IBM Moves Real-Time Communication and Collaboration Into 3-D

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IBM Research announced a new project, dubbed "Sametime 3-D," demonstrating the integration of Lotus Sametime with several virtual environments. The project showcases the business value virtual environments can bring to the future of C

Specifically, users can instant message a colleague and instead of only chatting with one another, launch into an immersive 3-D environment directly from within the Sametime chat session. "Sametime 3-D" creates a virtual meeting space 'on demand' that uses the capabilities of the virtual environment, including presentation tools, access to 3-D objects in the avatar's inventory and full avatar functionality.

As the 3-D meeting space is launched, people have the option to attach files, select a meeting space type and sign in using their existing enterprise authentication tools. Future work includes the provision of recording and reporting capabilities that the meeting initiator can use to capture text chat, video recording of the meeting and maintain a record of participants and materials, including the entire meeting space.

Today, at the Virtual Worlds Conference and Expo, IBM will be demonstrating the integration of Lotus Sametime with the OpenSim virtual world platform.

"The ability to easily integrate existing communication and collaboration tools in 3-D environments will allow businesses to clearly realize the ROI of virtual environments," said Colin Parris, vice president of Digital

Convergence. "Extending the real-time connection between people into a 3-D medium enhances the experience and productivity of teams located across the country or the world."

The IBM collaboration vision is to foster innovation and business agility by making it easier for people to find, connect to and collaborate with one another through a unified communications experience -- right from their familiar devices, applications, and processes.

In addition to IBM's work with the OpenSim platform, IBM and Forterra Systems have been working together to develop and release later in 2008 a futuristic unified communications solution code-named "Babel Bridge" for the U.S. intelligence agencies. This robust feature set also addresses the needs of other industries like financial services, energy, consulting services, and healthcare.

The combination of IBM Sametime's unified communication and collaboration platform and Forterra's On-Line Interactive Virtual Environment (OLIVE) immersive 3-D environment takes group collaboration productivity to a new level, incorporating not only voice, video, and media, but it adds the important element of a sense of presence and digital identities that build stronger relationships.

Also, IBM is pursuing similar integration capabilities between Lotus Sametime software/IBM Unified Communications and Collaboration (UC2) platform and a variety of other environments including the ActiveWorlds platform.

For more information about IBM's 3-D Internet initiatives, visit: www.ibm.com/3Dinternet .

For more information about the OpenSim community, visit opensimulator.org/wiki/Main_Page .