

**Digital Worlds Institute:
A Partnership between
UF College of Engineering and UF College of Fine Arts
Summary Report to the CFA Faculty Council May 02, 2008**

The Digital Worlds Institute supports a multifaceted collaborative program of research and education utilizing the tools of 21st Century technology and culture. Founded in the College of Fine Arts and the College of Engineering at the University of Florida in 2001, Digital Worlds (DW) serves as a platform for interdisciplinary research that would not have occurred within the confines of any one college or department. Through the use of distributed virtual environments and high-performance technologies, DW reaches out across the campus, state, nation and the world to share new cultural opportunities with creative people around the globe.

In addition to hosting several semester long interdisciplinary classes at the Digital Worlds (DW) Research, Education and Visualization Environment (REVE), DW has also been the epicenter for numerous research, education and service activities. Partners utilizing the REVE facilities include the College of Fine Arts, the College of Education, First Florida, the UF Virtual Worlds Environment (VWE) Working Group, the Association of Digital Arts and Media (ADAM), the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences/Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Office of the Provost, the Florida Higher Education Arts Network (FHEAN) and numerous other campus and external entities.

Several ongoing and emergent research initiatives have also utilized the REVE facilities, including the Integrated Situational Awareness System (ISAS), the Fusion City project and the Martin Luther King World House series of interactive globalcasts, undertaken in cooperation with Morehouse College in Atlanta (Dr. King's Alma Mater).

In 2007, DW was a founding partner of the Office of Transdisciplinary Research and Innovation (OTRI), in collaboration with the CFA Dean's Office, the Center for Arts in Healthcare Research and Education (CAHRE). Since that time, OTRI has successfully partnered with other Research Units including the College of Public Health and Health Professions, the Veterans' Administration Hospital, the Lastinger Center and external Partners and Sponsors including the Smallwood Foundation, the US DoD and Virtual Reality Aids, Inc. As a result of these collaborative efforts, over a quarter of a million dollars have been received to date in calendar year 2008:

- Smallwood Foundation \$ 25k
- UF-wide investigation of Virtual World Environments \$ 25k
- Opportunity Fund \$ 69k
- DoD/Veterans Administration \$124k
- Virtual Reality Aids, Inc. \$ 20k

TOTAL \$263K

**Day ONE of the Interdisciplinary Research Seminar
With Live Lecture from Linz, Austria**



**Interdisciplinary Research Seminar
Class Sorted by MAJOR**

Advertising	Electrical Engineering (3)
Aerospace Engineering	Finance (2)
Agricultural Education & Comm.	Geography
Anthropology	Higher Education Administration
Chemical Engineering	Industrial & Systems Engineering (3)
Civil Engineering	Interdisciplinary Studies
Communication (6)	Physics
Computer Engineering	Public Relations
Criminology	Science & Environmental Education
Curriculum & Instruction (4)	Sociology
Digital Arts & Sciences (3)	Undecided Undergraduate

In Spring 2008, the Interdisciplinary Research Seminar, created and facilitated by DW, attracted over 30 graduate students (and several undergrad) from across the UF campus, generated significant graduate SCH for the College of Fine Arts, and also creating a tangible example of the efficacy of collaborative teams doing interdisciplinary R&D using Virtual World Environments (VWE's). Several graduate students are now incorporating elements of these investigations into their thesis and dissertation work.