

# Dulce et decorum est pro patria party

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October 31, 2018



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On April 2, 1996, at the then-named Computer Game Developers Conference, Microsoft introduced DirectX 2.0 to great fanfare. And by great fanfare, I mean “ridiculous fanfare.”

Read [Jay Barnson’s account of the event](#). Do it.

I did not attend the party, but I did receive a surplus toga kit. I’ve donated it to [the Microsoft archives](#). The kit includes a fake laurel wreath, and a pouch containing DirectX coins and a few chocolate coins.

On what I presume to be the obverse of the chocolate coins is a head in profile with the message “sic itur ad astra“, which the Internet tells me translates as “[Thus we go to the stars.](#)” On the reverse it contains the ATI logo surrounded by the message “MILLIONS WILL FEEL THE POWER”.

The DirectX coins read

| PAX ROMANA  
| IV-II-MCMXCVI

The party theme *Pax Romana* intended to convey that [Microsoft was bringing an era of peace to the game industry by introducing a common API that targets all PC video cards](#), so game developers didn’t have to write custom drivers for every video card they wanted to support. (According to that article, the message was not welcomed by the game development community at the time.)

Here’s a [closer view of the pouch and the DirectX coins](#), part of [this retrospective of the history of DirectX](#) from the point of view of one of its founding members, Craig Eisler.

I hung onto this toga party kit for many years, initially thinking that maybe I could use the toga for a costume party or something, but a bout of spring cleaning convinced me to donate it to the Microsoft archives. “Never worn. Chocolate coins still uneaten. (We recommend that

you consult your doctor before attempting to eat multi-decade-old chocolate coins that were stored in a garage.)”

Bonus artifact: The PAX ROMANA poster.

### PAX ROMANA

THE DAWN OF A NEW CIVILIZATION TIRED OF HIGH-TECH CYBER-BABBLE? SICK OF THE INTERNET? DO YOU MISS A SIMPLER TIME BEFORE THERE WERE COMPUTERS, WHEN 'INTERACTIVE GAMES' MEANT THROWING CHRISTIANS TO THE LIONS? WELL, SPONSORED BY THE THREE COMPANIES YOU'D LEAST EXPECT, A ROMAN GALA OF EPIC PROPORTIONS IS TAKING PLACE ON THE FINAL DAY OF THE COMPUTER GAMES DEVELOPER CONFERENCE™ IN SANTA CLARA, CA. YES, EVERY CITIZEN OF THE GREAT PC EMPIRE IS INVITED TO AN EVENING OF FEASTING, TOURNAMENTS, MUSIC, SLAVE AUCTIONS, DEBAUCHERY, AND SILLY STRING (OKAY, MAYBE A LITTLE TECHNOLOGY) MICROSOFT,® ATI,® AND IBM® INVITE YOU TO THE LARGEST TOGA PARTY EVER, SPONSORED BY OTHERWISE SERIOUS AND RESPECTABLE COMPANIES! REGISTER QUICKLY BEFORE OUR MANAGEMENT CHANGES THEIR MINDS BECAUSE IF YOU MISS THIS EVENT, BEING TRAMPLED BY CHARIOTS WILL SEEM LIKE NOTHING COMPARED TO THE AGONY YOU'LL FEEL WHEN FRIENDS DESCRIBE THE BLAST THEY HAD AT THE PAX ROMANA WITHOUT YOU.



IF YOU CAN STILL FUNCTION THE NEXT DAY, WE'LL BE HOLDING AN ALL-DAY CONFERENCE CONSISTING OF THREE CONCURRENT TRACKS OF SESSIONS ON EVERY ASPECT OF WRITING STELLAR GAMES FOR MICROSOFT WINDOWS® 95, AND MASTERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF PC GAME TECHNOLOGY. THERE WILL BE AN OVERVIEW AND IN-DEPTH COVERAGE OF THE BETA RELEASES OF THE NEXT DIRECTX SDKs, FEATURING DIRECT3D®, DIRECTDRAW®, 2.0, AND DIRECTPLAY®, 2.0, FOR ON-LINE GAMING.

## **Tuesday April II, MCMXCVI**

6:30 – 11:30pm

Roman Circus and Toga Party

## **Wednesday April III, MCMXCVI**

An all-day seminar at the Santa Clara Westin® Hotel

Announcing the newest components of **DirectX®**:

### Direct3D

Integrated tightly with DirectDraw, Direct3D sets a baseline for killer real-time 3D that will really slay you.

### DirectPlayX

Microsoft takes multiplayer gaming to the Internet. DirectPlayX will provide a host of services for building on-line gaming servers and peer-to-peer connectivity.

WINE, TOGAS, GOLD, LIONS, SLAVES, ENTERTAINMENT AND VOMITORIVM SVPLIED. BRING YOVR OWN SANDALS.

REGISTRATION REQVIRED

Raymond Chen

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