

## Contributions from R&D in virtual environments

Colóquio - Tecnologia com as Ciências Sociais:  
e-Planning para MIT-Portugal

**Pedro Almeida** | [almeida@ua.pt](mailto:almeida@ua.pt) | Carlos Santos | Luís Pedro (Social Media research team)  
Dep. of Communication and Art  
Univ. of Aveiro

# Virtual worlds and Second Life

- Metaverse and avatars → Web 3D (3.0?);
- Social and economic interaction;
- Croquet Project, **Second Life**, Kaneva, Entropia, PS3 Home, ...;
- Some figures about SL:
  - > 13 million registered users;
  - > \$ 1.300.000 daily trade.
- SL is a shared, collaborative environment, **planned and built** by users;
- Potential for supporting R&D in different scientific areas.

# Research and Development in SL

The potential of virtual worlds is explored in DeCA R&D, namely in:

- Education (SecondUA);
- E-government (e-justice centre);
- Institutional presence / marketing / socialization (SecondUA, Sapo and PT Inovação).

## SecondUA | education and institucional presence in SL

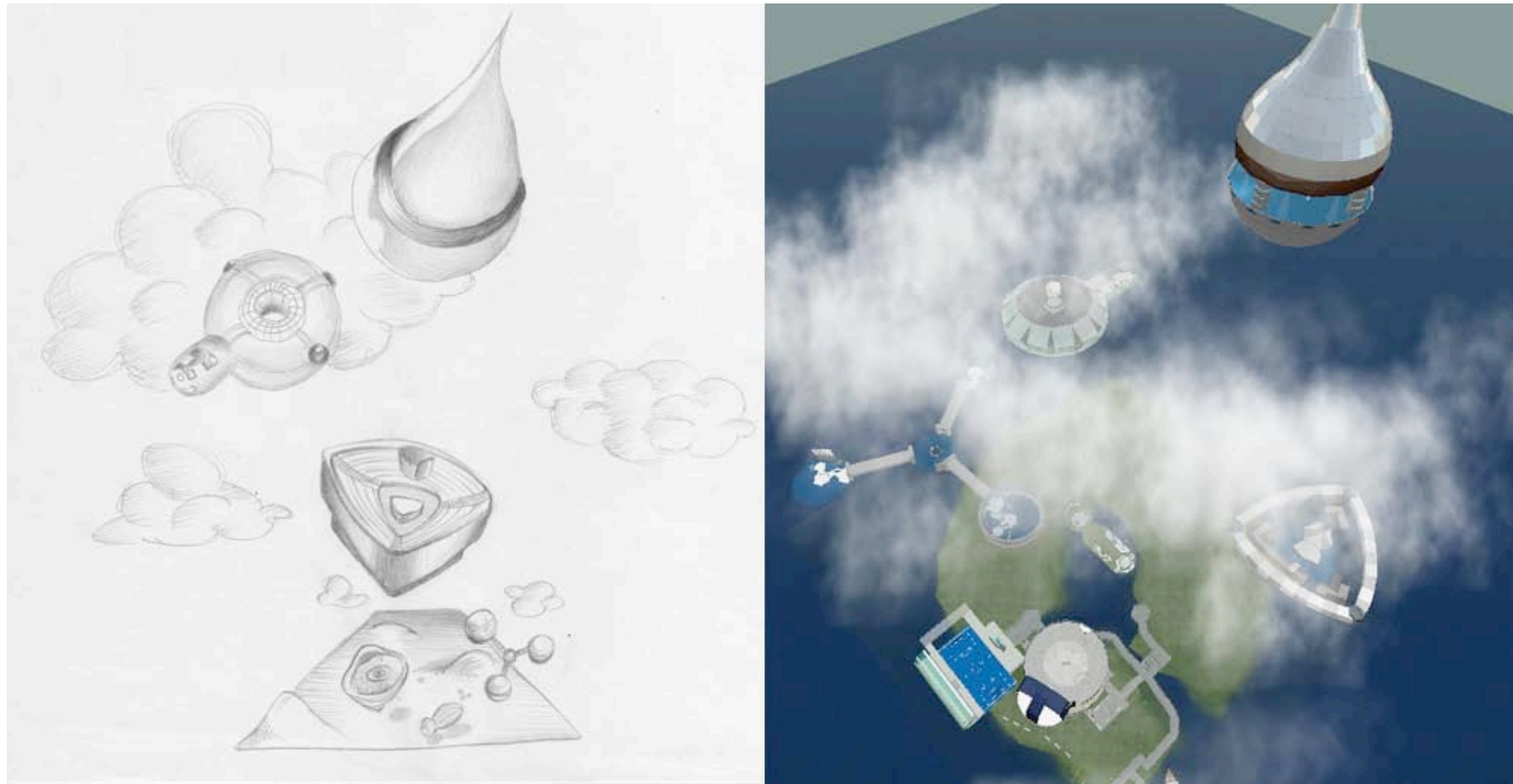
A challenge proposed as a curricular research project aimed at:

- Creating an institutional presence for UA in Second Life;
- Providing a multifunctional space for researchers, teachers and UA services develop their (virtual) activities;
- Exploring the development technologies for building a presence in a virtual world.



# SecondUA | concept and spaces

Rethinking the campus concept → virtual campus



## SecondUA | concept and spaces

**InfoZone** → meeting, welcome and information point

**Aularium** → formal and informal classes

**Showroom** → exhibitions and scientific dissemination

**Second Caffé** → informal meetings, events

**Auditorium** → shows, conferences

**Scriptorium** → private meetings

and ... soccer field, *moliceiros*, ...

**SecondUA Settlers** → reinforcing socialization and supporting infrastructures for students, courses and academic unions.

# e-justice centre | e-government in SL

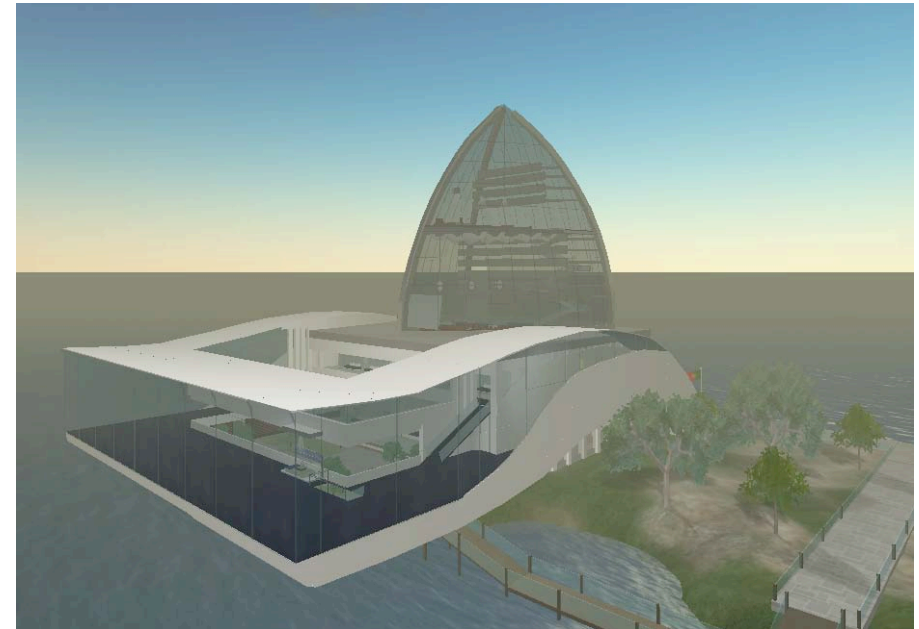
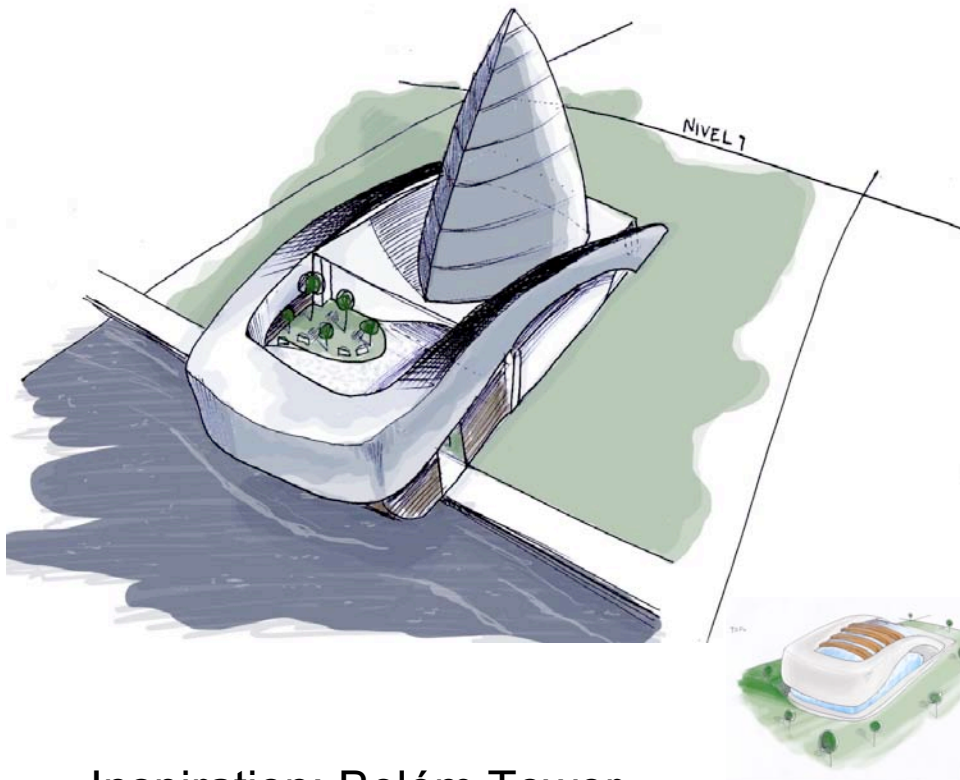
## An arbitration centre in SL - goals:

- Provide alternative means for resolution of disputes through mediation and arbitration in Second Life  
→ The dispute may include commerce of (virtual) goods or services or another type of contract in SL;
- To explore and evaluate new reconfigurations for e-government → rethinking **interaction** and **presence** in the digital world;
- Provide a (academic) simulation space for court sessions (*role play*).





# e-justice centre | buildings



Inspiration: Belém Tower

One island with a main building and 2 private rooms.



# Institucional presence | marketing | replication

Replication of real spaces – in association with events



# Institucional presence | marketing | replication

Link: corporation (PT Inovação) <-> region (Aveiro)



# R&D in virtual worlds

## Final notes:

- New platforms allow new planning, simulation and research spaces;
- New socialization spaces foster and require new training, participation and even research methodologies;
- Virtual environments bring people and institutions closer:

IBM

SUN

**MIT <-> Portugal**

