

**Virtual St Andrews Project (ViStA):**  
*Using the immersive Internet to support international student transition to life in a UK university*

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## Overview

- Objectives
- Immersive Internet
- Data collection
- Demonstration
- Student response
- Multimodality

## Background

- International university
- New academic year



## Project Objectives

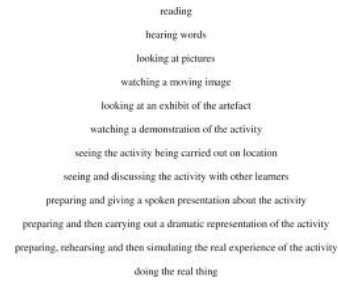
- Ease transition to University before arrival
- Develop a sense of familiarity
- Reduce anxiety



## What is 'immersive' in iNet?

- Degree to which user's senses are engaged
- Desirability & meaningfulness of user's activity

Driver & Driver (2009)



## Rationales for using iNet

### Pedagogical

- Enhancing motivation/engagement
- Facilitating collaboration
- Access
- Safe environment

Mayrath et al. (2008)

### Institutional

- Operating in global context
- Flexibility of provision
- Enhancing campus experience

Savin-Baden et al. (2010)

## iNet cf VLEs

### Advantages

- High level of immersion
- Greater scope for collaboration

### Disadvantages

- iNet technology-led
- Technological learning curve for users
- Expensive

Savin-Baden et al. (2010)

## iNet: StA Examples

### Virtual St Andrews Cathedral



### Laconia Acropolis Virtual Archaeology



## iNet: StA Examples

Virtual Humanitarian Disaster



Computer Networking



## Data Collection

- Pre-arrival concerns
  - Accommodation
  - Transport
  - University Life
  - Day-to-day Life



If you would like to visit...  
<http://openvirtualworlds.org/ViStA/register/>

## Student Response

- Negative responses
  - Content
    - “Just a bunch of links.”
    - “How is it better than Google maps?”
  - Technical
    - Dislike of avatar



## Student Response

- Positive responses
  - Content
    - “Really interesting to visit.”
    - “Can I add content?”
  - Project
    - “Can I manage the project?”



## Future Plans

- Peer communication using VOIP
- Student-generated scenarios
- Academic integrity training
- Use by the Advice & Support Centre

## The place of multimodal literacy?



## References

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