

Second Life and Libraries:

I am Librarian. I am Avatar

"We are never prepared for what we expect."

James A. Michener, Caravans

I am librarian. I am avatar.

I am resident in the very beautiful world of Second Life;
a persistent 3D world covering 390 square miles... 1,010 square kilometers
almost 5 times the size of the city of Amsterdam.

I enter this world through my computer.

The Second Life browser is the window to the 3D virtual world.

I am not alone here.

6,000,000 unique users have accounts to enter this world with its
growing economy and a traded currency.

I share this world with 50-60,000 people at any given time.

I am a volunteer, a teacher, a learner and a mentor.

I am engaged.

I attend conferences, take classes and am employed here.

I have logged over 1800 hours "in world".

I do not work alone.

I am but one of the 800 plus librarians in the "in world" groups of the Second Life Library.

We participate in the greater whole... across borders and time zones; an extension and an
enhancement of our professional work in the physical world.

We build new partnerships in the communities of this virtual world.

We are inspired and renewed. We are empowered.

We are librarians. We are avatars. We are learners.

Gartner Group estimates that "by the year 2011, 80 percent of Internet users will be in virtual worlds". (Raskino, 2007). The 2007 Horizon Report identified virtual worlds as an emerging technology with a 2-3 year period of adoption into mainstream use for the higher education community. (Horizon, 2007). As the year progressed, a variety of web applications linking the open source Second Life to the web did not go unnoticed. The very popular Facebook site took on Second Friends and Second LifeLink, allowing friends on Facebook to see whether their friends are currently in the virtual world and also offering a Second Life URL (SLURL) which launches the Second Life browser to enter the world. Activity from Second Life to the web was equally improved with Second Life users now able to blog or micro-blog to popular blogging sites or send "tweets" to a Twitter account. These are only a couple of the many options on the web or in the virtual world for Second Life users.

Earlier this month, the first Congressional Hearing on virtual worlds was held in Washington D.C. It was of an educational nature to inform the Telecommunications and Internet Subcommittee on the current state of virtual worlds and, more specifically, Linden Lab's Second Life. Reportings and articles on virtual worlds such as Second Life, are popping up in the popular press and slowly making it into scholarly literature across a variety of disciplines, including education, media and communication, library science, business, medicine, to name just a few.

Dr. Larry Johnson, Chief Executive Officer of the New Media Consortium, was one of four witnesses to give testimony before the Telecommunications and Internet Subcommittee. He spoke for the many hundreds of colleges, universities and museums that are members of the not-for-profit consortium:

“The emerging landscape of virtual worlds represents as profound an opportunity, as profound a driver of changes in the ways we think, learn, and work, as any technology that has ever preceded it — and more so.”

Dr. Larry Johnson,
Chief Executive Officer, New Media Consortium
Testimony at United States Congressional Hearing, April 1, 2008.
(Johnson, 1)

Are we seeing the early stages of the 3D web; merging the current 2D and 3D applications such as Second Life? There are currently 6 million unique users in Second Life, with 50-60,000 people logged on at any one time. Should we be exploring virtual worlds? Should we be concerned? Should we be gaining experience in these worlds as they evolve?

This international frontier emerging before us requires broad-band access and computers with the latest graphics cards as toll for entry. (See systems requirements:

<http://secondlife.com/corporate/sysreqs.php>)

Again we see a digital divide. For many, the cost of access will be too high. It is here where libraries can play a role; advocates for broad-band public access and raising awareness of both issues and opportunities for users entering the virtual worlds, and considering the implications for physical libraries and library users. Through exploration and timely immersion into these worlds, we may open up doors to new services and possibly new roles for librarians and libraries. We can prepare....

A Brief History of Second Life:

Second Life was launched in by a San Francisco company, Linden Lab, in 2003 with server space representing a patch of land measuring 1 square kilometer. There were 500 residents. By January 2006, Second Life had 100,000 residents. (Rosedale, 3). Linden Lab now identifies 6 million unique users (over 12 million accounts). The virtual economy has seen exponential growth over the past 4-5 years, with users now spending approximately US\$850,000 worth of “virtual currency” per day on the Second Life platform. There are two separate Second Life grids; the main Second Life grid is often referred to as “main grid” (18 years and over) and there is a separate teen grid called “Teen Second Life” for ages 13-17. Linden Lab requires that all adults on the teen grid go through a security check through a third party company before being admitted to the teen grid. Second Life is open source. Linden Lab also makes available test versions of release candidate browsers for residents interested in working with the latest features, including the bugs. Second Life web site:

<http://www.secondlife.com>

In Linden Lab’s metrics reported January 2008 they showed:

- average adult age: 33
- average teen age: 15
- 11.5 % over age 45
- 70% of users are outside the United States
Residents come from more than 100 countries

Gender by usage: (declared gender)

- male: 41.11%
- female: 58.89%

First Congressional Hearing on Virtual Worlds:

On April 1, 2008, four well-known leaders from the business, education and not-for-profit community gave testimony at the first United States Congressional Hearing before the Telecommunications and Internet Subcommittee on virtual worlds: *Online Virtual Worlds: Applications and Avatars in a User Generated Medium*.

In his Opening Statement, Congressman, Edward J. Markey, District of Massachusetts (D-MA), described virtual worlds as "...vehicles for understanding across communities" and spoke of the power of the new medium, and gave examples of their use including, training for emergency first-responders and training for scenarios that are difficult to train for in real life. He also spoke of upgrading broad band infrastructure and ensuring that we bridge digital divides in our country so that all Americans can participate. He raised issues of consumer protection, personal privacy, intellectual property, fraud and child protection.

"Virtual worlds are at the cutting edge of so-called "Web 2.0" applications and services, which enable users to generate the content of the realm, such as with YouTube and Flickr and Facebook. Virtual worlds can also support business operations and commercial applications - from real estate sales, to business conferences, product marketing, music sales, and the general buying of goods and services. IBM, which is testifying today, has been an early and active colonizer of this electronic frontier.

Today's hearing has been designed primarily to be educational. *In time, virtual worlds will become ever more commonplace and millions of Americans will inhabit such worlds for parts of their day - for communications, for business, for education, for health care, for cultural interests. As that occurs, policy issues will inevitably arise that mirror the issues that confront policymakers in the real world - consumer protection, personal privacy, intellectual property protection, banking issues, online gambling, or child protection concerns. Policymakers will have to continue to monitor these issues to ensure adequate consumer protection as virtual worlds continue to evolve and grow."* (Markey, 2008)

The testimonies of the four witnesses offer well articulated positions for use of virtual worlds within the educational, business and not-for profit communities. Librarians may want to consider these testimonies when creating proposals for virtual world projects.

Phillip Rosedale, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Linden Lab, the creator of Second life, explains that the world "...began with a large 'game-play' element." but today it is "...a vibrant mix of in-world businesses, real world "brick and mortar" brands, educators, scientists, and curious and creative individuals." (Rosedale, 2). He reported that people in Second Life had created over one billion "in world objects" and that most derived value from artistic, intellectual or utility in the virtual world. (Ibid. 3). In his testimony he counted the Political Outreach and Community in SL as offering opportunities for public participation in government as well as the opportunity for expanded political discourse that may not be cost effective in the physical world. (Ibid. 3). He also addressed potential misuse of virtual worlds and his company's ability to track, retain and investigate information related to potential crimes—and thus the ability to closely assist law enforcement." (Rosedale, 4)

During the Hearing, video technology was used capture video of the Hearing which was later made available as a webcast (available from the government web site - http://energycommerce.edgeboss.net/wmedia/energycommerce/040108.ti.hrg.virtual_worlds.wvx) and, quite appropriately, video was streamed live into Second Life where selected people (including Congressman, Edward Markey) were logged in with their avatars. They met in a virtual hearing room similar to their actual location in Washington D.C. In turn, live video of the avatars watching the video of the hearing was streamed back to the hearing room in Washington and displayed on screens during the "real life" Hearing.

During his testimony, Laurence Johnson Ph.D. (Larry Pixel in Second Life) clarified a number of misconceptions about virtual worlds:

- work done in Second Life is just another facet of the work people do on their campuses (noting that any dichotomies drawn between the two were artificial)
- behind an avatar is a thinking person (noting that he is the same person at the hearing as he is on the NMC campus in Second Life)
- virtual space extends our notions of the real world just as the web extends our notions of the network
- virtual worlds are not games
- emerging developments in virtual worlds offer profound opportunity and changing the ways in which we think, learn and work

“A virtual world like Second Life or Project Wonderland is not a game, serious or otherwise, and referring to the work done in these spaces as games limits both the potential for the technology and the work it is enabling.” (Johnson, 1)

An Educational Presence in Second Life: Some of the Numbers:

The New Media Consortium (NMC), a not-for-profit association of colleges, universities and museums counts hundreds of institutions and over 7,500 educators and students working and learning in Second Life. (Johnson, 1). The NMC Observer is available at: <http://sl.nmc.org>

Linden Lab has its own program for educators on the adult and teen grids. These programs are not part of the NMC campus. The Campus Second Life Program provides approved educators with temporary land grants to set up virtual classes, and reported 400 universities and 4,500 teachers were involved in the programs. (Rosedale, 3). Second Life: Education and Non-Profit Organizations: <http://secondlifegrid.net/programs/education>

Alliance Second Life Library 2.0:

The Second Life Library opened in April 2006 on a 4,000 square meter patch of leased land. By May 2006 they received an anonymous donation of an island (65,000 square meters). The Second Life Library is a collaborative project led by the Alliance Library System (ALS), based in Peoria, Illinois, USA and is led by Executive Director Kitty Pope. ALS coordinates the activities for the Second Life Library and the efforts of many hundreds of library volunteers from around the world. ALS Innovation Librarian, Lori Bell (Lorelei Junot in SL) started the Second Life Library on a small patch of leased land. The Second Life Library and partner islands now number over 40! There are over 800 self-identified librarians in the library related “in world” groups; 1400 library “friends” in the “in world” Second Life Library group, and over 650 members in the Google Groups mailing list on the web. (Pope, 2007)

In 2007, the Second Life Library was the winner of the ALA Information Today's *Library of the Future* and one of six *Sirsi-Dynix Building Better Community awards*.

(Note: All statistics are taken from the Second Life Library Year End report listed in the bibliography, with updates to the group members listed and the Infoisland blog: <http://www.infoisland.org>).

Reference Service from the Second Life Library:

Currently reference service is available from a new island, Info International. There are 32 confirmed volunteers, with 15 volunteers regularly reporting statistics. The reference area has 78 hours of scheduled volunteer work each week. Various technologies have been used at the reference area including OCLC Questionpoint which was provided by OCLC for a 6 month trial period.

Reference Statistics for 2007:

- 6,769 patrons
- 1921 directional questions related to Second Life
- 2292 reference questions in Second Life
- 186 directional questions related to the “real world”
- 287 reference questions related to the “real world”
- 46 reported voice questions
- 37 patrons who spoke/typed no English

Continuing Library Education:

The Alliance Library System has partnered with the University of Illinois Graduate School of Library and Information Science and is offering a variety of non-credit courses including:

- “Introduction to Virtual World Librarianship”
- “Intermediate Virtual World Librarianship”
- “Immersive Learning”
- “Setting up an educational presence in Second Life”
- “Second Life 101”
- “Teaching and Training in Second Life”
- “Technical Skills for the Virtual World of Second Life (building, scripting, machinima)”

I teach the *machinima* portion of the course (real-time 3D video capture in a game or virtual world). Building and scripting are taught by experienced SL residents (e.g.: Charlene Trudeau who created Shakespeare’s Globe Theater on Renaissance Island).

Listing of Libraries / Librarians with a Presence on the Alliance Second Life Library Islands: (as of April 10, 2008)

- Directory of libraries and facilities: http://infoisland.org/directory_alpha.php

[Aero-Astro Archives](#)

[McGill Library Bibliotheque](#)

[Alliance Library System](#)

[McMaster University Libraries](#)

[Alliance Second Life Main Library](#)

[Mi Pueblo](#)

[American Library Association](#)

[Michigan Library Consortium](#)

[Arabic Library](#)

[Mount Saint Vincent University \(MSVU\)](#)

[Archivists of Second Life](#)

[Murdoch University Library](#)

[Art Librarians](#)

[Mystery Manor](#)

[Australian Libraries](#)

[Aut University](#)

[Bell Library](#)

[Black Abolitionist Archive, University of Detroit Mercy Library](#)

[COBDCV col.legi de bibliotecaris i documentalistes de la comunitat valenciana](#)

[California Library Association](#)

[Canada Nexus](#)

[China Cafe](#)

[Cleveland Public Library](#)

[Clevnet](#)

[Cullom-Davis Library, Bradley Univeristy](#)

[Cybrary City I Offices \(multiple tenants\)](#)

[Dream Weavers Cafe](#)

[Dutch Language Area](#)

[English-Speaking World](#)

[Exhibition Concourse](#)

[Eye4You Alliance](#)

[French Language Area](#)

[Genealogy Research Center](#)

[Geographic Information Systems](#)

[Georgia Institute of Technology](#)

[German Language Area](#)

[National Library of Medicine, Specialized Information Services](#)

[Nebraska Library Commission](#)

[Nova Southeastern University Library](#)

[Olathe Kansas Library](#)

[Park and Exhibit for the Stateless](#)

[Peace Park and Religious Resource Center](#)

[Portuguese Language Area](#)

[Public Libraries in Second Life](#)

[Rainbow Gardens Pet Memorial Center](#)

[Reader's Garden and Book Discussion Place](#)

[RezLibris](#)

[SA Customer Service Experience](#)

[SL Society Hill Library 2.0, Society Hill SC Public Library](#)

[Scandinavian Language Area](#)

[Scarlet House of Music](#)

[Second Life Medical Library](#)

[SirsiDynix Auditorium](#)

[South Carolina State Library](#)

[Spanish Language Area](#)

[Sprott Shaw Library](#)

[Stanford University Libraries](#)

[State Library of Kansas](#)

[Steelhead Public Library](#)

[IBM Library of Computer Science and SSME](#)

[Talis Sci-Fi Portal](#)

[ICT Library](#)

[The Den of Inquiry](#)

[IN-World Institute of Photography](#)

[The Public Library of Charelotte & Mecklenburg County](#)

[Info Island DK](#)

[The University of North Carolina Greensboro Library and Information Studies Department](#)

[Info Island International Reference Desk](#)

[The Vannevar Bush Reading Garden: Caledon Library](#)

[International House](#)

[Tisch Library and the Wright Center for Science Education, Tufts University](#)

[International Plaza](#)

[Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library](#)

[Italian Language Area](#)

[University College Dublin Library](#)

[Ivy Pavillion](#)

[University of California, Los Angeles \(UCLA\) Library](#)

[Japanese Language Area](#)

[University of Florida George A. Smathers Libraries](#)

[Johnson & Wales University](#)

[University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign](#)

[Kean University Library](#)

[University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, GSLiS, Graduate School Library and Information Science](#)

[Kuhrang Public Library](#)

[University of Kentucky Libraries](#)

[Le Bibliotheque Francophone](#)

[University of Montevallo Carmicheal Library](#)

[Library Gallery](#)

[University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Information and Library Science](#)

[Library Showcase](#)

[Library Student Journal](#)

[University of Plymouth, erdt \(Electronic Resources Development Team\)](#)

[Lincolnshire Lending Library and Reading Room](#)

[University of South Florida](#)

[London Punch Reading Room](#)

[VWLA: Virtual Worlds Library Association](#)

[Machinima Institute & Cafe](#)

[Washburn School of Law](#)

[Mark & Emily Turner Memorial Library](#)

[Webcastatorium - Worldbridges](#)

[Whitehorn Memorial Library: Caledon Library](#)

Many other libraries and librarians have a presence in the virtual world, including the Amsterdam Public Library and a variety of library and educational projects with a presence on the New Media Consortium campus which comprises hundreds of islands.

As of December 2007, the partner islands included:

- Stanford University Libraries
- Cleveland Public Library
- Center for Disease Control
- Educator's Coop 1 and 2
- University Medical Center Gronigen (Holland)
- Commonwealth 1, 2, 3, 4
- Bradley University
- Info Architecture
- Info Island DK (Denmark)
- VirtuAlba
- San Jose State University Graduate School of Library and Information Science
- ISTE Island
- Lighthouse Learning Island
- ALA Arts Info Island
- Edtech
- Echoditto Island
- Castle Turing

More than 40 islands and thousands of visitors:

The assortment of library and partner islands include Infoland International with an outdoor information patio including reference service and a commons area providing information on various cultures, exhibits and locations in Second Life.

Renaissance Island is an immersive learning environment with the theme of 16th Century Tudor England with a replica of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre. Costumes are offered to new visitors to the island when they arrive at the telehub. The Alliance Library System received a grant to build the theater and *Southwark* areas on the sim. Live concerts with local musician, Thom Dowd, take place in at an outside stage on the island.

Land of Lincoln: In celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Lincoln-Douglas debates and the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, the Alliance Library System has just opened the Land of

Lincoln immersive learning area. The project was planned and built by librarians, historians, educators, students and friends. The islands currently receive approximately 5,000 visitors per day and are expected *over 6000 visitors per day* with the Land of Lincoln.

Museum of Music (MuMu): The MuMu opened in early 2008 with the 'British Invasion'; an immersive exhibit of music, streaming video and decorated bedrooms and living rooms of the sixties. Abbey Zenith and Bucky Barkley are co-curators of the MuMu and recipients of a Foundation for Rich Content grant which was used for the creation of the museum and exhibits.

Health Info Island: In 2006 and 2007, Alliance received two grants from the National Library of Medicine Greater Midwest Region to start and staff HealthInfo Island. In 2008 the Alliance Library System (ALS) announced the Greater Midwest Region/National Library of Medicine had awarded ALS a further \$35,000. grant called "Share the Health", The grant is to provide consumer health information to people with disabilities and chronic illness in Second Life. Virtual Ability Inc. (VAI) is a partner on the project. Their ongoing work in Second Life includes the Heron Sanctuary which provides a community of support for people with disabilities.

Through the project, those involved on the project will reach out to the residents in Second Life and provide instruction on how to search for and use this information effectively. Members of the project team also hope to provide information on accessibility and disabilities to people in Second Life, as well as their family members and work colleagues. Contact Carolina Keats (Carol Perryman in real life) and Namro Orman (Guus van den Brekel, Coordinator of Electronic Services, Central Medical Library (CBM), Groningen, NL.) to find out how you can help on the various projects. Health Info Island blog: <http://healthinfoisland.blogspot.com>

Library Islands in Teen Second Life: a separate grid

Linden Lab provides two separate grids for Second Life residents: the adult grid and the separate Teen Second Life for ages 13-17. All adults on this grid are tied to educational related projects and the specific island for the project. Clearance is required from a third-party investigation organization selected by Linden Lab. The library projects on Teen Second Life grid include a variation on the *Land of Lincoln* island currently open on the main adult grid, and also the *Eye4YouAlliance island* funded by the Public Library of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, USA. Teen Librarian & Second Life specialist, Kelly Czarnecki (Saryn Fanwood / BlueWings Hayek) and other adult educators, including representatives from the US Government agency, NASA make up the adults on the islands. NASA's site includes a space lab and learning center featured in the Goldsphere machinima filmed on Eye4YouAlliance (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zE3LRyZYnE4>).

Together teens and adults plan and create events and work on group content development projects. Events include college fairs, spaceship build-offs, literary events, art shows, model UN trivia, ecosystem scripting, poetry events, medieval fashion show, slideshow and machinima (animated 3D video capture) instruction and festivals, to name just a few. Teens and adults participated in the planning of the sim's now medieval theme and many of the buildings on the Eye4YouAlliance Island.

The blog is available at: <http://eye4youalliance.youthtech.info>

Business Plan can be found at http://eye4youalliance.youthtech.info/?page_id=111

Would you like to volunteer? http://eye4youalliance.youthtech.info/?page_id=58

International Conferences:

One of the great opportunities in Second Life is to attend national and international conferences that would otherwise be prohibitive in terms of cost and time. The online registration for the NMC conferences ranged from US\$125-US\$150. The cost of the Second Life Library's conference was US\$30. Below are examples of conferences held partially or entirely in the virtual world.

Held partially in Second Life:

- 2008 NMC Symposium on Mashups, (live online event to be held April 1 - 3, 2008 in Second Life and the web environment of Adobe Connect)
- Educause/ELI (Atlanta and Second Life)
- Educause 2007 (Seattle and Second Life)
- MiT5 (MIT: Media in Transition), Boston
- UNESCO eLearning Conference, Barcelona
- CILIP, UK : Umbrella 2007 (discussion panels in Second Life)
- Second Life Community Conference (Chicago and Second Life) Aug. 2007

Held Entirely in Second Life:

- Virtual Worlds: Libraries, Education & Museums (held at the NMC Conference Center and on Infoisland), March 8, 2008
- Symposium on the Evolution of Communication (held at the NMC Conference Center in Second Life) December 4-5, 2007
- Second Life Best Practices in Education 2007 – 1300 attendees with workshops/presentations over a 24 hours, held on several sims
- Beyond Broadcast 2007
- New Media Consortium (NMC), Symposium on Creativity 2007
- Dr. Dobb's LIFE 2.0, 2007 and 2008

A Glimpse of the Virtual World from the Social Web:

With Second Life now being open source, we are seeing a growing number of mashups between Second Life and other web 2.0 applications. The very popular social platform, Facebook, has beta applications that users can install on their sites to keep in touch with friends and locations in Second Life. These user created mashups display thumbnail images of friends in SL and allow users to communicate with friends on SL or teleport to a suggested site or location. *Second Friends* is a cool visual application that pulls in the photos of any of your Facebook Friends who are on your Second Life Friends list. The mashup of Facebook and SL was created by Andy Powell (Art Fosset in SL), who leads Eduserv Foundation, a not-for-profit information and communication technology (ICT) organization supporting the education and library communities.

Another Second Life application, *Second LifeLink*, allows Facebook users to access to Display a listing of Facebook friends that are also Second Life friends with the option to view online "in world" status, share favorite Second Life locations with Facebook friends and meet virtually by following the "in world" links listed under the friend's name. This launches the Second Life browser and logs the user into the location listed on the Facebook entry.

From Second Life, people routinely post content to the web using Second Life created technologies to do so. Content is also brought into Second Life. Examples of database queries and display in Second Life can be seen on some of the library projects. HealthInfo Island has tools for reading RSS feeds, querying popular medical databases, among many other useful tools linking the 3D virtual world to the current 2D web. Namro Orman's blog posts can be seen on the BlogHUD site (<http://bloghud.com>), along with the posts from others wearing the popular Heads Up Device (HUD). Another popular HUD is the *SLtweets HUD* (<http://sltweets.com>). From Second Life, users can send updates of their travels, activities or ramblings to their Twitter account on the web. If Twitter friends have text messaging (SMS) updates enabled, the micro-posts of under 140 characters will go directly to their cell phone or PDA. Messages can also be pulled into Second Life from the web. The promotion for the HUD gives examples of its use as "...the ability to catalog our finds, research and explore, geo tag, and share the information on demand with others who might have the same interests – or to not share it with anyone in the world." Other activities of Second Life residents

include posting videos and images captured in Second Life to photo and video management and editing sites such as Youtube, Jumpcut, Blip.tv, Facebook, etc.

Second Life and Group Content Development: Participatory Culture

Second Life residents have a rich assortment of tools built into the Second Life browser that can be used to capture events in 2 dimensional images or in video (known as machinima). This video capture is familiar to millions of gamers who readily capture video of experiences and post to the popular social web sites supporting video and audio, video editing and remix sites, video mashups, etc. Second Life offers opportunities to work collaboratively, and this can be extended to media content. We are seeing the beginning of mashups between Second Life and web 2.0 applications.

Henry Jenkins, media analyst and Director of the Comparative Media Studies Program at MIT, looks at this participatory culture, and collective intelligence in his book, *Convergence Culture: where old and new media collide*. He describes this *convergence* as: “the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want.” (Jenkins, 2). He writes that “convergence involves both a change in the way media is produced and a change in the way media is consumed.” (Jenkins, 3). It is here that libraries and librarians can enter the equation and start to rethink programming and physical building setups to accommodate areas for library users to begin developing content. Jenkins writes that in this new *participatory culture* fans and information consumers “are invited to actively participate in creation and circulation of new content” (Jenkins, 290). In this scenario we can learn alongside our library users and begin to facilitate content development.

Participation in *machinima* and *other shared media creation* projects in virtual worlds positions libraries with opportunities to move into a new environment and a way to connect directly with library users and the broader community. Second Life, it's collaborative. It's economical. It provides us with the opportunity to learn new skills that can be applied to both the virtual world and in telling our stories through machinima across multiple media platforms. Being early adopters allows us to gain experience and later provide orientation and instruction to interested library users exploring virtual worlds and related online communities.

Looking Forward:

Virtual worlds are on the horizon, and participation now in voluntary library projects offers us a first step into virtual worlds such as Second Life. Even if the adoption rate for virtual worlds is a bit farther off into the future, we need to address issues of access both for library users and librarians. Keeping abreast of activity surrounding virtual worlds via mailing lists, virtual library associations and local groups is a good place to start.

In this year's 2008 Horizon Report, “grassroots video” was identified as being upon us in the next year. Video capture in virtual worlds and games is an option for library users and librarians. Libraries and educational institutions are beginning to create “commons” areas where students and library users can create new content and mashup existing work (addressing issues of copyright law) to share across the web, on social networking sites, send across the mobile networks or stream video into virtual worlds. In this new collaborative environment, we can translate our collective open stories into rich visual clips of experiences to be used and morphed into new objects and distributed across media platforms from the social 2D web to the 3D worlds such as Second Life. Jenkins notes that “convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content.” (Jenkins, 3). For librarians and educators, participation in this new media system and information landscape requires us to take on roles along side our neighbors as “media producers and consumers.” (Ibid.). This may require developing new skillsets for many of us. Virtual worlds offer us a platform for assorted content

development and a means to record it. Addressing access issues to these worlds for library users and librarians, will open up options for exploring the environments and taking the new journey as librarians, as learners, as avatars.

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HVX Voyager in Teen Second Life
Blog: <http://machinimalibrarians.blogspot.com>
Machinima: <http://www.youtube.com/hvxsilverstar>
Flickr Photos: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/photolibraries>