

IBM AND WORLDS INC. EXTEND 3-D TECHNOLOGY FOR THE INTERNET

VRML+ Lets Groups Communicate, Share Experiences in Virtual Worlds

LOS ANGELES, August 8, 1995--- Click on the Internet and begin an exciting journey with other people through a virtual environment. Travel with other cyber-surfers from around the world who, like you, can be seen as real-life avatars, or visual embodiments of people. Chat with your cyber-pals as you tour an art gallery of renowned paintings. Conduct business by talking to sales representatives about their products and services. Buy and sell products that can be demonstrated and seen in full-motion 3-D form.

Fantasy? A page from a C.S. Lewis novel? No, all of these virtual collaborations are possible now. At SIGGRAPH '95 today, IBM and Worlds Inc. will announce and demonstrate Virtual Reality Modeling Language+ (VRML+), a jointly proposed extension to the emerging Internet standard, Virtual Reality Modeling Language (VRML). The two companies are offering VRML+ to the computer industry as a first step towards an enhanced VRML, and are making the protocols freely available.

In the fourth quarter of 1995, IBM and Worlds Inc. will begin distributing a free VRML+ browser, which supports multi-user virtual environments for IBM OS/2* Warp, Apple Power Macintosh**, and Microsoft Windows 95** and NT** platforms. Servers will be available for RISC System/6000 (RS/6000)*, Silicon Graphics Inc. Challenge** and Indigo**, Linux, Sun Solaris**, and Windows NT** platforms.

"Through VRML+, the Internet becomes the venue for meeting new friends, exchanging ideas, traveling to exciting places, and conducting business," said Willy Chiu, multimedia technology director, IBM Software Solutions Division. "This new technology can give companies a formidable advantage by enabling them to provide continuous personal service to their customers."

"VRML+ adds avatar descriptions, avatar motion, and text communication to the evolving VRML standard," said Dave Gobel, president and CEO of Worlds Inc. "Today, the Web is a lonely place. Tomorrow, people will be able to experience it together."

The ability to turn the Web into a universe of friendly and fascinating cyberworlds offers a huge realm of potential for leading consumer product and service organizations. VISA is one of the companies working with Worlds Inc. to create 3-D applications for its member banks and their customers. "Electronic services for the consumer have incredible potential," said Todd Chaffee, senior vice president, Advanced Payment Systems, VISA International, "but they will succeed only if we can deliver simple and compelling interfaces that are dynamic and easy to use. We believe VRML+ is a major step in achieving this goal."

IBM and Worlds Inc. will showcase VRML+ at SIGGRAPH '95, along with IBM Virtual World, a live demonstration that will link participants in Chicago and Los Angeles. Steve Mills, general manager, IBM Software Solutions, will join the Los Angeles audience from his keynote address at the Web World conference in Chicago. He will be represented visually through a life-like, 3-D avatar which can communicate in real time. The technology demonstration will visit the following virtual worlds on the Internet:

Virtual Branch Office: For private conferences and cyber-chats, users will be welcome to arrange meetings in virtual conference rooms, living rooms, or even pool side.

IBM Digital Library: Cyber-surfers can tour the wonders of an art museum through IBM's newest multimedia technology, which allows owners of information content to maximize their assets and make them available through networks around the world.

New Product Gallery: Cyber-surfers can virtually test-drive hot IBM products, technologies and services.

"We are extremely pleased to be partnering with IBM," said Gene Feroglia, general manager, Commercial Division, Worlds Inc. "The IBM organization brings a strong worldwide marketing, distribution and consulting presence that will make it possible for Internet content providers and users everywhere to take advantage of this exciting new technology."

Worlds Inc., the worldwide leader in social computing, is a privately held corporation that produces shared, interactive, three-dimensional virtual environments for consumer and commercial applications. The company is headquartered in San Francisco.

Based in Somers, N.Y., the IBM Software Solutions Division provides multimedia, data management, application development, and workgroup solutions for mission-critical applications on PCs, workstations, LANs, and host systems.

*Indicates trademark or registered trademark of International Business Machines Corporation.

**Indicates trademark or registered trademark of the respective companies.