

### COVID19 – An Increased Need for Remote Learning and Training?



For the HE/FE and training sector I am sure that the last couple of months or so has been about coping with rapid changes needed to deliver the summer term's learning on-line, and that most of this has been focused around VLEs, Zoom and the like.

However as it increasingly seems that the "new normal" will impact training, teaching and learning for probably at least a year, to what extent will FE and HE institutions and commercial training organisations and departments take the opportunity to have a fresh look at immersive 3D and VR solutions? Whilst VLEs, video lectures and Zoom tutorials can deliver a lot of useful content, they will struggle with the sense and context of being there, of learning vocational skills, and of working on physical collaborative tasks. Physical teaching time may be even more limited, and social distancing measures may further reduce effectiveness and efficiency. And this against a backdrop of squeezed revenues. In such stressful times it seems that many IT departments, eLearning teams and tutors are falling back on the comfort of familiar (if not totally prevalent) technologies of video lectures and lessons/seminars by video conferencing.

Having been involved in using immersive 3D for training and education for over a decade, and VR for over 6 years, it does very feel like a technology whose time has come. We are already seeing an increase in the use of the technology for virtual events (where there is no need to generate content as such – see sidebar), and using it for remote training and learning is surely the next step. And the focus may well be on the "immersive 3D" approach rather than VR unless institutions want to pay for a headset per student - the days of sharing may well be over! Also, our key argument remains that you need to be able to create your own content so you can scale and adapt to student need - rather than commissioning "one-offs" from design-led VR agencies.

We're trying to get a feel from those we know working at the coal-face of training and education as to how they see the next year panning out - and to what extent they see immersive 3D and VR solutions as being a part of the "new normal" mix, and we'll see about passing on some of feedback we get. But we're always interested in the wider view - so if you're reading this then please feel free to let us know your view through email or on the blog.

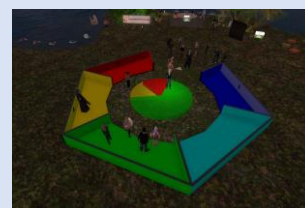
These are challenging and distressing times, but perhaps a richer educational and training environment can be one of the legacies of all this enforced social distancing.

### Virtual Events

One thing that COVID has certainly done is increase the interest in holding "proper" virtual events in immersive 3D environments such as Engage, VirBela, AltSpaceVR and even the venerable Second Life. David attended two immersive 3D events on the same day last month. One, on the relatively new platform of Engage, was all about holding virtual events in VR – and David attended in an Oculus Quest VR headset. Two whole hours of it, including networking afterwards (Learning Note – use a drinking straw to drink when in VR!).



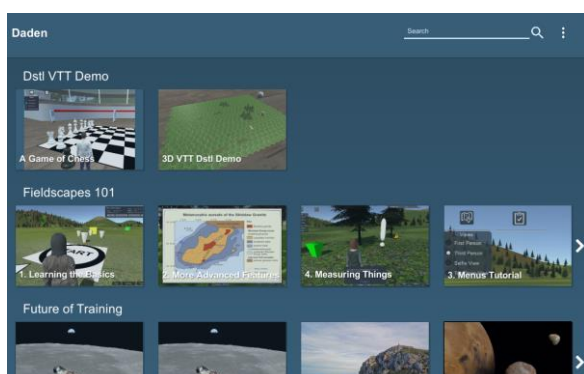
The second was a meeting in Second Life, 15+ years old, with a group of educators comparing the physical-world experience to the Second Life experience, and the Second Life Experience to that of the new group of VR platforms.



Whilst we could use Trainingscapes for virtual meetings (and do in-house) it is not really optimised for it, and there are some very neat features in some of the new platforms. We're compiling a comparison of the different systems, and with over a decade's experience of running events in VR spaces we think we have a fair nose for what works and what doesn't.

So if you're think about running virtual events then do give us a shout and we're happy to share our thoughts on what the options are, and if you'd like it provide a helping hand to get you started on these platforms.

## Trainingscapes v2.0 Sneak Peak



We're now well on the way to completing v2.0 of Trainingscapes. The core PIVOTE engine is unchanged, the focus is on giving the whole application a more modern feel, a slicker student experience, and more suited to corporate and HE/FE use.

We've implemented a "Netflix" type exercise browser, which will show student courses and the exercises within them. There'll also be features like "Recently Visited", and icons to readily show which exercises have been optimised for mobile or VR use.



The Explorer screen layout has been re-arranged to hopefully make for an even slicker and minimal interface so that students can focus on the task in hand and just call up UI elements when needed. The editor layout has been similarly tweaked to smooth the most common workflows, so as to make it even more intuitive to use.



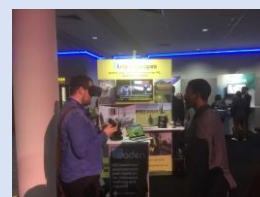
If you'd like to a demo of Trainingscapes in operation, and to understand how immersive learning on PC, mobile or VR headset can help your organisation deliver training regardless of COVID or the more traditional challenges of cost, time distance, risk and carbon then please contact us for a demo over Zoom, Skype, Jitsi or your favourite remote media of choice!

### This Quarter we've also ...

- Been named one of the West Midlands Innovation 50 by Mills & Reeve



- Been awarded a Phase 1 project under the Defence and Security Accelerator/Royal Navy programme on Intelligent Ships – looking at how we can apply our Virtual Persona concept to develop a Virtual Ship Persona.
- Supported a team of MBA students at UoBirmingham looking at the opportunities for us in employee and business support chatbots.
- Had a stand at the excellent JISC Digifest2020 event – all elbow-bumping the week before lockdown and showing lots of people what Trainingscapes can do (an using lots of headset wipes!).



- All started working from home and meeting on Trainingscapes!

### Get in Touch!

If there is anything in this newsletter that has caught your interest and you'd like to discuss more just email [info@daden.co.uk](mailto:info@daden.co.uk) or call us on +44(0) 121 250 5678, or visit our website at [www.daden.co.uk](http://www.daden.co.uk). We look forward to talking to you.

## CONTACT US

Faraday Wharf, Innovation Birmingham Campus, Holt Street, Birmingham, B7 4BB, UK  
(COVID allowing)

t: 07811266199  
e: [info@daden.co.uk](mailto:info@daden.co.uk)  
w: [www.daden.co.uk](http://www.daden.co.uk)