



# From Research to Practice: Creating a Virtual POD Using a Collaborative Virtual Environment

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Public Health Preparedness Summit

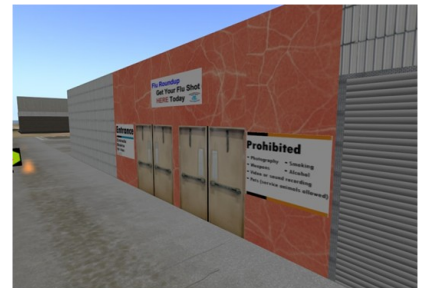
## Innovative Practices from the Field

Last October, the Walla Walla County Health Department (WWCHD), partnered with the Region 8 Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response (R8-PHEPR) and the Center for the Advancement of Distance Education (CADE), University of Illinois, to create a novel approach on training staff and volunteers to support mass vaccination clinic operations.

Historically, training staff and volunteers is a time and labor intensive process. In an emergency, many local health jurisdictions do not have the capacity to concurrently provide training while setting up a mass vaccination clinic. In a non-emergency event, training has to be fitted in during the course of the business day...sometimes it happens, sometimes it doesn't.

Just-in-time training (JITT) is an alternative that is used by many to train staff and volunteers prior to an event. This is a quick and dirty method and, depending on the location, training may take up to three hours to deliver. This is simply much too long and the removes essential staff needed to make the clinic ready. An alternative was needed...one that can be used and quickly delivered by any public health department while maintaining flexibility to adapt to a county's unique needs.

For many years, WWCHD has used the Walla Walla County Fairgrounds to host their annual flu vaccinations; in particular the Community Building was the walk-through vaccination clinic, and most recently, the Pavilion has been used to support the drive-through clinic. Using floor diagrams and pictures provided by WWCHD, the staff from CADE used Second Life (<http://secondlife.com>) to virtually create the Community Building and Pavilion.



These activities are sponsored by University of Minnesota: Simulations and Exercises for Educational Effectiveness (U-SEEE) Preparedness and Emergency Response Research Center (PERRC), supported in part through a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/OPHPR, Grant Number 5P01TP000301-03. The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC. Project Lead Investigator: Colleen Monahan. U-SEEE Principal Investigator: Debra K. Olson.

Using these computer-based simulated environments, WWCHD, CADE and R8-PHEPR was able to produce forty training videos that were role-specific e.g., Greeter, Vaccinator, and two videos that provided an overview of the entire mass vaccination clinic operations. FRAPS ([www.fraps.com](http://www.fraps.com)), a real-time video capture software, was used to create the training videos. The audio was provided by R8-PHEPR staff using a script developed by WWCHD. While the videos were relatively short, they were specific in the delivery of the responsibility that each role entailed.

The videos were shown to first and second year nursing students from the Walla Walla Community College. The videos were available at the flu clinic for any students who may have missed the initial screening and to all the volunteers who participated in clinic operations. The staff and volunteers, once they registered with the Volunteer Coordinator, reported to the Orientation/Training Lead with their clinic assignment. The Orientation/Training Lead then queue the appropriate video and upon completion of the video, answered any questions that the staff or volunteer may have.



In addition to training, another benefit of using computer-based simulated environments is that a planner can design a clinic and anticipate potential bottlenecks or areas of concern before the actual placement of equipment and furniture. For example, maintaining linear patient flow may prove difficult in some buildings. A virtual model of the clinic can be created and equipment and furniture arranged, and rearranged, to efficiently promote linear flow. This can be done without moving actual furniture and equipment or removing staff from their duties.

This medium used current technologies to add to the training toolbox and meet the need of our community partner. It was relatively quick to learn and inexpensive in its cost. Upon completion of this project, potential uses of using computer-based simulated environments were identified to include:

- Augment tabletop presentations by creating and presenting a virtual incident;
- A video can be created and used on an agency's webpage to inform and educate the community on various topics; or
- Orientation videos for new employees.

Read more about this research project at: <http://www.sph.umn.edu/research/u-seee/individualprojects/virtualenvironments.asp>

## Contact

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## Region 8

