

SmallWorlds

Virtual world and real life collide in seamless multi-media experience based on Adobe® Flex® and the Adobe Flash® Player

SmallWorlds

www.smallworlds.com



Industry

Technology

Challenges

- Build an accessible virtual world that requires no additional downloads or plug-ins
- Integrate existing web content within the virtual world

Solution

Developed using Adobe Flex 3, SmallWorlds is a virtual world accessible to anyone using the free, ubiquitous Adobe Flash Player.

Results

- Expanded market reach by ensuring easy access to virtual world
- Integrated seamlessly with web content to support the virtual narrative
- Achieved enthusiastic response from early users

Systems At A Glance

- Adobe Fireworks
- Adobe Flash Player
- Adobe Flash Professional
- Adobe Flex
- Adobe Flex Builder™
- Adobe Photoshop

An innovative virtual world experience

SmallWorlds is a high-resolution 3D isometric virtual world designed to run within a web browser using Adobe Flash Player. Developed by New Zealand's Auckland-based studio Outsmart, SmallWorlds incorporates media, web content, and casual games into an accessible and sophisticated 3D world that integrates seamlessly with the rest of the web.

“We wanted to create a unique virtual world experience for users,” says Mitch Olson, co-founder of SmallWorlds. “We also wanted to create a virtual world where participants did not have to download software or plug-ins to enjoy the experience. We were determined to make accessibility a key feature of SmallWorlds.”

According to Olson, the decision to build SmallWorlds using Adobe products was easy. “Adobe is a leader in delivering the development environment and software we need to create this multi-platform, virtual world,” says Olson. “Approximately 95% of our users already have the correct version of Adobe Flash Player on their computers, and we will not require users to continue downloading plug-ins as they become more involved in the virtual world.”

According to Olson, Adobe Flex, Flash Professional, Photoshop®, and Fireworks® were integral in the development of the program. “The Adobe Flash Player engine is the best software of its kind and goes well beyond delivery of HTML content,” he says. “And, we see Adobe Flex as one of the most powerful and sophisticated development platforms available today.”

A whole new world

SmallWorlds is breaking new ground in virtual experiences, according to SmallWorlds' Co-founder, Darren Green. “One of the key distinctions between SmallWorlds and other virtual worlds is that SmallWorlds has been built to integrate with web-based content and media like music, videos, photos, and other Web 2.0-based widgets,” he says. Users can invite friends to listen to real music or radio stations, or watch real YouTube clips as an experience in their virtual world while everyone in the room is sharing the same experience at the same time.

“SmallWorlds has been designed specifically to interact with other web content, making it the first virtual world that easily allows web content to be integrated into the virtual world, or for SmallWorlds to be embedded anywhere in the web,” says Green.

Targeting the age demographic of 13 years and older, SmallWorlds aims to be a simple, entertaining and easily accessible experience for anyone with access to the web.

Fully integrated development framework

Coming from a rich Internet applications (RIAs) background, both Green and Olson are experienced in a variety of development tools and have found the sophistication and power of Adobe Flex Builder 3 software is ideal for the purpose of designing SmallWorlds.

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Mitch Olson,
Co-founder,
SmallWorlds

For More Information

www.adobe.com/products/flex/
www.adobe.com/products/flash/



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Adobe Flex Builder 3 software is a highly productive Eclipse-based development tool enabling intelligent coding, interactive step-through debugging, and visual design of the user interface layout, appearance, and behavior of rich Internet applications.

Benefits of Flex Builder 3 include complete HTML rendering; local SQLite database storage, performance and memory profiling; visual CSS editor for graphical editing of CSS properties; design view extensibility for third-party products; native Flex format exporting from Adobe Fireworks, Photoshop, Flash, and Illustrator®; code-gen wizards for Adobe ColdFusion®, Java™, PHP, .NET and JavaScript and Ajax wrappers among other benefits.

Green says that the ease of accessing SmallWorlds, compared to its virtual world competitors, is part of the reason that reviews of beta trials have been so good. Users have instant access to the experience using the free, ubiquitous Adobe Flash Player.”

“It’s quite a sophisticated narrative, and the design and pixel-perfect world graphics make the experience pleasant. When this is added to the largely unique integration with other entertainment tools, SmallWorlds goes well beyond the framework of virtual worlds currently in operation,” Green says.

SmallWorlds describes itself as allowing “you to build your own room, house, or even your own world, and fill it with a range of items, while engaging in a plethora of fun activities.”

Fun activities include widgets such as YouTube TV screens and graffiti canvases, as well as virtual shops where users can purchase virtual world items, and create spaces for other users to explore.

Development of additional activities is underway, and as the world advances users will be able to play action, strategy and puzzle games, as a duel directly between two players; with a group, or in tournaments.

Green adds that plans are currently being developed to add larger outdoor spaces where groups of players can build their homes and create new and interesting places for others to explore.

“Adobe products like Flex and Flash are at the very core of the success of Small World grows,” Green says.

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