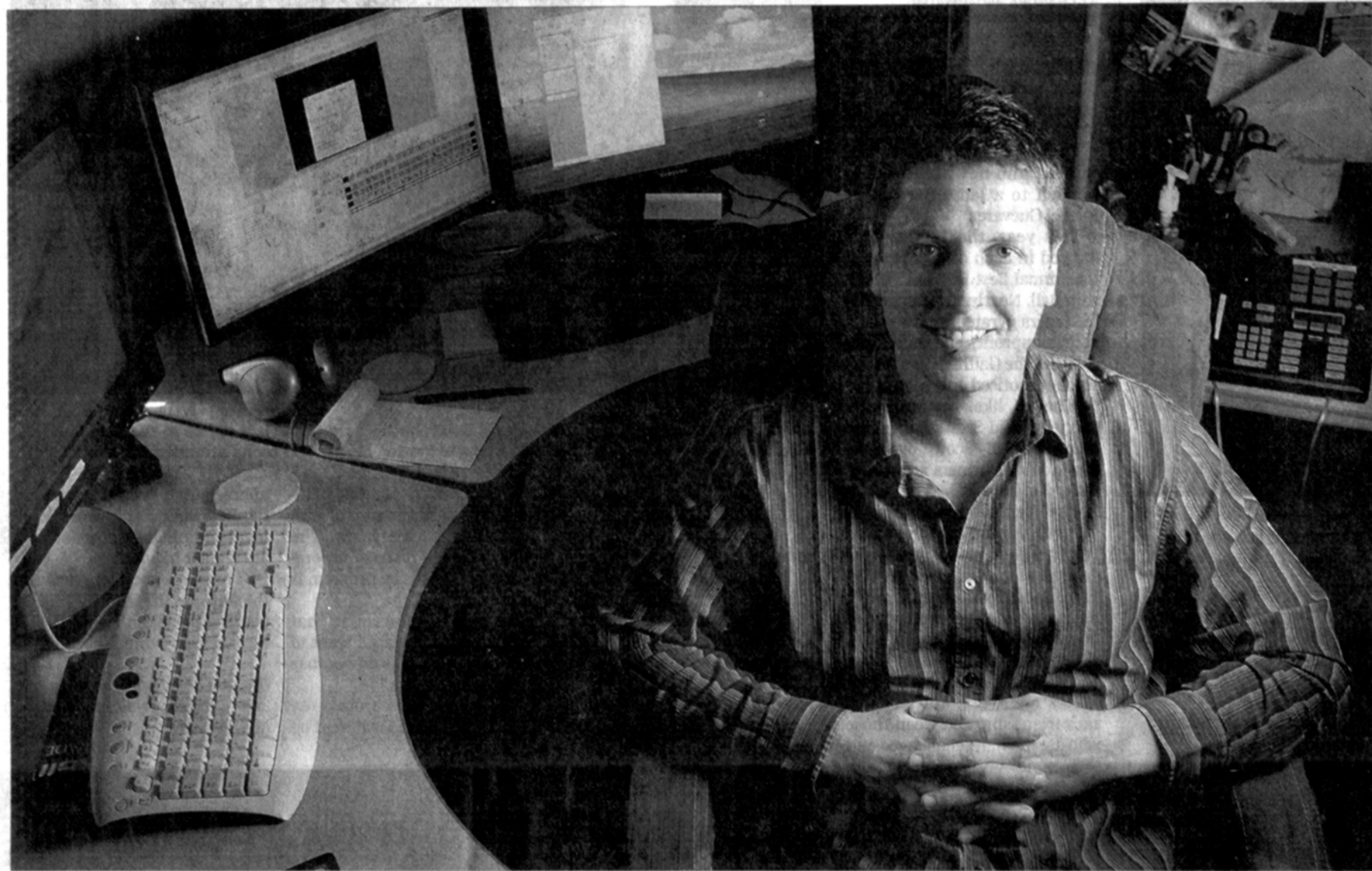


BUSINESS

Biz Q&A | Martin Grebing, creative director of Digital Tap



KERI WIGINTON | Times

Martin Grebing is the creative director at Digital Tap in Wesley Chapel. The studio provides animation, video production and graphic design services in North America.

Temp job became a dream job

BY ASJLYN LODER
Times Staff Writer

Art school paved Martin Grebing's unusual path to success. The 37-year-old from Bradenton parlayed a temporary job into an eventual partnership and a dream job as creative director of Digital Tap, a Wesley Chapel digital production and animation firm. The *Times* talked to him about a career that stretched from an international bridge to the *Zap Squad*, a cartoon about a "group of super kids that protects the world from evil."

How did you get into digital animation?

I've always wanted to be a cartoonist since I could hold a pencil. I love the Sunday morning comic strips, and that's what I wanted to do.

Where did you go to school?

I went to the Ringling School

of Art and Design. That's what it was called then. Now it's called the Ringling College of Art and Design. It was just starting to get known for the program back when I started in the early '90s. I always had a knack for creative stuff as well as computers, and it was the only place I had ever heard of at the time that offered a four-year bachelor's in creative animation.

Was it a good program?

Oh, yeah. It's hard to see a major movie anymore that doesn't have a couple of Ringling people in the credits.

How did you get started in the job you have now?

For the last four years, almost five years, I've been working at American Consulting Engineers. They hired me initially to work on a fly-through for a client, for a firm that wanted to build a bridge from Buffalo, N.Y., to Fort

Erie, Ontario (Canada).

What's a fly-through?

It's a three- or four-minute video that acts like a camera flying through this virtual environment.

But that was just a temporary job.

It was about six or eight months before I became full time, and they offered me the position.

What does the company do?

We started out with civil engineering as the bread and butter of the company. Now, we cover several different areas, like permitting, environmental scientists, and GIS experts.

How did you move up?

When I started at the company, there were probably only 30 or 40 people. Within a year or two, we almost doubled the size of the company. As the company grew,

our need for graphics grew.

And Digital Tap is now a division of American Consulting Engineers?

The demand for our services started growing outside our immediate company. As this demand started growing, that created the need for us to have our own graphics entity, our own identity, so we could market our services.

Digital Tap made this new animated movie, *Zap Squad*, and *The Sands of Time*. What is that about?

There's time travel. There's kids with super powers. They go back in time to ancient Egypt. It's a fun romp. Were getting a lot of favorites for Bad Breath Lucas. His super power is that he has corrosively bad breath. Another guy's power is, he's called Earthquake and if he eats too much junk food he blows up as big as a balloon and turns into huge

wrecking ball.

A cartoon about super kids seems pretty far from engineering.

One benefit of producing this cartoon was to show that we can do it. In addition to being a product we can sell, it functions as a really nice marketing piece. In a perfect world, that's where I want to be. I want to be writing and producing our own stuff, and be the hotshot studio that produces other people's ideas.

It sounds like the temp job really worked out for you.

It's been pretty crazy. I was very fortunate to find a company that's very forward thinking and aggressive. The owners in the company like to invest in people and not just resumes.

Asjlynn Loder can be reached at aloder@sptimes.com or (813) 225-3117.

Fight that corrupt folder

I have a Dell 5305 running Windows XP Service Pack 3 with Outlook Express 6.0. Recently I have been unable to delete some e-mails of a wide variety of text, video, photo. Is my Deleted Items file broken or is it something else? Please help.



JOHN TORRO
Solutions

Deleted e-mails get sent to a file named Deleted Items.dbx, which is represented by your Delete folder within Outlook Express. It is probably corrupted. From within Outlook Express click Tools, Options, Maintenance and click the Store Folder button. Copy that location into your copy buffer (highlight it and press Ctrl-C). Exit Outlook Express. Now click Start, Run and paste (Ctrl-P) the folder location into the command line and click OK. That will open Windows File Explorer to that directory (which is normally hidden). You will see a .DBX file for each of your Outlook Express folders. Delete the Deleted Items.dbx file. When you restart Outlook Express it will see that there is no file and create a new one.

My computer is a Dell Dimension 2400 with 512 MB of RAM and a 40 GB hard drive. On startup I keep getting the

following message: "Logitech desktopmessenger.exe lacks a '(the app ID separator)'. I have a Logitech cordless mouse. If that fact is of any significance, can I get rid of this message? I have no idea what it means. I also have Webroot Sweeper with Anti-Virus. It keeps quarantining a virus called W32/LibHack-A. Can you help with this virus and how to eliminate it? Is there some way of stopping it before it tries to install itself?"

That message is coming from Logitech Desktop Messenger. You don't need it, so you can try removing it through Add/Remove programs. If you run into an issue removing it, such as missing files, just disable it at startup as follows: Click Start, Run, type MSCONFIG and click OK. Click the Startup tab. Find the line referring to LogitechDesktopMessenger.exe and uncheck it to prevent it from loading. As far as the W32/Libhack-A, it is a trojan-type worm that hides and downloads other malware. If your antivirus keeps reporting it, it may be finding it in the system restore files. Check with Webroot support to verify this. You can also go to www.malwarebytes.org and download their free version of the Anti-Malware program. Follow the directions at that site.

I have a Lenovo R61e laptop running Windows Vista Home Premium Service Pack

1. I have a Reminder program, self-written in Visual Basic 6, which I like to display at startup. Windows will not display it then, but when I try to display it from a desktop icon, I get the message: "An unidentified program wants access to your computer. Don't run it unless you know where it's from or you've used it before." When I click "Agree," the program appears. Of course I know where it's from. Other programs I've written display without any trouble, and this same program has displayed on another Vista computer at startup, without a problem. How can I get it to appear without the "unidentified program" message?

If that program runs without the UAC prompt on another PC, that PC most likely has the UAC feature turned off. That would be one way to resolve your issue, but I highly recommend against doing that. Any program that is not digitally signed will produce the prompt. Digitally signing programs is beyond the scope of this column, but you can find more info on how to do it using the Vista SDK (Software Developers Kit), a free download.

Send questions to personaltech@sptimes.com or Personal Tech, P.O. Box 1121, St. Petersburg, FL 33731. Questions are answered only in this column.

People notes

Advertising

Schifino Lee Advertising & Branding, Tampa, announces that **Eric Leventhal** has been named a senior copywriter. Leventhal was a freelance writer.

Brand communications

Spark, Tampa, announces these appointments: **Katie Shelnut** to account executive, and **William Rossiter** has been promoted to designer. Shelnut was an account executive at Lord & Lasker, Tampa; and Rossiter served as an intern.

Construction

Skanska USA Building Inc., Tampa, announces that **Jeff Courtney** has been promoted to pre-construction manager, and **Dionne Sprunger** has been promoted to estimating engineer. Courtney was senior estimator, and Sprunger was document fulfillment systems coordinator.

Legal

Mercedes G. Hale has been named a shareholder at Steele Law Group PA, Tampa, and the firm will now be known as Steele + Hale PA. Hale was a partner at DLA Piper in Tampa. The firm concentrates in the areas of unfair competition counseling and litigation, including restrictive covenant enforcement and defense, trade secrets theft and defense, copywriting infringement, trademark, service mark, and trade dress infringement.

Lansing C. Scriven has been elected to the Board of Governors of the Florida Bar for a two-year term. Scriven is principal of Lansing C. Scriven PA, Tampa, and his practice concentrates in the areas of business litigation.



Shelnut



Courtney



Sprunger



Scriven

How GM, Chrysler will survive

WASHINGTON — Negotiations over the government's bailout of Chrysler and General Motors have shifted into high gear, and from this point until the end of June, things are likely to get more tense and complicated.

My guess is that when it's all over, both companies will have been run through a quickie bankruptcy process and will emerge smaller, with less debt, a lower cost structure and Uncle Sam as the majority owner.

The process is now being driven largely by Steven Rattner and Ron Bloom, the Obama administration's auto czars. They have laid down the parameters for talks among the companies; the United Auto Workers; the banks and bondholders; and, in the case of Chrysler, Italy's Fiat, which seeks to integrate Chrysler with its newly revived European operations.

The Obama team understands that it will get only one good shot at its \$40-billion rescue and that if its plan doesn't work, the companies will be shut down and sold off in pieces. Its priorities are to minimize damage to an already weak economy, protect workers and pensioners, and get the government out of the deal as quickly as possible with all of its money back.

What is the final rescue plan likely to look like?

For starters, it will certainly require that workers accept a wage and benefit package that would bring labor costs down to the levels of Toyota and Honda plants in the United States. Unionized workers will have to accept immediate reductions in base pay, along with increased cost sharing for their health insurance.

Even that's probably not enough, however. The generous defined-benefit pension plan that UAW members have always gotten will need to be replaced by company contributions to individual 401(k) plans. And to reduce the tens of billions of dollars that both GM and Chrysler have committed to fund a new retiree health plan, the government is likely to insist that benefits be trimmed.

Both companies will also have to lay off tens of thousands of additional employees as they eliminate brands, close more plants and outsource more noncore functions. Chrysler's product line will be reduced to Jeeps, minivans and trucks, along with a new line of passenger cars using Fiat-designed platforms and engines. GM will be left with its Chevrolet, Cadillac and Buick nameplates, along with GMC trucks.

Going through bankruptcy would allow both companies to bypass state laws and dramatically reduce the number of dealerships without having to take the time and bear the expense of buying back the franchises from their owners.

The toughest negotiations will be with the GM bondholders and Chrysler bankers. The question is how much of the new companies they will own. The government will be entitled to more than half of the stock of the reorganized companies. The union's health fund will probably be entitled to stakes of 20 to 25 percent. At Chrysler, there's also the matter of Fiat's contribution of technology and management services, which it offered for a 20 percent share.

That leaves only about 10 to 15 percent of each company. Bankers and bondholders will kick and scream and call it unfair, but in the end they'll take it because they'll conclude that it's better than the alternative. And that's the way GM and Chrysler will be saved.



STEVEN PEARLSTEIN
Washington Post

Send your job news

Send your **People Notes** or **Company Notes** (which now appear at money.tampabay.com) to dbrosan@sptimes.com. You are encouraged to submit a photo for People Notes, but not all will be used and they cannot be returned.