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Federal Virtual Worlds Challenge Finalists Announced

Orlando, FL - This week, the U.S. Army Simulation & Training Technology Center announced the finalists in the inaugural Federal Virtual Worlds Challenge (FVWC). The challenge was launched in August 2009 to reach a global development community to explore innovative and interactive training and analysis solutions in virtual worlds. The goal was to expose possibilities for using virtual worlds that may have not been considered by the U.S. Government. Evaluators across the United States Government including the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Transportation and Health and Human Services were instrumental in determining the finalists. Even though the Federal Government is the intended beneficiary of what is learned from the challenge, the public has been invited to participate through a public review process available on the website which will remain open through the coming months.

Submissions were received from the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada and made use of a variety of virtual worlds: such as Second Life™, Active Worlds™ and 3DInternet. Entries were then divided into four categories: Collaboration, Skill Building, Instruction and Visualization.

"It was clear that there were groups of developers who were pushing the envelope of training and analysis capabilities within virtual worlds. Our hope was that the Federal Virtual World Challenge would expose those "pockets of excellence" and provide an opportunity to build relationships between these innovators and the Federal Government. We were very pleased with the quality of the entries submitted in the inaugural year of this event and we believe that each of the finalists have demonstrated great innovation in the use of this emerging platform." says Tami Griffith, the creator of the challenge.

Finalists in each category from both the Government/Government Contractor and the Non-Government categories are invited to demonstrate their entries and attend the award ceremony taking place on the final day of the Defense Users' GameTech Conference in Orlando March 29-31, 2010. Non-Government winners will receive travel accommodations to the conference. This group is also eligible to receive a monetary award in the amounts of \$1000, \$500 or \$250 for first through third place. Additionally, the director of the Simulation & Training Technology Center will have the option of awarding a \$25,000 grand prize if a submission provides a significant advancement and would likely lead to additional future Government investment. However, the real value to the finalists may be the recognition gained for their innovations and the potential of follow-on work with the Government.

Finally, the finalists are invited to provide a poster session at the Federal Consortium of Virtual Worlds event in Washington, D.C., May 13-14, 2010.

The Non-Government category finalists, in alphabetical order of entry are:

- Building 3D Models in Second Life - Dr. Cynthia Calongne
- Breakdown - Jeremiah Isbell
- DataScape – David Burden
- Hyper-Reality – Kevin Simkins
- Imagine – Kevin Simkins
- Immersive Learning Environment - Donelle Bunch-Sydow
- PIVOTE - David Burden
- Tactical Situation Visualization – James Stibbards
- Tredpro Fusion Fire System - Aaron Buley
- Virtual Training Partners – Mark Jankowski

The Government/Government Contractor category finalists, in alphabetical order of entry are:

- Army Family Support Center - Jaque Davison
- Chicken Chase - Dana Moore
- iSched – Virtual World Training Scheduler - Alexandre Gosselin
- I-Room - Austin Tate
- Mars Expedition Strategy Challenge - Mike McCrocklin/Andrew Stricker/Dr. Cynthia Calongne
- Play2Train - Ramashsharma Ramloll
- VetAdvisor Virtual Room - Dan Frank
- Virtual Border Crossing Simulation - Ken Hudson
- Virtual Power Station and Grid - Thomas Stead