

6th European Conference on
**eGuidance: widening access to
lifelong guidance**

Adopting Virtual Worlds

A fact of (second) life

- Virtual worlds (VWs) are **here to stay and grow**: better try and make the most of them
- **Online games** = most surveyed - profitable! – subset of VWs
- **Lessons** to be drawn as to education and governance

EDUCATION 1

- **OECD** on Videogames & Education, Santiago, October 2007 (see www.enlaces.cl/seminariovideojuegos)
- **Serge Tisseron** submits that games drive:
 - IMMERSION
 - INTERACTION
 - RECOGNITION
 - NEGOTIATION

EDUCATION 1

- Air-tight **immersion** guarantees full **attention**
- **Interaction** elicits a sense of responsibility, **ownership**; makes for child-centered, customized knowledge appropriation
- **Impersonation** combined to instant feedback makes for safe simulation, enhances **self-esteem**
- **Negotiation** opens minds to **new sources of learning**.

EDUCATION 2

- **Mediappro** (www.mediappro.org) pinned down a widening **gap** between schools/home, street
- **GiS** (http://games.eun.org/upload/gis_synthesis_report_en.pdf) took stock of how **games** are used at school, identified prerequisites for their **productive use**

EDUCATION 2

- In 2006, Mediapro contrasted the youth's **passion** for game consoles, home PCs, mobile phones, etc with the **dearth of attention** given to school curriculum
- Interestingly, Mediapro found out that the youth are eager to **learn from their elders** how to reconcile their passion with a meaningful, productive life. This gives parents, teachers a chance to restore their authority. It ties in with GiS' prerequisite 1, **coaching**.

EDUCATION 2

- GiS also documented the fact that using games increases the use of traditional teaching aids (complementarity, **no displacement**)
- Standing for **mass collaboration**, VWs fit the shift to child-centered knowledge appropriation

GOVERNANCE 1

- Edward Castronova: « Online games » = misnomer;
« **synthetic worlds** » = more fitting
- Virtual communities = ideal **testing grounds** for social behaviour
- Publishers, users = **2 basic constituencies**

GOVERNANCE 1

- Game designers = **gods** (Richard Bartle). Likewise, chat room moderators = **judges**
- Game **publishers** need to be educated to governance
- Purpose of the guidelines of the **Council of Europe** (real world-assisted governance of VWs, see www.coe.int)
- **Users** too need an education: who's in charge?

GOVERNANCE 2

- The 5th c. BC « **Polis** » rediscovered?
- **Risks:**
 - full divulgation of private life in social networks
 - Transparency: success, failure decided by popular demand
- **Rewards:**
 - free, agora-like debate on blogs, in chatrooms
 - equal opportunity to contribute to VWs' « politis »

CHALLENGES AHEAD 1

- Option **1** = **ignore** or play down VWs= the generation gap will only grow
- Option **2** = **make the most** of VWs
- **EU** institutions go for **Option 2**:
 - FP7 TEL call = example
 - E-Inclusion on self-training, job mobility, ageing better, etc
 - Web 2.0 seen as « digital equalizer » affording everyone the same chances irrespective of social status, education, location.

CHALLENGES AHEAD 2

- **EU** foresight:
 - EC Com 28.04.08
 - EP Reso 12.03.09
 - EP Reco 26.03.09
- **CoE** foresight:
 - 2008 guidelines to online gaming, ISPs
 - Draft Reco regarding online content
- **UNESCO** Convention on cultural diversity

CHALLENGES AHEAD 3

- **Regulation**-wise, a UKG-OECD workshop held in March 2009 found that:
 - most virtual worlds offer a combination of content, media and plain space
 - all three components have been subject to longstanding, well-tested legal provisions
- Logic would then recommend a **mix** of:
 - applicable law
 - light-touch regulation designed under the auspices of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

CONCLUSIONS

- VWs = **effective tools** to get students and citizens ready **for the 21st century**
- Ubiquitous, affordable, harmless and user-friendly **access** to VWs will encourage their **adoption** “from cradle to grave”
- VWs’ **regulation** must be **conspicuous** enough to inspire trust but **light** lest innovative use is stifled.