

## Daniel Burwen Cognito Comics



Making media that matters: storytelling in the tablet age

### ABSTRACT

In this talk, Daniel Burwen, creative director of CIA : Operation Ajax, will give a retrospective of the process creating this groundbreaking graphic novel for the iPad, while examining other forms of new media coming out of the tablet space. He will also explore the various culture barriers to media creators and storytellers in the digital age, and hopes to leave the audience inspired, curious, and hungry to create.

**Daniel Burwen, a.k.a. dabu**, is the visionary behind Cognito Comics. He founded the company in 2008 to present socio-political and world issues to the general public through the engaging mediums of comics, animation, and games. Dabu started his professional career as a graphic designer and in 2005, his passion for video games inspired him to join Electronic Arts (EA) and Activision. During his tenures, he worked on large commercial game projects, creating cars and tanks for James Bond and Skate Parks for Tony Hawk. In 2007 he left Activision to pursue teaching, and has gone on to train artists at Academy of Art University, California College of the Arts, and Art Institute San Francisco. In 2008, looking to develop social cause based media, but deeming modern games too heavy of a pursuit to take on at that moment, he decided comics would be a good direction to try instead. Within months, he had met and signed Stephen Kinzer to bring Kinzer's renowned work to the masses through the art of comics. It was a stroke of luck that the iPad was announced just as Cognito was about to start production on its first comic book. Dabu did an about face and focused on creating a graphic novel that would take advantage of new technology. Since its completion in late 2011, CIA Operation Ajax has garnered critical acclaim, and dabu has presented the work at SXSW, Comicon San Diego, and Culture Tech in Northern Ireland.