

## **Eduserv Awards £333,000 for Research into Online Learning & Education in New Virtual Worlds**

**Bath, 7th June 2007** – Eduserv, the not-for-profit IT services group, today announces that its Foundation has awarded grants totalling £333,000 to fund four research projects, each of which involve investigations into the use of virtual worlds in learning and education. The Foundation's grant programme is designed to drive the effective application of IT in education.

The projects, conducted by Oxford University, Kings College London, London Knowledge Lab and University of Paisley, will investigate how educators can develop effective means of incorporating 3-D virtual worlds into teaching and learning.

Diane Carr, post doctoral research fellow in media and education at the London Knowledge Lab, will use the grant to analyse the effectiveness and appropriateness of learning in online worlds such as World of Warcraft and Second Life. Courses will be taught in Second Life and the outcomes assessed.

Daniel Livingstone, lecturer at the University of Paisley's school of computing, will research and develop pedagogical theories relevant to multi-user 3-D virtual worlds and develop Sloodle (an open source project integrating Second Life and Moodle) to provide the tools required for the support and management of student's learning.

At Kings College London, Prof. Richard Beacham will also explore learning in Second Life by developing replica models of 19 European theatres from different historical periods and investigating how they can be used in practical teaching situations.

Dr. Kenneth Michael Kahn, senior researcher at Oxford University's Learning Technologies Group, will focus his research - 'Modelling4All' - on developing ways in which creating computer models for use in learning and research no longer has to be limited to those with extensive programming skills.

Andy Powell, head of development at Eduserv Foundation, comments: "It is clear from the recent Eduserv Foundation Symposium, "Virtual worlds, real learning?", that there is a significant amount of interest within the education community in the use of

virtual worlds. By funding this research, we are helping to evaluate the potential of online learning and deliver a better understanding of how we can use such developments for education."

### **Eduserv Foundation**

Established in July 2003, the Eduserv Foundation develops and supports programmes that drive the effective application of ICT in education. These schemes include research grants, assistive technology licences, tutor guides for vocational education and information literacy initiatives.

The Foundation delivers its mission with a mix of external grants and internal projects through:

- A programme of groundbreaking research
- Promotion of best-practices within the community
- Development of UK and international interoperability standards
- Development of demonstrator and prototype services and open source software toolkits.

Activities are funded from trading surpluses and investment returns from Eduserv.

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### **About Eduserv**

Eduserv is a unique, self funding registered charity with the mission to realise the benefits of ICT for learning and research. Eduserv has an in-depth understanding of education and is driven by the needs of the community to deliver real benefits and save significant sums of money each year. Services include:

- Access and Identity Management - Athens and OpenAthens
- Licence Negotiation and Management - Chest
- Managed web hosting
- Content management (CMS) and web development.

Trading surpluses are "gift-aided" to the parent charity to support the work of the Eduserv Foundation in the education sector.

**For more information about Eduserv please visit [www.eduserv.org.uk](http://www.eduserv.org.uk) or contact:**

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