

A Greek behind the creation of the Bionic eye

Professor Stan Skafidas (foto) of the University of Melbourne, who is of Greek origin, is according to "New Scientist" behind all the revolutionary changes in wireless communications (Wi-Fi).



company that designs and manufactures semiconductor products for enterprise class wireless systems. In his role as Chief Technology Officer at Bandspeed he was responsible for research and new product development. At Bandspeed he co-invented Adaptive Frequency Hopping a coexistence mechanism that is an important part of the Bluetooth standard. This technology is part of every Bluetooth device (ver 1.2 and later).

In July 2004 he joined NICTA as program leader of sensor networks at the Victorian Research Laboratory. Professor Skafidas is now Research Group Manager – Embedded Systems. He is a member of the IEEE 802.11/802.15 standard committees for Wireless Local and Personal Area networks.

In February this 2008, Stan and his team were the first in the world to announce the development of an integrated transceiver using the Complimentary Metal Oxide Semiconductor process which is capable of wirelessly delivering data multi gigabit per second data rates. This next generation wireless technology will enable the truly wireless office and home of the future.

His research interests include RF CMOS, Antennas and Propagation, Wireless Communications and Implantable devices.

More specifically, the researchers of the Australian Institute "Bionic Vision Australia", stated that their research on the creation of a bionic eye are in their final stage and within the next years they will proceed in using the implant on humans.

According to "Neos Kosmos", part of the research staff of the Institute is Professor of Digital Technology, Stan Skafidas, who currently is the head of NICTA research centre of the University of Melbourne, which is working directly with the "Bionic Vision Australia" institute.

The pioneer invention of the Australian scientists consists of a camera mounted on glasses, which captures images. Then, these images are converted into electrical signals which stimulate the neurons in the retina.

Stan Skafidas and his research team in the NICTA centre, have been developing for over three years the so called "magic" microchip, a catalyst for the right functioning of the bionic eye. The

microchip will be implanted in the patient and will convert the images captured by the small camera to electrical signals which in turn stimulate the neurons in the retina.

The success of research was welcomed by the Federal Government, which funded the research activities a few days ago by providing a grant of 42million AUD (28.5 EUR), in order to speed up the research process for the first bionic eye in the planet.

Stan Skafidas

Professor Efstratios (Stan) Skafidas received the Doctoral Degree in Electrical Engineering in 1997 at the University of Melbourne, Australia.

Prior to joining NICTA he co-founded Bandspeed, an Austin Texas based



Oldest human-made structure was a wall

The oldest manmade structure ever discovered has been found in a cave in central Greece, and was likely built by our Palaeolithic ancestors to keep out cool, ice-age winds, according to the Greek culture ministry.

The structure is little more than a roughly built stone wall that covers most of the entrance to a cave near Kalambaka, in the centre of country. Researchers say tests of four samples of the wall concluded it was built about 23,000 years ago.

"The dating matches the coldest period of the most recent ice age, indicating that the cavern's inhabitants built the stone wall to protect themselves from the cold," said a release from the Greek ministry.

Paleontologists have been excavating the Theopetra cave since 1987. They say it was inhabited from the Upper Palaeolithic period (50,000 to 10,000 years ago) onwards.

Michael Chiklis Launches His New Comic Book Pantheon at WonderCon

Michael Chiklis introduced the comic book series, Pantheon, at WonderCon, one of the country's leading comics and pop culture conventions, held April 2nd through the 4th. Created by Chiklis, Anny Simon Beck, and acclaimed comics writer, Marc Andreyko, Pantheon is a dark and stylized story of ancient Greek gods returning to a ravaged, chaotic near-future Earth, where they battle for the fate of mankind.

"As a kid, Greek Gods were very real to me, so the chance to bring my childhood heroes and villains to life in the modern world is irresistible," said Chiklis, a third generation Greek-American. "Besides, I couldn't say no to Zeus. . . no one in the family would ever talk to me again."

The five-issue series pits Zeus's fellow gods against the Titans in an epic battle of good versus evil, and father versus son. Breaking the golden rule of Greek mythology – to never reveal themselves – the gods Zeus, Aphrodite, Pandora, Cronus, Prometheus and Jason return to their timeless battles, as Armageddon nears.

Working closely with Chiklis, Beck and Andreyko will be rising star artist, Stephen Molnar, while the Sharp Brothers provide striking covers for the series. Launching at WonderCon, IDW, Chiklis, hosted a signing as well as a panel for Pantheon at San

Francisco's Moscone Center.

"It's not a bad idea to make yourself into a comic character," Chiklis joked during an un-moderated, early evening panel discussion with "Pantheon" scripter Marc Andreyko, a writer best known for his work on DC's "Manhunter" and "Torso," a graphic novel retelling of the Cleveland Torso Murderer who dismembered Ohio drifters in the mid 1930s. "Pantheon" is set in the near future where Miami is half-submerged due to melting polar icecaps and Olympian gods battle the ancient Titans as the world edges into Armageddon.

"I've always wanted to do something in the area of the Greek Gods," Chiklis said during a quick interview following the panel discussion, "but so many people were doing projects that really dealt with the classical Greek Gods and I always thought of doing something with the Greek Gods in a modern context." (When Chiklis mentioned his Greek heritage during the panel discussion, fans in the conference room quoted "300?" by yelling "Sparta!" This was, after all, a comic book convention.)

After Chiklis developed the idea with his collaborator Anny Simon Beck, he "went through the arduous task of looking for the right writer." He arrived upon Andreyko. "There were certain peoples' work that I

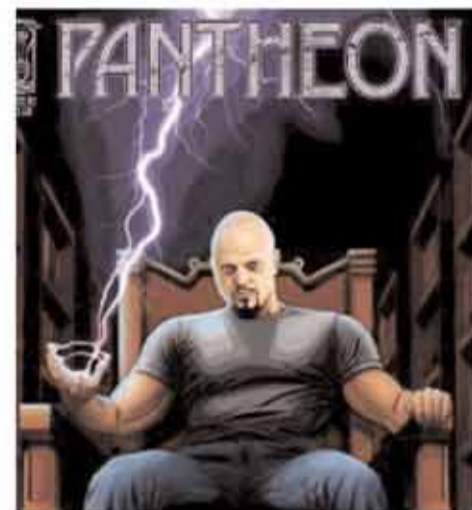
liked," Chiklis explained. "Marc Andreyko is one of them. I got into his series 'Torso.' That caught my imagination. I thought that was really well done."

From the outset of the interview, Chiklis' nervous publicist urged him to get to the IDW booth on the convention's main floor where a long line of fans had gathered to get their signed copies of "Pantheon." I asked him if we could talk a little bit more as we walked to his signing and he obliged me. With his steely blue eyes and wearing an open leather jacket and a gray t-shirt, he looked just like Vic Mackey. I half expected him to clue me in on the Armenian money train heist or how to shake down corrupt Mexican land developers. Instead, I asked him about his relationship with comic books.

"I was a huge Marvel fan growing up," Chiklis said as we sidestepped a roving squad of stormtroopers. "I loved Thor and Captain America and Iron Man and the Fantastic Four, naturally. They've always been part of my life."

"And then for a long time I got so busy with my career, (comic books) were sort of in the periphery for me in my life, but I always stop and pick something up that was new."

Although Chiklis wants to make "Pan-



theon" a "great graphic novel" and promises not to put his name on it and forget about it, the potential for a film franchise is never far from the actor's mind. "That was definitely behind it from the beginning," he confessed. "I can't lie."

"Now we've got to the point where the technology has leapt forward where I almost feel like I'm 14 again," the TV star turned comic creator enthused. "It's cooler than ever now. You can actually do in a film what is there on the page. You can achieve that and more and that's exciting."

On that note, Chiklis and I arrived at the IDW booth where a Parthenon's worth of fans cheered his arrival. As he turned to thank me for the interview before meeting his public, I once again felt as if I were looking into the gaze of a mythic character such as Vic Mackey or maybe even the post-apocalyptic version of Zeus the thunderbolt thrower.