

Martian Boneyards

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The Educational Gaming Environments group at TERC (EdGE @ TERC) and Virtual Space Entertainment (VSE) are developing *Martian Boneyards*—a game of scientific collaboration in the new high-definition massively-multiplayer online environment (MMO) called *Blue Mars*.

Martian Boneyards is the first game from EdGE and VSE in *Arcadia*—a region on *Blue Mars* dedicated to scientific gaming. *Martian Boneyards* presents an unfolding story set in the terraformed world of *Arcadia* with a mystery about how bones and artifacts came together near the outskirts of the region. Players hunt for the bones, compare and sort them, map their data using visualization tools in the science center in *Arcadia* and then use this evidence to build and revise theories about what may have occurred to leave remnants. *Martian Boneyards* raises many questions that require scientific investigation and the game rewards players for gathering and analyzing data and eventually using the data of the community to build evidence-based theories about what happened in the boneyards.

Tools and resources available in *Martian Boneyards* allow players of all ages to explore roles—and thus develop the behaviors and skills—for professions in science-related fields like forensics, genetic engineering, bioinformatics, and even entrepreneurial sectors. *Martian Boneyards* rewards players for learning and using skills to make theoretical and applicable discoveries. These rewards will enable players to advance career-wise within the game—gaining in-world status as well as STEM expertise in science content and data visualization and analysis, communication, and collaboration technologies.

Martian Boneyards is scheduled to launch in spring 2010. For more information, please visit <http://www.edgearcadia.com>. This project is funded by the National Science Foundation's Informal Science Education (ISE) program.