

Journal of • Virtual Worlds Research

jvwresearch.org ISSN: 1941-8477

Assembled 2016

April 2016 (Part 1)
Volume 9 No. 1



Volume 9, Number 1

Assembled 2016 (Part 1)

April 2016

Editor in Chief

Yesha Sivan
Tel Aviv University, Israel

Issue Editor

Sue Gregory
School of Education
University of New England, Australia

Coordinating Editor

Tzafnat Shpak



The JVWR is an academic journal. As such, it is dedicated to the open exchange of information. For this reason, JVWR is freely available to individuals and institutions. Copies of this journal or articles in this journal may be distributed for research or educational purposes only free of charge and without permission. However, the JVWR does not grant permission for use of any content in advertisements or advertising supplements or in any manner that would imply an endorsement of any product or service. All uses beyond research or educational purposes require the written permission of the JVWR. Authors who publish in the Journal of Virtual Worlds Research will release their articles under the Creative Commons Attribution No Derivative Works 3.0 United States (cc-by-nd) license. The Journal of Virtual Worlds Research is funded by its sponsors and contributions from readers.

Journal of Virtual Worlds Research

jvwresearch.org ISSN: 1941-8477

Volume 9, Number 1
Assembled 2016 (1)
April, 2016

Editorial

Sue Gregory
School of Education
University of New England, Australia

This first Assembled issue of the 2016 Journal of Virtual Worlds Research relates to an eclectic group of six articles covering a variety of aspects of the use of virtual worlds – including articles on: the history of the virtual economy, the use of non-player characters, a simulation for office-based medical staff emergencies, the relationship between a real and virtual supermarket, an evaluation of lighting controls, and a platform for connecting video games. More specifically the articles cover the following:

Nazir and Siu Man Lui, in their article “*A Brief History of Virtual Economy*”, present an overview of the virtual worlds of Second Life, Entropia Universe and World of Warcraft’s economy. The authors take the readers through events that occurred since virtual worlds’ inception into higher education and impact on the three virtual world’s economies. Presented are a variety of scenarios demonstrating that individuals and companies have made large sums of monies (even millions) through their use of the virtual world, and also that others have lost money. The authors also present a framework to identify characteristics of products and services available in the virtual world economies.

The second article presented by Banks and Martey “*Put on Your Game Face: Designing the Researcher Presence in Immersive Digital Environments*” provide a discussion on the use of non-player characters (NPC) in courses, and how students reacted to these through two case studies. Second Life and WoW (World of Warcraft) are also utilised in this research. The two case studies examine presence, identity and articulation of the researcher language, interactions and digital bodies. The authors explore the avatar’s appearance, interactivity, communication and movement. The authors conclude that, depending on how the NPC is set up, this can impact on the interaction between the NPC and participants. If the avatar appears human like and communicates relatively freely, they are made part of the group. However, when they are more robotic, they are mostly ignored, except for when they are needed for instructions or assistance.

The third article by Lemheney, Bond, Padon, LeClair, Miller and Susko, “*Developing Virtual Reality Simulations for Office-Based Medical Emergencies*” provide an overview of training for office-based medical staff for emergencies. Three high-risk medical scenarios were created that targeted office-based emergencies: chest pain, respiratory distress/allergic reaction, and suicidal risk.

AvayaLive Engage was used to custom-build interactive objects. Participants were physicians, clinicians, nurses, nurse assistants and registrar staff. Participants were encouraged to interact as they would in a live situation, such as using safety-oriented communication, checking electronic medical record, documenting and sharing encounter information, seeking assistance where necessary, and activating emergency services. The authors stated that feedback in relation to the virtual scenario training was received as overwhelmingly positive, particularly through teamwork, building scope of practice and rehearsing infrequently used clinical skills. Participants were provided with meaningful learning opportunities through the rapid development, implementation, and participant orientation of the virtual world scenario.

The fourth article by Khan and Brouwer “*The Relation between Customer Types in a Real Supermarket Compared to a Virtual Supermarket*” presents research on an understanding of how people behave, what to expect of them as customers and seeing whether the results are transferable to a virtual supermarket. The authors compare customer types in a real supermarket with behaviours in a virtual supermarket through the use of a cave automatic virtual environment (CAVE) using a mobile app with advertisements. They determined that there were nine types of customers and the majority of participants shopped in the virtual environment in the same manner as they did in a real supermarket. Customers were also willing to receive the advertisement in the same manner as displayed in the real environment.

The fifth article by Khan, van de Kraan, van Leest, Mason and Aliakseyeu, “*Utilizing Virtual Environments for the Evaluation of Lighting Controls*” presented an overview of the use of lighting controls in virtual environments as an experiment to authenticate real world use. The authors contend that through the use of a virtual environment during the planning stage, the correct lighting can be used because different scenarios can be tested prior to the implementation stage. The authors tested the use of a physical environment, a CAVE, and a screen using a virtual world to determine the best way to select the correct lighting prior to installation. The authors found that the virtual installations were incapable of replicating experiential aspects of the lab. However, both the CAVE and monitor were preferable when evaluating utilitarian aspects of interaction techniques for light. The participants in the research found the touch interface superior in the lab compared to using gestures to control the lighting in the CAVE and screen.

Lastly, the sixth article by Parkkila, Järvi, Hynninen, Ikonen and Porras presents an overview of using the cloud for connecting video games in their article “*Gamecloud – A Platform for Connecting Video Games*”. The authors undertook research to establish if gaming companies were interested in collaboration across games and cross-promotion. Business aspects play a major role when it comes to connecting games. To date, cameo roles have linked games in advertisements. The authors explored the possibility of creating a generic platform to connect multiple video games through such things as characters, items, and decisions made by players and events. Exploration was made in relation to linking one game to another or linking a game to reality. The technology was tested with four example games and was able to verify that connecting games is possible with little effort by the game developers. The testing of the platform with commercial game companies was difficult, as companies were not interested. Through the interview results, it was suggested that linking games was promising, however, companies felt it a risk to release their own data.

Again, in the tradition of the JVWR, we present six diverse views. Enjoy.