



CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Educational Technology Research in Virtual Reality Study

JUNE 2008

Does your child enjoy learning about nature, using computers and making art? If so, please contact University of Pittsburgh, Maria C.R. Harrington at (412) 606-2170 * (412) 799-0927 *email mharring@pitt.edu



Image of the SIS PC lab and screen captures from the 3D CGI virtual ecology created by Maria C.R. Harrington © 2008

Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh are putting together a series of virtual reality field trips for elementary aged children to engage and inspire independent exploration, inquiry, scientific learning, and artistic experiences. All volunteers will participate in a research study of the usability of the computer simulation software of Virtual Trillium Trail. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the human-computer interaction performance in the simulation in terms of high to low navigation and visual fidelity. The software is like a computer game, but designed for learning. In addition to exploring and learning about our local ecology, all children will be helping us to design new fun, child-driven, knowledge-based technologies. In the follow up session, *all children will have a chance to design and build their very own virtual world ecologies.*

Who can participate?

Any elementary age child in the third, *fourth and fifth grades* may participate *with their parents' or legal guardians' approval*. Parents are invited to be present at all times. Each child will always have a parent with them, even though the parent is not being studied. Anyone can stop the study at any time.

Where? The study will be conducted in your home, and at your convenience.

When? Any time in the month of March, April, and May 2008, and at your convenience.

- **Pre-test: Over the phone (15 minutes).**
- **Virtual Trillium Trail Field Trip: Any time at your convenience, (at least 1 hour).**
- **Virtual Ecology Diorama Creation Activity: Any time at your convenience, (at least 1 hour).**

Who are we? This project is a PhD dissertation study “Simulated Ecological Environments for Education” of Maria C.R. Harrington, a PhD Candidate in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh. ***To sign up or ask questions:*** please contact Maria C.R. Harrington, at (412) 606-2170 or 412 799-0927 or send an email mharring@pitt.edu , web site: <http://www.sis.pitt.edu/~mariah/phd/index.html>