The Purdue “Serious Games Center” seeks to encourage collaboration and establish a foundation for research at Purdue on serious games and virtual environments for learning, support innovative instructional practices, and establish a framework for developing and implementing engaging and innovative instruction for both K-12 and higher education classrooms.

The center includes a lab for utilizing, designing, developing, and evaluating serious games and virtual environments. Usability software allows for the full capturing of user interactions within these environments.
Virtual environments for learning

Today’s learners crave interactivity. Called digital natives or the gamer generation, they live with interactivity, often everywhere but the classroom.

A 2008 Pew report found that 97% of American youth aged 12-17 play video games, including 94% of American girls, while also finding that game playing is a social activity, and that game playing can often incorporate aspects of civic and political life. Gartner Inc. estimates that by 2011, 80% of Internet users will have a virtual world presence online. Games and virtual environments are today’s popular media, and fit well with the sort of motivating, exploratory, and goal-based, frequent feedback, problem-solving experiences today’s learners seek.

ENHANCING COLLABORATION

The Serious Games Center was founded in order to encourage collaboration across the Purdue community. There is a great deal of interest and talent related to games and virtual environments within Purdue. The Serious Games Center seeks to share resources and help to establish Purdue as a leader in research on the use of serious games and virtual environments for learning.

The center also seeks to encourage collaboration between Purdue and K-12 schools in order to utilize research to benefit schools and their teachers and students.

If you are interested in discussing how the center can help you, please contact us.

Center Director Dr. Bill Watson

Bill Watson is an Assistant Professor in the Educational Technology Program in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

Bill’s research focuses on a new paradigm of instruction for today’s schools. He believes that today’s students should be active participants in their own learning, and that a learning environment centered on the learner as an individual is necessary to ensure that each student reaches mastery of the curriculum.

With their potential for promoting motivation, problem-solving, and deep learning, video games and virtual environments hold great promise for instruction that is appropriate for today’s learners. Further research is needed to discover how best to design and utilize this technology for learning, and the Serious Games Center seeks to further that research and support instructors in utilizing games and virtual environments in their courses.

Contact Bill at bwatson@purdue.edu.