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LKAB world's first with interactive work-environment and safety training

LKAB is the first industrial company to launch an interactive safety training and certification programme. Participants are trained in familiar settings and realistic situations.

"At LKAB safety always comes first. We're very pleased to be able to offer our co-workers an innovative training programme that employs gaming technology," says Jonny Snell, QEW coordinator at LKAB.

The stage for the training programme is a virtual version of LKAB's underground mines and processing plants. Participants embark on a journey that takes them from the change rooms through physical plant and workshop areas. During the programme participants are faced with a number of different work-environment and safety-related scenarios.

"The programme is based on situation-based learning in work environment and safety, in a virtual environment. Participants must solve various tasks correctly and safely. They are aided by an audio guide," says Jonny Snell.

Before training participants get a chance to try the different scenarios, which deal with, among other things, maintenance and overhead crane work, they must first equip themselves with the right type of equipment in the change room.

"That's where many people begin their working day at LKAB – in the change room. This is a logical way to start the programme; by equipping your character, or avatar, as it is called in gaming language, for work at surface level or underground," explains Jonny Snell.

The proposal for a virtual gaming environment, of which the aim is to support and strengthen work-environment and safety efforts, was presented to LKAB's internal innovation council. What began as an idea presented by a committed, innovative and responsible employee is now a finished product – ready to be launched.

"We contacted the game developer to begin collaboration. It has been a long

process and has involved both mining experts and chief safety officers to create as realistic an environment as possible," says Jonny Snell.

EducateSmart has developed the interactive training programme, which is called SafetyBASE.

"Existing training programmes are perceived as containing too much unnecessary text. It is simply too much to read in preparation for practically oriented tasks," says Matti Larsson, developer at EducateSmart.

The programme is based around a so-called serious game, i.e., it is a training programme in game form that takes place in familiar environments and realistic situations. Gaming technology is the core of the programme. According to international research, this is the best training form for effective learning through increased motivation.

"Work environment and safety issues are more important than anything else at LKAB. If we can highlight issues effectively, in a way that increases awareness of risks and contributes to making LKAB safer, we must do so," says Jonny Snell.

Initially the training programme will be implemented in a full-scale test, where 60 LKAB- employees will get an opportunity to try the programme.

"After the trials an evaluation will be conducted and statistics from the test will also be presented. Then, we will be able to see what we do well and, above all, what we need to be better at," concludes Jonny Snell.