Exploring the affordances of virtual fieldwork in a multi-user, 3-D digital environment

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Virtual Skiddaw:
Exploring the affordances of virtual fieldwork in a multi-user, 3-D digital environment

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What we built

100 km² area
real data, maps

6 detailed sites
higher res
hand specimens
task lists

Navigation
avatars
guided (linear)
free-roaming
teleports

Chat
range adjustable

Support
manual, transcripts

Access via web browser
Gaming VFTs: challenges

Cost: resources, people, time
Real data: detail vs performance
Framework: self-contained vs adaptable
Comparisons: virtual vs physical fieldwork
Overload: not alienating non-gamers...

Gaming engine: affordances

‘3D’ landscape – geology in context; spatial literacy
Rich interface – interactivity and immersion
Self-contained – (mostly): little linked material
Multi-user – especially for distance learners
‘More than fieldwork’ – do something different:
  – flying
  – aerial views, map overlays
  – in-world cross-section
  – teleports (time-saving)
  – fadeable avatars
Evaluation & the future...

1. V-skiddaw at the OU
eSTeEM project + Steve Tilling

2. V-skiddaw for A-Level students

3. A Virtual Field Trip Service
   innovate UK project
   Daden Ltd, DesignThinkers, OU

What about: F2F students? or schools?

Virtual Field Trip Ecosystem

Authoring Institution
(Also likely to be a user institution, but could be non-educator)

User Institution

Geospatial Subcontractor

Web/Cloud

VFTaaS Operator (Daden)

Multiple Lesson Plans

KS1-3 GCSE/A UGrad

£ Revenue

Stream from

others’ use

£ Payment, eg per use, per loc, global pass, per annum

£ Management/Support Costs

Revenue/Cost flows in yellow

£ New Locations

£ New Features
Questions for you

1. Main attractions of Virtual Skiddaw?
2. How would you use a similar VFT?
3. Should we make more?
4. Would you like to be involved?
Shameless plug…

Project team (1)

**Open University**
 Shailey Minocha – *leader, virtual worlds*
 Tom Argles – *geologist*
 Brian Richardson – *production manager*
 Kat Garrow – *project manager*
 Sarah Hack – *graphic designer*
 Nick Braithwaite – *OSL Director*
 Sarah Davies – *academic consultant*

**Trent & Peak Archaeology**
 David Strange-Walker – *LiDAR, photogram*
Project team (2)

Daden Ltd
David Burden – *project lead*
Paul Rahme – *programmer*
Macdonald Mbaya – *programmer*
Darrell Smith – *project manager*
Tim Lozinski – *graphics/environment*
Iain Brazendale – *programmer*
Lucy Smallwood-Rose – *administrator*
Guy Wallace – *graphic designer*
Chris Stevens – *programmer*