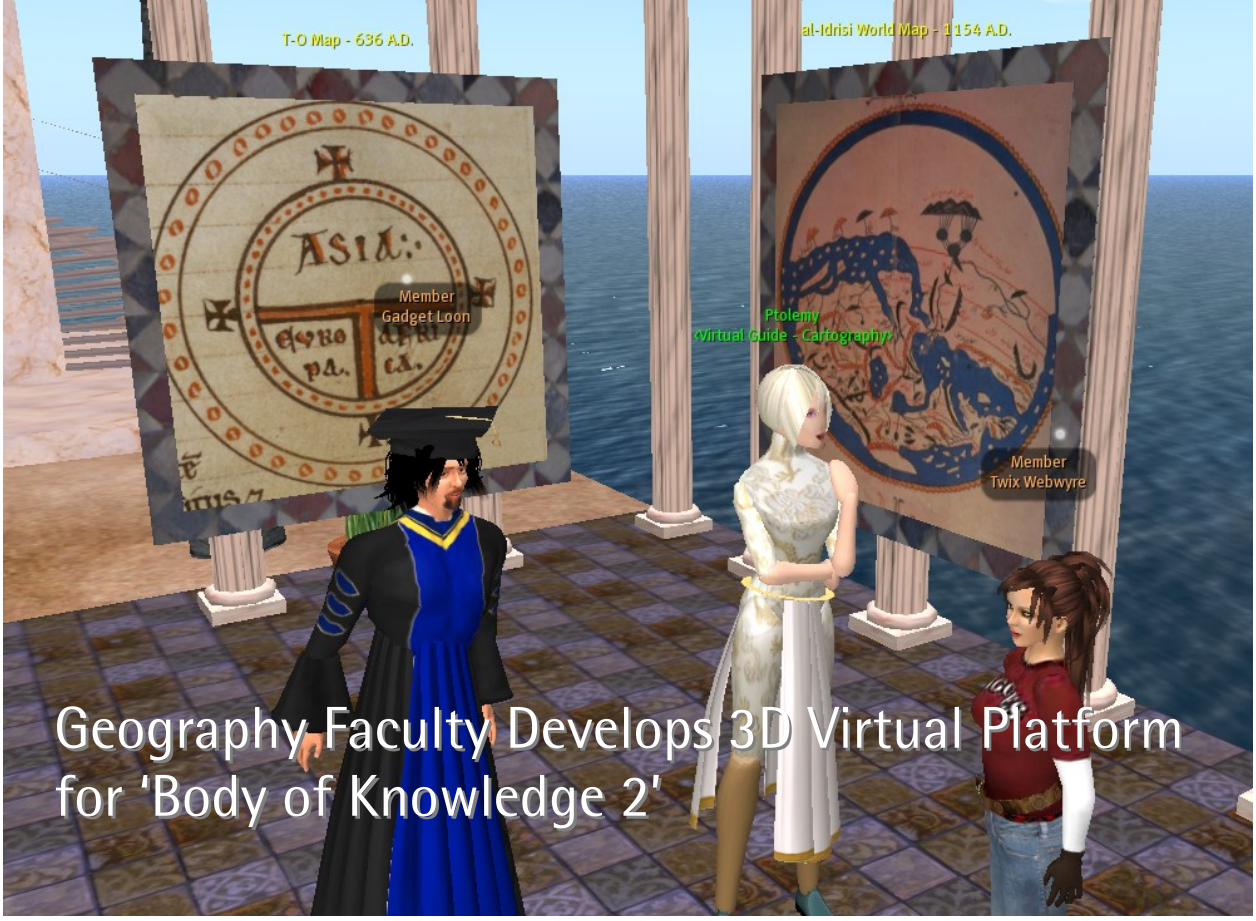

Geography Faculty Develops 3D Virtual Platform for 'Body of Knowledge 2'

Dr. DeMers (Gadget Loon) and his student (Anna Klimaszewski-Patterson) consult a chat bot (artificial intelligence-based virtual robot) about the GIS&T Body of Knowledge.

Dr. Michael N. DeMers, Associate Professor of Geography, NMSU

Anna Klimaszewski-Patterson, Geography graduate student

Dr. Michael N. DeMers, Associate Professor of Geography, has recently been awarded funding to create a 3-D virtual platform within a persistent virtual environment such as Second Life that allows people to query, examine, interact, discover, share, and collaborate with the Geographic Information Science and Technology (GIS&T) Body of Knowledge, today known as BoK.

His work is in collaboration with Hunter College for its National Science Foundation (NSF) funded project entitled, Geographic Information Science and Technology BoK2: Foundational Research. San Diego State University and Brigham Young University also participate in this project.

Dr. DeMers and his graduate assistant Anna Klimaszewski-Patterson's background interacting with, teaching in, and designing content in 3-D virtual worlds positioned them to collaborate on the NSF grant. Their portion of the project involves the delivery of GIS&T content in an educational setting, especially related to the use of BoK 2 as a guide to curriculum.

The collaborating research team will examine and test different environments for realizing the Bok2 by investigating the strengths and weakness of different available technologies including dynamic wikis, persistent immersive synthetic environments, or some combination of these for their efficacy with respect to knowledge building, pedagogy and research, and their capacity to create viable active collaborative virtual communities.

"This platform is part of the grant's overall 'foundational' research designed to push the BoK forward to version 2 but in a way that participants will get, share, and even create real or near-real time information," states Dr. DeMers. "We plan to write a follow-up proposal designed to implement and test the environments we are currently developing. We also plan, assuming the second proposal is successful, to use the platform to begin building the next generation of BoK (BoK2)."

Dr. DeMers can be reached at mdemers@nmsu.edu.