Abstract

In this paper we describe an e-Tourism environment that takes a community-driven approach to foster a lively society of travelers who exchange travel experiences, recommend tourism destinations or just listen to catch some interesting gossip. Moreover, business transactions such as booking a trip or getting assistance from travel advisors or community members are constituent parts of this environment. All this happens in an integrated, game-like e-Business application where each e-Tourist is impersonated as an avatar. More precisely, we apply 3D Electronic Institutions, a framework developed and employed in the area of multi-agent systems, to the tourism domain. The system interface is realized by means of a 3D game engine that provides sophisticated 3D visualization and enables humans to interact with the environment. We present "itchy feet?., a prototype implementing this 3D e-Tourism environment to showcase first visual impressions. This new environment is a perfect research playground for examining heterogeneous societies comprising humans and software agents, and their relationship in e-Tourism.