

USC CENTER ON PublicDiploacy

USC Annenberg School · 3502 Watt Way, Suite 103 · Los Angeles, CA 90089-0281 · (213)821-2078

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Email: vhorton@usc.edu

Contact: Tori Horton
Tel: 213-821-4024
Mobile: 626-497-9798

USC Center on Public Diplomacy to lead panel in Mexico City on virtual worlds' role in making the global local

CPD Director Joshua Fouts to chair panel "From Global to Local: Virtual Worlds, Immigration, and Linguistic Diaspora" simulcast in Second Life

LOS ANGELES – On September 10, the USC Center on Public Diplomacy is convening a panel in Mexico City and the virtual world of Second Life, called “From Global to Local: Virtual Worlds, Immigration, and Linguistic Diaspora”, which will explore the way virtual worlds can have an impact on making global issues local. The panel is part of Interdependence Day V, a three-day event that focuses on the necessity for the world’s citizens to act in cooperation across borders in a post-September 11 environment.

The “From Global to Local” panel will focus on how virtual worlds – 3-D, immersive, interactive, digital environments -- are playing an increasingly popular role in cultural dialogue and interaction. Joshua Fouts, Director of the USC Center on Public Diplomacy, will be joined by other experts to discuss the effect of virtual worlds on democracy, public diplomacy, the social good, and migration. Other panelists include Peter Marx, Former Chief Technology Officer for Vivendi Universal Games; Jose Murilo, Manager of Strategic Information, Ministry of Culture (Brazil); Mark Wallace, virtual worlds journalist; François Bar, Associate Professor, USC Annenberg School for Communication; and Gilson Schwartz, Academic Director of the City of Knowledge, Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil).

“The interdependence of our world is highlighted ever more dramatically by the role the Internet is playing in providing new venues for cultural dialogue and the public good. Virtual worlds provide an increasingly popular, but equally misunderstood role in this. This unique group of experts will move the discussion forward,” said Fouts.

The panel will be simulcast in Second Life on USC Annenberg Public Diplomacy Island [<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Annenberg%20Island/187/67/40>] and will feature a mix of panelists participating physically in Mexico and virtually in Second Life.

Interdependence Day was created in response to the September 11th, 2001 attacks to bring together civic and political leaders, artists, and intellectuals for a series of colloquia, roundtables, and cultural events all focusing on the realities and possibilities of forging constructive interdependence in our troubled and divided world. Originally founded by Dr. Benjamin Barber, President and Director of CivWorld, the gathering is now in its fifth year and is entitled “Migration, Human Dignity and Interdependence”. Interdependence Day V is hosted by Luis Ernesto Derbez, president of the Center for Globalization, Competitiveness and Democracy at Tec de Monterrey (previously Mexico’s Foreign Minister and Minister of the Economy) and sculptor and philanthropist Sebastian.

This year’s confirmed participants for Interdependence Day V include Diana Aviv, President of Independent Sector; former international negotiator Lord Frank Judd; Robert Kuttner of *The American Prospect*; Emma Nicholson, Vice President of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament; author Tahir Shah; Faouzi Skali, Founder of the Fes Festival of World Sacred Music; PBS Television personality Tavis Smiley; Hungarian parliamentarian Ivan Vitanyi; and Princeton University Professor Cornel West.

“We are delighted to participate in this visionary conference,” said Fouts. “Now more than ever, it is critical to discuss the interdependence of our societies, cultures, countries as an opportunity for mutual understanding. We are thankful to have the support of the MacArthur Foundation to explore this potential.”

Fouts’ participation in the event and that of the USC Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School is supported by a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation called “The Role of Philanthropy in Virtual Worlds” which was announced in June. Fouts and Douglas Thomas, Associate Professor of Communication at the Annenberg School, are co-principal investigators for the grant. With MacArthur support, the USC Center on Public Diplomacy is researching ways that virtual worlds form communities around the public good and is organizing virtual world conversations and simulcasts that impact real and virtual world issues such as migration, education, and global and civic engagement.

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation is a private, independent grantmaking institution dedicated to helping groups and individuals foster lasting improvement in the human condition. Through the support it provides, the Foundation develops knowledge, nurtures individual creativity, strengthens institutions, helps improve public policy, and provides information to the public, primarily through support for public interest media. MacArthur's \$50 million digital media and learning initiative that aims to help determine how digital technologies are changing the way young people learn, play, socialize, and participate in civic life. More information is at www.digitallearning.macfound.org or www.macfound.org.

The USC Center on Public Diplomacy at the Annenberg School studies the impact of private activities -- from popular culture to fashion to sports to news to the Internet -- that

inevitably, if not purposefully, have an impact on international cooperation, foreign policy and national security as well as on trade, tourism and other national interests.

Please join us on September 10, 2007, from 12:15 pm – 1:45 pm CDT (10:15 am – 11:45 am PST/SLT) for this remarkable conversation. In Second Life, please join the group “MacArthur Foundation SL Events” for detailed updates.

The complete event schedule for Interdependence Day V, as well as details on the “From Global to Local: Virtual Worlds, Immigration, and Linguistic Diaspora” panel, including expert participant bios, are located here:

http://uscpublicdiplomacy.com/index.php/events/events_detail/2449/

Contact: Tori Horton

vhorton@usc.edu

phone: 213-821-4024

mobile: 626-497-9798

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