

what next?

VIRTUAL TELUS-TROPOLIS

Online city demos business solutions the fun way

◀ By Annette Bourdeau ▶

If you build a virtual city, they will come.

Telus has crafted a Second Life-like online city, the Telus Innovation Experience (TIE), to showcase its industry-specific communications and IT business solutions.



Telus' virtual city: more fun than PowerPoint

If visitors want to learn more about Telus' emergency-planning solution, SafetyNet, for example, they're thrust into the middle of a municipality using SafetyNet to help it deal with a flood-related crisis. Multiple-choice questions pop up throughout the scenario to test visitors' crisis management skills and keep them engaged.

As of Jan. 29, TIE included 15 different modules tailored for industries like health care, finance and oil and gas. To ensure all offerings are relevant,

the Telus Business Solutions marketing department is segmented into vertical, industry-specific teams. They're empowered to develop new solutions based on feedback they hear from clients. "Marketing is looked at as a strategic enabler of the business — gathering insights and building solutions," explains Jeff Lowe, Calgary-based VP marketing for Telus Business Solutions.

Visitors convene in "Telus Plaza" to solicit advice from experts, chat with peers about best practices and eventually be linked up with sales reps. The plaza will also incorporate two of Telus' research-driven online analysis tools: the Business Value Tool and the Wireless Solutions Roadmap.

"This is not a technical discussion. This is a discussion with business leaders about staying ahead of the competition," says Lowe, adding that since TIE's soft launch last summer, it's been attracting about 50 potential clients per day. Lowe says awareness of Telus' business solutions is quite low, so TIE can be an educational tool in the sales force's arsenal. Plus navigating through a virtual city is a bit more exciting for clients than sitting through yet another PowerPoint presentation.

For now, there aren't any plans to advertise TIE; potential clients will be directed there by the Telus sales force.

Telus worked with Montreal-based agency LVL Studio to build TIE. ■
www.tie.telus.com

PUSHING BUTTONS

With everything going high-tech, why should old-fashioned buttons be any exception?

Independent Huntington Beach, CA-based company My-iButton recently launched a



lightweight multimedia button ideal for displaying marketing messaging. For example, restaurants could have their servers wearing

buttons displaying photos or videos of the day's specials. Files can be uploaded via a USB port.

The buttons are rechargeable, and will last eight or nine hours on a full charge. They can be worn as pins or hung from lanyards, and can be rotated to display both landscape and portrait views.

The buttons are sold for \$79.99 each at my-ibutton.com. AB

GOODBYE, IT GUY

New tool lets marketers use the Google Optimizer all by themselves

Know JavaScript coding like the back of your hand? Good for you, we're all very impressed. For the rest of us, Vancouver-based software company Marqui's latest suite of marketing automation solutions includes a feature that allows even the non-tech savvy to take advantage of Google's free Website Optimizer tool.

The Google tool enables marketers to tweak and test variables on their landing pages to see which formula of images, body copy, titles and other factors delivers the highest conversion rates. While the tool is free, it requires JavaScript coding, forcing many marketers to rely on help from their IT support staff every time they want to run a new test. Marqui's fall 2007 marketing automation software suite is fully compatible with Google's Website Optimizer, allowing marketers to simply tick boxes and paste URLs instead of waiting for programming help.

"It's dead easy for marketers...we're like your little IT guy," says Ryan

Stocker, Marqui's director of product development. "[Optimizing] that landing page is really important — it's not uncommon to see [conversion] lifts of 100 or 200%. That's why testing is so exciting."

Marqui is the first vendor to offer full integration with Google's Website Optimizer. "They deserve credit for being very forward-thinking," says Tom Leung, business product manager at Mountain View, CA-based Google, adding that the tool is free because better websites that offer improved user experiences are in the company's best interest.

"In the long run, we think Google will stand to benefit. If advertisers get a higher ROI and decide to reallocate spending because their website is performing so much better, we feel that we have an opportunity to participate in that increased spending," Leung explains. "It is consistent with our mission of making the web a better place."

The Marqui suite with the Google tool starts at U.S. \$450 a month. AB