Inaugural I/ITSECverse Highlights Metaverse Capabilities

One of I/ITSEC 2022’s Focus Events is the launch of I/ITSECverse, an evolving collaboration involving defense stakeholders and government users, industry partners and the I/ITSEC conference focusing on metaverse capabilities.

Occurring in the exhibit hall throughout the week, I/ITSECverse includes nearly two dozen organizations showcasing these capabilities in their booths, as well as an integrated training ecosystem called the Multi-Verse Training Environment (MVTE) demonstration hosted by Brightline Interactive [Booth 1332].

“I/ITSECverse is what NTSA [National Training and Simulation Association] is calling a technology-centric ecosystem,” said MVTE organizer Jennifer Arnold of NVIDIA Omniverse. “This ecosystem has been developed to showcase all of the innovative technologies that are associated with the metaverse, or immersive collaborative spaces. So, imagine a multitude of virtual collaborative spaces or virtual worlds, all interoperating together to support multiple missions.”

MVTE organizer Tyler Gates, General Manager at Brightline Interactive and Chief Futurist at The Glimpse Group, added, “We understand overall that the technologies required to actually create these immersive ecosystems that are connected to one another require a collaboration across the entire industry. I/ITSEC and NTSA are no strangers to these types of collaborations. In fact, they have been pivotal in setting up these types of collaborations with conferences like I/ITSEC. What we see is that there are a multitude of companies that exist across the I/ITSEC show floor that have a metaverse mentality, that are not necessarily trying to demonstrate one singular technology as the end goal, but in fact, they recognize that their technologies exist in a very large ecosystem, and that ecosystem collaboratively works together for the betterment of the entire community.”

Emphasizing that this is the pilot year of a multi-year vision for I/ITSECverse, Arnold said the focus this year is to identify companies and organizations on the show floor that have a metaverse capability.

Conference attendees can visit the companies highlighting these capabilities throughout the exhibit hall, identified by signage as part of I/ITSECverse. Information on participating companies is also available through NTSA [Booth 2580].

“Currently, [these companies] are not necessarily all integrated or interoperable,” Arnold said. “So, this year, we’re trying to identify this ecosystem and who has this capability. As the metaverse and I/ITSECverse grow, our intent is to have all of these capabilities integrated in some capacity.”

One example of this is the MVTE demonstration. Gates noted that, going forward, I/ITSECverse intends to be a demonstration environment, and MVTE is the first. The demonstration showcases a training scenario combining aspects of cloud, network, spatial technology and full-motion simulation, and highlights the collaboration of over 10 partnering companies including Brightline Interactive, NVIDIA Omniverse, Dell, AT&T, Ericsson, Eight360, Varjo, RAVE Computer and others, that “for the better part of the last seven months have been working together weekly to make this happen.”

The training scenario is created in the cloud instance and then deployed to two full-motion simulators. At last year’s I/ITSEC, Gates said, “we had this full motion-simulator. People called it the ‘hamster ball.’ Now we have two of them in this footprint, and we’re showcasing the use of both of them at the same time.”

“The things that people want are collaboration,” he continued. “They want an environment that works well with other environments, and what we want to showcase with this demonstration is that it’s actually already possible. We’re now doing it. We’ve put it on the table so that others can now see it and figure out a way to do it themselves.”

Asked what messages conference attendees can take away from I/ITSECverse experiences, Gates said a goal is that people feel educated and empowered. “Inclusive of training and simulation, and beginning from now to the next three years or so, the future of all learning is going to completely shift when people recognize that computing is shifting. We’re very used to having compute in our hands all the time. Now we have compute in cloud instances and networks that can carry that high-volume compute down to our device at speeds that are faster than we can think to move our head. And that changes how we’re able to think about creating simulation content, writing requirements on government contracts, and what can be done by collaboration with large technology companies coming together under one mission.”

Gates continued, “Hopefully people walk away with an understanding that there is a shift underway, and at I/ITSEC in that booth, with all of those companies in there, they saw something that made them think totally differently about how simulation works.”

Arnold added that attendees will see that “the fidelity of the simulations and the physics that are behind those simulations have gotten us to a point where they are incredibly realistic, and we have not been at this instance before.”

Acknowledging that the metaverse “is still being defined in terms of what the metaverse can do for you,” Arnold concluded, “our hope is that our [I/ITSEC] community gains an understanding of how we as a community are defining the metaverse and how it can help us meet our mission by using the technologies that they’re going to see on the I/ITSEC show floor.”