WalkAbout - An Experimental Virtual Environment for Learning

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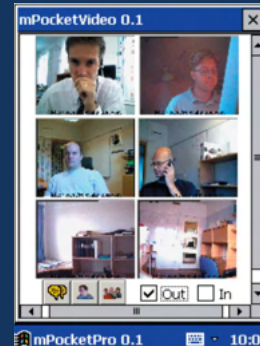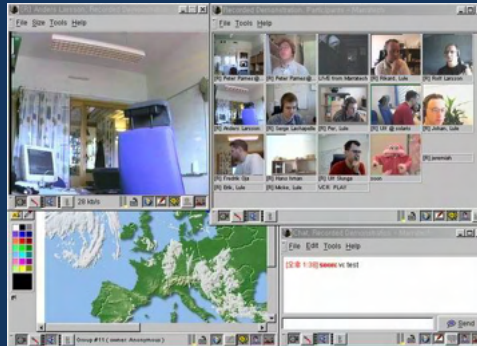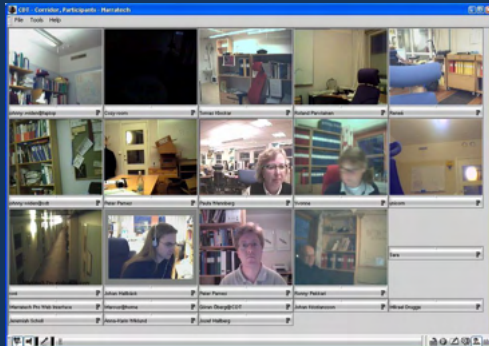Universeh 210602

http://www.parnes.com/blog/

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Background

- Video conferencing for learning is boring.
- Hard to engage students online using traditional tools.
- Learning should be fun.
- Tools should encourage engagement and wanting to learn.
- I have been working with online meeting tools since 1994.
  - mStar - Marratech - Google Hangouts

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Background: Dialogica

An application for helping people with disabilities (aphasia) express themselves using avatars and animations, chat, speaking trees etc.

Dialogica: helping users express themselves

- Multiuser
- Choose avatar
- Choose animations
- Choose worlds
- Chat - predefined and own
- Text-to-speech
  - different voices
- Real-time translation
- Voice chat
- Static 3D
- iPad primarily

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WalkAbout -
An Multiuser Experimental Virtual Environment for Learning

Different 3D-worlds

Many Avatars (150+)

3D-Positional Audio

Audio changes with distance. Natural break-out rooms.

Web Screens for External Content
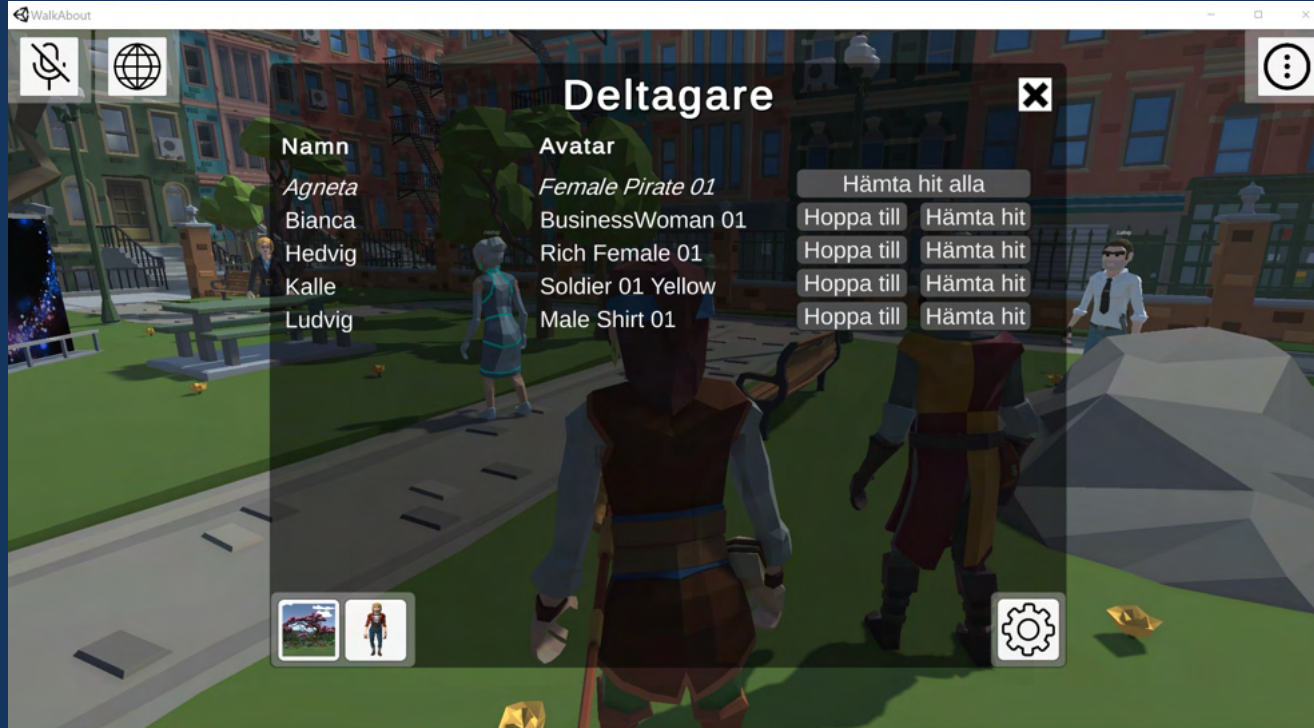## Create your own Learning Environment

Multiuser

Multiuser, 25-50 participants per room

Multiple rooms - jump between rooms

Move Students Around

Some Learning Scenarios

1. Live lecture(s)
   - Break out groups by moving to specific points

2. Prepared students presentations.
   - They build their own presentation environment.

3. Social interaction and spontaneous meetings
   - Hangout

4. Ask questions
   - Teachers and bots

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WalkAbout Usage

- Learning
  - Children
  - Students
  - Adults

- Work
  - Social
  - Meetings
  - Connection 24/7

- Other Events
  - Recruitment
  - Information in general - bots

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Status

- *Not released yet - internal testing*

- Platforms: iOS, Mac, Windows
  - Probably work on Android and Linux as well but not tested
- Many worlds
- Many users
- Voice chat
- Web screens
- UI half-baked - needs new icons
- UI Swedish only
- Some animations - more later

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The Future

- Internationalization
- Integrate text chat from Dialogica
- Real-time translation
- Animations
- 3D-Objects
- Web Screens part 2
- More UI work
  - Visual components for e.g. audio reach
- Beacons to show interesting points
- Persistence - save and load environments
- Bots that help with learning.

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Extensions

- Emotions
- Avatar customization
  - Clothing, skin color, attributes
- Weather & Time of Day
- Text to animation with AI

Make it Fun

Fireworks

Loot boxes

Mini games

Paint guns

Stickers

Horses

Arcade Games

How can You use WalkAbout?

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