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3-D Internet: Capturing Visitor Insights with Best Practices in Virtual Worlds

Brian S. Utesch

Anthony D. Hall, Rob Johnson, Sonal Starr, Greg Bender

ibm.com Global Web User Engineering

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Overview

Purpose

- Understand the *voice of the customer*
- *Develop methods* relevant to virtual worlds

Methods

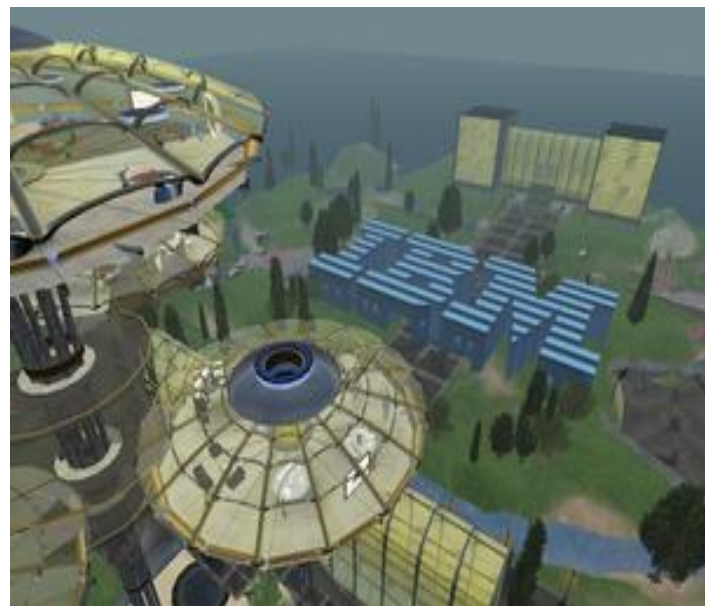
- complexity
- low
- high
- Instrumented feedback (object)
 - Scale: on-going drop box, plus sampling 100+
 - Ethnographic observation
 - Scale: Observing 1 up to a few
 - Interviews/Role playing
 - Scale: 1 on 1 interaction
 - Panel survey
 - Scale: 100+ asynchronous feedback
 - Virtual focus groups
 - Scale: DSC up to 12, scale up to 30 to 60
 - Visual attention
 - Scale: 1 on 1 observation

VBC in Second Life

Purpose: Clients who want to buy hardware, software or services, or get help solving a business problem, can *meet with a sales rep* in the IBM Virtual Business Center

Accessible through Second Life, it is unique because it is staffed by real IBM sales representatives from around the world, not robots or kiosks, who can chat with visitors in *several languages* and build business relationship

The center, which has had 10,000 visitors since it opened (6/2007 - 10/2007) offers visitors the opportunity to connect with a real IBM representative 24 hours, five days a week



Instrumented Feedback

Purpose: Provide a mechanism to capture visitor *self-report impressions* of the 3D environment

Implementation

- Accessible via a *3D object* in the form of a book
- Browser window, hosted by IBM (secure)
- Pervasive coverage
- *Six questions* (2 optional event) plus a free-form comment field



Next steps

- Secure, *in-world* feedback
- Engaging object
- *Incentives*

Lessons learned

- *Keep it short* (max 10 questions) to increase response rate
- 3D survey object, rather than 2D
- *Iconic design*

- Use in conjunction with traffic metrics

Ethnographic Observation

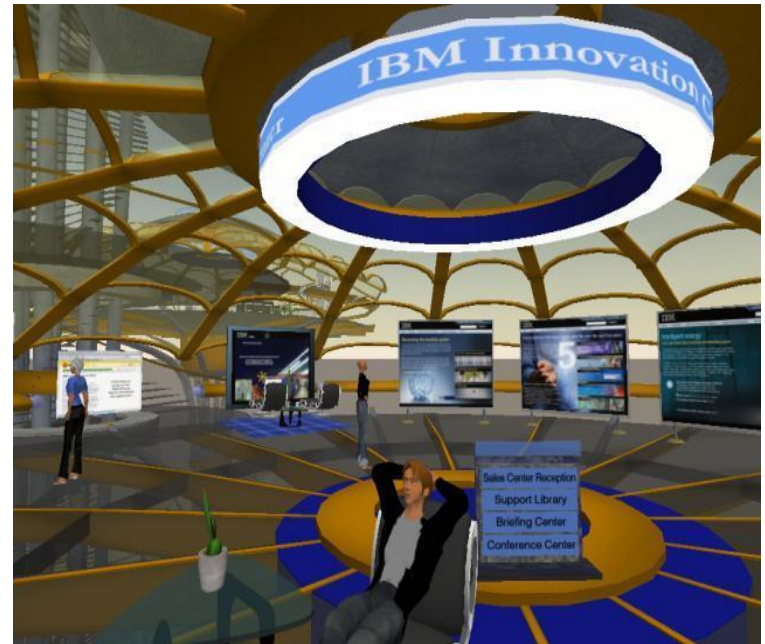
Purpose: Limited observations, provide an initial summary and a *viability assessment* of method

Procedure

- Trained practitioners
- Pre-defined times and locations
- *Independent observations*
- Identified as IBM
- Pre-determined responses

Next steps

- *Engage SL culture* and thought leaders
- Interviews with influencers in SL



Lessons learned

- *Sufficient traffic* is needed for patterns
- Non-descript clothing
- Text chat *requires close proximity*. Immersion less stealth
- Observers in different areas worked well

Interviews/Role Playing

Purpose: How well SL provides the desirable “*sales atmosphere*” available in Real Life

Procedure

- Recruited a IBM sales rep with SL use
- A research *team member = customer role*
- Scenario “role playing” to *simulate customer engagement*
- All communication was conducted via typed chat
- Questionnaire used to capture input

Next steps

- *Incentives* to encourage rep participation
- Recruit existing customers

Lessons learned

- Available pool is much smaller (diff recruiting)
- *Big savings* in travel coordination, time, and cost
- Communication within Second Life takes *longer than in real life*

Panel Survey

Purpose: *External view* for situational assessment and continuous improvement

Procedure

- Panel provider recruit *100 savvy SL users*
- Participation incentives (Lindens and US \$)
- 56 questions* in the survey (with logic)
- Survey categories: Demographics, SL activity, VBC Impressions, Comparing other F500 islands, Original ideas

Next steps

- Add business users to panel

	VBC	F2F	Email	tChat	Phone	Web	vConf	Other
Learn about	40%	6%	18%	1%	2%	29%	1%	3%
Shop for	20%	10%	4%	1%	1%	60%	0%	4%
Get support	26%	5%	9%	12%	21%	20%	3%	4%
DDD	20%	25%	8%	5%	2%	24%	7%	9%
Manage	10%	5%	12%	0%	7%	60%	1%	4%
Collaborate	30%	22%	7%	2%	2%	18%	11%	8%

Lessons learned

- Compensation very *inexpensive* (roughly \$1 = \$100L)
- Only one major panel provider in SL
- SL users eager* to provide feedback
- Traditional *business roles difficult to find*



Virtual Focus Groups

Purpose: *Replicate* real-life focus group methodology

Implementation

- *Presentation board*
- Virtual cameras
- *In-world recruiting*
- Questionnaire
- Security measures

Next steps

- *Add voice* communication
- *In-world response* mechanism



Lessons learned

- *Controlled access* (perimeter interruptions)
- Travel *cost avoidance*
- Communication takes longer (typing)

Visual Attention

Purpose: *Capture visual attention* of visitors within the 3D internet environment

Implementation

- 15 participants with Second Life experience were recruited
- Each participant was given *5 tasks*
- An in-person single subject test protocol with a non-obtrusive *eye tracking mechanism*

Next steps

Large samples, in Geographies



Lessons learned

- Common in 2D web, uncommon in 3D web
- Higher cost, *harder problem to represent* in 3D cubes of reference, blooms

Visitor Insights

- Most visitors come to *Learn* (rather than Support, Develop/deploy, Shop or Engage a Rep)
- *Participants were impressed* IBM wanted to know what residents thought
- SL residents are looking for a *fun, novel and informative experience*
- *Staffing* is viewed as critical and a competitive differentiator but risky if done poorly
- The corporate experience is *building brand image* and goodwill rather than immediate revenue
- IBM should focus on providing *benefits to residents*, particularly in-world small business owners (e.g., offer training and skills)