

Santa Barbara, June 2007

Stanford University Chooses WorldViz VR Technology

Application: Social behavior and interaction research

Equipment Used: WorldViz PPT X4 Optical Tracker, WorldViz Vizard 3D software toolkit, NVIS nVisor SX head-mounted-display

Client: Stanford University, California, Communications Department



Jeremy Bailenson, Psychology Professor in the Communications Department at Stanford University, conducts experiments in his Virtual Human Interaction Lab (VHIL) to study social behavior and interaction.

His team aims to better understand human interaction based on both physical appearance and behavior. In one project Bailenson creates virtual representations of participants and studies how they relate to their virtual counterparts.

During the experiment, physical or behavioral characteristics of the avatars are changed to analyze how participants react.

In his “Diversity Simulation”, created to study the relationships of gender, status, and race, Bailenson lets subjects experience the world through the eyes of someone else. His



goal is to test the ‘extended contact hypothesis’, “namely that wearing the face of another in a simulation designed to highlight diversity issues can increase awareness.”

In much of Bailenson’s research, building lifelike avatars plays an essential roll. His students, mostly from the social sciences, are generally little interested in complex programming. At the same time, their research relies heavily on the quality, realism and interactivity of the environments

and representations they are creating. “Vizard”, Bailenson comments, “is the most powerful software solution for social scientists trying to create persuasive 3D graphics without being programming geniuses.”



Particularly useful to the research team at Stanford University is the WorldViz online support forum, “which I cannot speak highly enough of”, says Bailenson. Initiated in 2002, the WorldViz online forum quickly guides users to helpful answers, and provides immediate access to an expert team of Vizard technicians.