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

Tom Argles, Shailey Minocha
(The Open University)
David Burden
(Daden Ltd)

email: tom.argles@open.ac.uk

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
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**
   eSTeM project + Steve Tilling

2. **V-skiddaw for A-Level students**

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

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**Virtual Field Trip Ecosystem**

- **Authoring Institution** (also likely to be a user institution, but could be non-educator)
  - Technically Skilled Educator/Staff
  - Create new locations and core lesson plans
  - Under contract (if req)
  - Digitise area from sat/aerial/site

- **User Institution**
  - Educators
  - Customise Lesson Plans
  - Learning Analytics
  - Experience Virtual Field Trips
  - Create User Generated Content

- **Web/Cloud**
  - Multiple Locations, eg
    - Skiddaw
    - Snowdon
    - Everest
    - Moon

- **Multiple Lesson Plans**
  - KS1-3
  - GCSE
  - A Level
  - U/Grad

- **VFTaaS Operator** (Daden)
  - New Locations
  - New Features
  - Management/Support Costs

- **£ Revenue/Cost flows in yellow**
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...

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Popular experiments

News

UN 155% says humans cause warming - 27 Sep 2013

Scientists are 95% certain that humans are the "dominant cause" of global warming since the View

Mammals threatened by fragmentation - 26 Sep 2013

Small mammals affected by rainforest fragmentation are likely to be wiped out more quickly than

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

Site visit, April 2013