

Context

Model United Nations (MUN) have become indispensable parts of academic curricula and have filled students from all parts of the world with great enthusiasm for the idea of the United Nations and the diplomatic interaction. It is within the simulated negotiations of MUN that students are able to test and improve many skills they have developed throughout their university careers. In many ways, the participation at MUN is a challenging experience. Delegates have to develop a thorough understanding of political, cultural and economic characteristics of the country they represent. Moreover, negotiations at MUN require rhetorical skills and the ability to negotiate, to work under pressure, to work in a team and to compromise. For many students, MUN are a chance to improve their foreign language skills and, most importantly, it is a way to get to know other people, new cultures and to make friends with people from all over the world. Hence, MUN is not only about improving and applying skills, it is about the very idea of the United Nations: uniting people from diverse backgrounds.

With the project SecondLife Model United Nations (SLMUN) the University of Innsbruck wants to open a new chapter in the decade-long success story of UN simulations and to explore the possibilities of a new technology. In the course of SLMUN students are expected to simulate negotiations in the United Nations Security Council. Unfortunately, the project supervisor Dr. Martin Senn has almost no experience with designing simulations and is looking for advice on how to plan and implement a simulation in Second Life.

Role

You and your group are experts on simulations of negotiating situations and you have also developed considerable expertise on SecondLife. As Dr. Senn approached you with his problem, you are preparing a briefing paper on simulated bargaining situations in SecondLife.

Case Study Challenge

List positive and negative aspects of simulations in academic teaching.

Find information on different types/concepts of simulations and explain which type/concept SLMUN represents

Explore possible advantages and disadvantages of simulating negotiations in SL. Have other universities already made experiences in this regard?

Compile a comprehensive report on opportunities and constraints of simulated negotiations in SecondLife

Expert Seminar

The expert seminar will be facilitated by Dr. Martin Senn. He is lecturer in international relations at the Department of Political Science of the University of Innsbruck. He is elearning officer at the Innsbruck School of Political Science and Sociology. Dr. Senn's personal interests in the field of elearning/eteaching are on SecondLife, collaborative learning.