

Graduate Student Earns Degree in Second Life Virtual World

By Anthony Adams

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Julio Molina Orrego, a graduate student from Colombia, has successfully earned his Masters degree by researching, presenting and defending his thesis in Second Life. He was presented his degree virtually from the Eindhoven University of Technology.

Julio Molina's research centered on "Collaborative Virtual Environments for Group Support Systems", studying the effect of 3D space on group support systems, GSS. The end result of the research and development is the introduction of a breakthrough technology for meeting support tools that can benefit businesses and organizations everywhere. Attendees of virtual business meetings now have the opportunity to augment the existing co-presence benefits of voice and chat communication in Second Life for presentations and interviews.

The new 3D brainstorming, idea organizing and voting tools facilitate "structured meetings" that drive critical meeting processes while concurrently recording the proceedings. Regardless of the meeting objective, groups can meet and work virtually using these 3D tools to make better decisions and accomplish more.

Molina, who's research was sponsored by the Alpine Executive Center in Second Life, believes this development opens the door to a wide variety of business applications for the virtual environment such as: focus groups, risk assessments, setting priorities, resource allocation, benchmarking, best practices, strategy planning and product design projects.

Anthony Adams, from the meeting support business groupVision, believes Molina's work to be a breakthrough development because it opens the way to implement group support systems in the virtual world. With education an ever-growing part of Second Life, the news of Molina's degree is bound to be a boost to virtual worlds. Molina majored in operations management and logistics, and earned a Master of Science degree. He took on the difficult challenge with tremendous creativity and thoroughness, and received a special achievement award from the Eindhoven University of Technology. His professors believe his work will benefit many businesses and organizations.

Molina already has a full-time job lined up with the consulting firm, Accenture.

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About groupVision (Switzerland): Provides facilitation services with electronic meeting support tools for improved meeting processes, making time spent collaborating more efficient with better use of resources. Operates the Alpine Executive Center at the Second Life MeetingSupport SIM.

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