

Abstract/Proposal Title:

Shaping Virtual World Collaborations: Working Across Government Silos

Abstract/Proposal description:

The National Defense University's iCollege offers distributed learning courses to graduate students from not only the Department of Defense, but also across the federal government. Virtual worlds (VW) (e.g., Second Life, Vastpark, etc.) offer a robust 3D web capability that can enhance interactivity and experiential learning. The paper will describe how the National Defense University's iCollege multi-organizational project, the Federal Consortium for Virtual Worlds (FCVW), is working to provide a VW elearning environment to serve multiple agencies within the US federal government. Benefits, challenges and solutions will be described. Examples of educational projects using VW will also be shown.

Implications for Practice:

The paper will describe a multi-sector project that is facilitating the use of VW across government. Participants will also find it useful in that it will:

- 1) identify uses of VW in government;
- 2) describe challenges and benefits of the use of VW;
- 3) demonstrate examples of uses of VW in education;
- 4) discuss collaboration models across multi-sectors for solving problems, sharing resources, and increasing communications.

Significant Outcomes/Insights:

The iCollege has learned a number of lessons in the creation and ongoing efforts of the FCVW to facilitate the use of VWs across government. For example, we have discovered:

- 1) the challenges and benefits of creating and maintaining a multi-sector (e.g., government, industry and academia) organization focused on solving a common government problem;
- 2) the government efficiencies that come from the creation of collaboration models/efforts (e.g., vGov and virtual .mil secure hosting of VW environments); and
- 3) the connections that the organization can make between industry to improve the functional capabilities of VW for government.

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