

Wizard Island is a multi-user virtual environment designed for the bandwidth, latency, and rendering constraints of home computers and the Internet. It features VRML rooms and avatars, audio chat, client-authored 2D or 3D avatars, multiple camera views of the virtual world, and URL-based browsing of *Wizard Island* servers worldwide.

Unlike many virtual worlds, in which the author of the world defines the set of avatars visitors must choose from, *Wizard Island* allows each visitor to embody their own custom avatar. Users build their representations from a 3D VRML file or a 2D bitmap, and use that avatar in whatever *Wizard Island* world they decide to visit. This self-expressive power comes from an underlying symmetry between the client and the server. The server provides the space or building, while the client provides the avatar within it.

In the audio domain, *Wizard Island* provides a push-to-talk, queued audio chat that allows several people to talk simultaneously despite the large latencies common on the Internet. Utterances from multiple simultaneous speakers are played in order of reception rather than being mixed. In addition, a text chat can be used to add text narration to the experience.

The grammar of film begs to be applied to multi-user virtual worlds. As a first step in this direction, *Wizard Island* provides camera control distinct from avatar control. At any time, users can switch from a first-person point of view to over-the-shoulder or room-relative points of view. The user can even choose to see the world through the eyes of another avatar.

Contributors

BRAD NEEDHAM
SCOTT B. LEWIS
MARK MCGINLEY
ANDREW RIELLY

Contact

BRAD NEEDHAM
Intel Corporation
Mail Stop JF2-64
2111 N.E. 25 Avenue
Hillsboro, Oregon 97124-6497 USA
+1.503.264.8911
Brad-Needham@ccm.jf.intel.com

