VIDEO GAME TO SAVE LIVES

BACKGROUND
Enviroquest offers environmental consulting and course instruction (e-learning and in-class) in health and safety, human biology, cell biology and genetics. The company wanted to bring awareness to the importance of, and lack of, thorough and effective response training in schools, institutions and workplaces.

Enviroquest wanted to create a serious game where users navigate through simulated emergency situations (fire, chemical explosion, violent intrusion, etc.) while making critical choices. Due to their research on cognitive awareness, the team predicted a hands-on approach to learning safety protocol would teach people more effectively than expecting them to read a sign on the wall.

Enviroquest lacked the expertise and equipment to create a base framework or module to build a responsive game. With funding from the ARC Initiative, they were able to team up with UOIT to develop a new game.

OUTCOMES
Dr. Kapralos recruited five UOIT students to work on the project. Mina Tawadrous, Master of Science in Computer Science candidate, was directly involved in the design and development for the technical framework of the serious game. Tawadrous and Dr. Kapralos also supervised four undergraduate students for the duration of the project. Aaron DeChamplain, Ian McCabe, Matthew Stephan and Farinaz Hadadi were responsible for creating models to use within the game such as avatars and fire extinguishers.

At the completion of the project, Enviroquest was given a module to work with that allows the user to take on the role of an instructor in a laboratory during a fire. The user is evaluated based on response time and whether or not they decide to evacuate or extinguish the fire.

If they find there is enough market interest, Enviroquest may move forward toward commercialization.

ABOUT FEDDEV ONTARIO
The Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) was created as part of Canada’s Economic Action Plan to support businesses and communities in southern Ontario as part of the Applied Research and Commercialization (ARC) Initiative. ARC is a pilot program designed to address the gap between small- and medium-size enterprises and post-secondary institutions. Launched in 2010, ARC’s goal is to accelerate innovation, improve productivity, create jobs and contribute to the creation of globally competitive Ontario companies with fewer than 1,000 employees.

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