



V-BIZ and V-GOV: Researching Virtual Businesses and Governments in Virtual Worlds

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Currently Teaching Course BUS659:
Virtual Worlds (VW's) and New Realities



Who Are We?

RL (Real Life)

- Benn R. Konsynski
- Professor: Emory University
- Studied VW's for >15 years

SL

- Rejin Tenjin
- Owner: SIMsim Island
- "Born" to SL in Fall 2006



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- David A. Bray
 - PhD Candidate: Emory U.
 - Previously IT Chief for Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Program, CDC

- Secure Courier
- PRIM Minister for SIMsim



In Terms of IS: What's Different?

- A sense of body:
You can see yourself and others as well as see their behaviors; by seeing actions can better discern intent
- Psychologically “mirror neurons” in the human brain reside near the language centers



In Terms of IS: What's Different?

- A flexible sense of identity:
I can transmute my identity into a form to which you might be more favorable
- Psychologically I can shift my identity to look more like you, or mask elements of my background you might not like



V-BIZ: Q's Worth Researching

- Identity: What (if anything) do the attributes and behaviors presented by a VW avatar reveal about an individual's RL persona and values?
- Co-Creation: What mechanisms best engage large distrusted VW avatars in providing product feedback or co-producing products?



V-BIZ: Q's Worth Researching

- Emergence: What rules and standards in VW's are best conducive to thriving economies?
- Convergence: What influence does RL have on VW's and VW's on RL commerce; do avatars play economic experiments differently (i.e., the ultimatum game?)



V-BIZ: Q's Worth Researching

- Attention Economies: How will businesses be able to attract the time of VW users (recognizing limits on user attention?)
- Augmented Reality: From design science, what elements of both RL and VW's shape consumer behaviors; why do people buy products in VW's?



When V-BIZ and V-GOV Collide

- Debates over centralized VW governance:
Second Life “protests” over in-world taxation or DotSoul’s 3 rules of their VW
- Real-world governance influencing VW:
FBI crack-down on in-world gambling
VW demonstrations with French Elections
- In-world endogenous governance:
Anshe Chung’s “zoning” of VW real estate
VW products growing in popularity → RL



V-GOV: Q's Worth Researching

- Identity: To what groups to avatars claim fidelity; how does identity influence both transnational issues and RL national borders?
- Co-Creation: Might a “fifth estate” arise to represent VW avatars (a vox populi) and how do VW's influence RL governments?



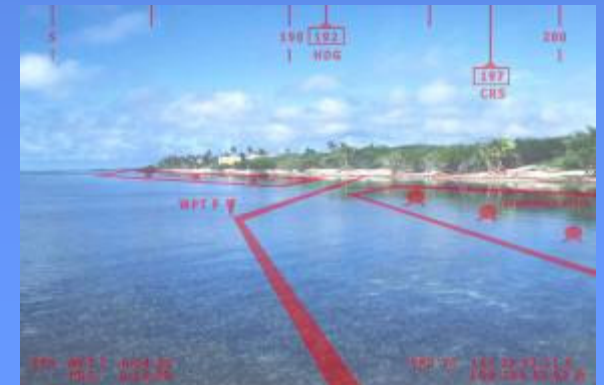
V-GOV: Q's Worth Researching

- Emergence: What starting conditions of VW's are superior for cooperative governance and distributed decision-making outcomes?
- Convergence: What role does RL have on influencing VW's and VW's on RL rule-making or knowledge collaboration endeavors?



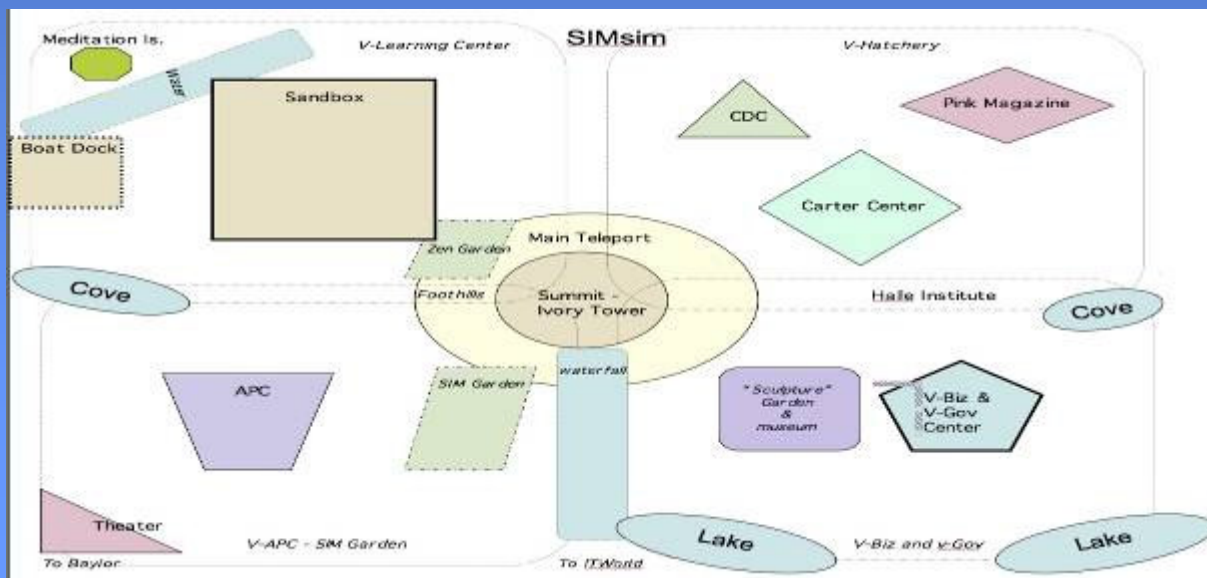
V-GOV: Q's Worth Researching

- Attention Economies: How can we share elements of avatar identities and behaviors across multiple VW's and how does this influence outcomes?
- Augmented Reality: From design science, do hybrid RL and VW interfaces influence system use and outcomes?



An Initial Research Foray: SIMsim

- Virtual Island in SL: Developed to embody the intersection of multiple domains:
 - V-Learning (MBA and BBA students)
 - V-Tech (Advanced Practices Council)
 - V-BIZ and V-GOV
 - V-Hatchery (new VW prototypes)



Research Approaches for VW

- Experiments, either behavioral or exp. economics
- Behavioral data, observational studies
- Ethnographies “in-world”
- Interviews, surveys
- Network analysis of relationships
- Content analysis of chat logs, voice chat, images
- Functional MRI, brain activity



Where are VW's Going?

- One future: 3D interface for web browsers
- More intuitive approaches to interactions through the Internet, better alignment to human cognition of “search” activities and results
- Who will be the Google-equivalent for VW's?



Navigating VW's By Thought

- Already here!
- Researchers have already developed interfaces that allow what you think to move your avatar and shape VW's
- True intersection of human-computer interfaces



Questions? How to Reach Us:

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