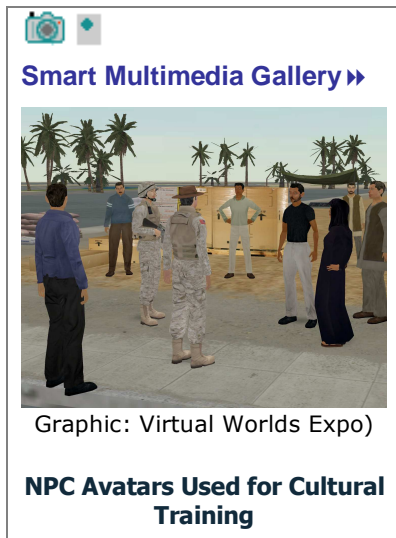


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FORTERRA SYSTEMS AWARDED PHASE II SBIR TO BRING NON-PLAYER CHARACTER TECHNOLOGIES TO VIRTUAL WORLDS

Effort will Enable More Realistic, Cost Effective Training by Minimizing Requirements for Use of Live Role Players



SAN MATEO, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Forterra Systems, the market and technology leader in purpose-built virtual worlds, today announced that the Company has been awarded a US Army Research and Development Command Phase II SBIR to develop the capability to support non-player characters in its virtual world platform.

Partnered with Charles River Analytics, a developer of state-of-the-art artificial-intelligence development tools, Forterra will develop an open interface and enhance the internal infrastructure of its On-Line Interactive Virtual Environment (OLIVE™) platform to support integration with third-party artificial intelligence-based applications. Charles River Analytics will develop sample integration to the interface as well as a representative crowd simulation based on their AgentWorks™ platform. Enabling non-player character technologies that control avatars in the virtual world reduces or eliminates the need for live role players in training scenarios, and provides more realistic and cost-effective training solutions using multi-player virtual world technologies.

“The use of virtual world technologies shows great promise as a tool to support infantry training but the need for large numbers of live role players to create realistic scenarios has limited the overall benefit,” stated Colonel Craig Langhauser, Director of the US Army Research and Development Command. “This effort has the potential to dramatically reduce the need for live role players without sacrificing the engaging nature of the scenario that’s created when they are present.”

“Up to now, virtual world solutions have relied on and even promoted the fact that all participants in the world were driven by real people,” added Dave Rolston, CEO of Forterra Systems. “While this is important for some types of applications, particularly in the consumer sector, it limits the use of virtual worlds in other areas because of the high cost and scheduling challenges of live role players. With tightly integrated support for NPCs, OLIVE will lead the way in supporting a wider variety of virtual world applications for government and corporate users.”

Dr. Scott Neal Reilly, VP of Decision Management Systems at Charles River Analytics says, “We are very excited to be teaming with Forterra on this effort. By using our tools for building culturally realistic artificially intelligent agents with Forterra’s rich OLIVE environment, we will be able to build effective and engaging training applications that are more cost-effective and widely available than those requiring live actors.”

The project will build from Phase I SBIR efforts that analyzed architectures and capabilities of various NPC and virtual world technologies to implement a working prototype system that will support distributed virtual training with large numbers of synthetic and virtual avatars in a realistic environment. A feasibility demonstration will be performed as a culminating event and a non-proprietary application programmer’s interface will be published. Emphasis will be placed on solutions that can be commercialized to support similar training needs in combat medicine, emergency preparedness, and corporate training exercises such as sales and call center exercises.

The resulting virtual environment, with integrated computer-generated NPC behaviors, will provide a cost-effective, realistic and engaging distributed training capability. It will immerse users in cluttered and dynamic 3D virtual world scenarios representative of the types of environments they encounter in the real-world. Users will have the opportunity to engage with other real users in realistic environments created without the need for large numbers of supporting role-players. Conducting exercises in this type of environment sparks the competitive spirit and promotes the desire to repeat exercises and achieve superior outcomes.

About Forterra Systems

Forterra Systems is a leader in providing online distributed virtual world technology for the corporate, healthcare, government, and entertainment industries. Forterra's software and services enable organizations to build their own virtual worlds to train, plan, rehearse, and collaborate in ways previously considered impossible or impractical. Using the OLIVE (On-Line Interactive Virtual Environment) platform and industry standard PC hardware, customers can rapidly generate realistic, collaborative, 3D Internet solutions that easily scale from single user applications to large scale simulated environments supporting many thousands of concurrent users. See more at: <http://www.forterrainc.com>.

About Charles River Analytics

Since 1983, Charles River Analytics has been delivering intelligent systems that turn our clients' data into information they can use to make effective decisions. The company has shown stable, steady growth and profitability for over two decades. Its research and development work for the US federal government has resulted in a series of successful commercial products. In the coming years, the company looks forward to continued growth in its core R&D contracting business and in new product ventures. More information about Charles River Analytics is available on the web at <http://www.cra.com/>.

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