

Handouts for:

MUVE it! Do You Need a Second Life?

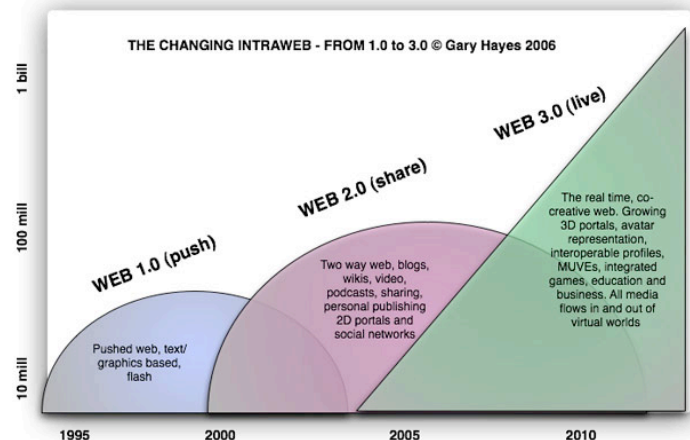
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c. 2007

Contents	
Do you need a Second Life?	p. 2
The One Afternoon Plan for SecondLife	p. 4
Resources	p. 5
All handouts can be downloaded from http://www.doug-johnson.com/presentations/	

MUVE it! Do You Need a Second Life? (Description)
Simulated 3-D environments like Second Life are being called Web 3.0. How do teachers and librarians get started using these new tools, what might they find in these worlds, and what are the learning opportunities such environments might present? Let Blue Skunk be your guide to this new medium of interacting with the Internet.



An in-service in Second Life...



From: <www.personalizedmedia.com/index.php/2006/08/27/virtual-worlds-web-30-and-portable-profiles>

Do you need a Second Life?

Imagine walking into a library and simply talking to a librarian who walks through the library with you, pointing out the resources you need. Or taking an entire class to watch a glacier build and melt. Or attending a seminar with educators from across the world. All without ever leaving your classroom.

This and much, much more are currently possible in the 3-D virtual world of Second Life, accessed through your computer and the Internet.

When I first started hearing about Second Life, my reaction was the same as many of yours probably will be: "My first life is so busy, how do you expect me to find the time to live a second one?"

It's a valid question, but Second Life and similar MUVES (Multi-User Virtual Environments) have a enough educational potential that all educators ought to at least take a look at these exciting new worlds.

First a short overview of what Second Life is and some steps in getting started exploring the world. Then, we'll take a look at some places to visit in Second Life and explore what pioneering educators are already doing there.

Second Life is one of a number of Multi-User Virtual Environments (MUVES) that a growing number of adults and children are using for recreation, business and education. In a MUVES you see a graphic representation of yourself walking about a computer-generated world that looks realistic. There you can see, interact and communicate (via chat) with other MUVES users. One can own real estate, purchase items and even start a business - well nearly everything one can do in RL (real life). A list of MUVES, along with their descriptions, can be found at TechSoup <www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/internet/page6759.cfm>.

The best way to learn about Second Life or similar environments may be to just jump in. While there is no cost to participate at a basic level, your experience will be better with a fast computer and good Internet connection. Go to <secondlife.com>, download the client software for your computer, create an account, and login.

Once you are in the world, you will start by creating an avatar, your character in Second Life. Read the introductory guides and then stroll or fly about. For those of us who like our information in print, there is *Second Life: Official Guide* (Sybex, 2006), but there is a complete "Knowledge Base" on the Second Life website.

One of the best ways to get a friendly introduction to this strange new world is by making a friend who is willing to give you a tour and answer your questions. ISTE hosts a social on Thursday evenings at 6PM Pacific Coast Time (also Second Life Time) at the ISTE Skypark. Most locations are easily found by using the search engine built into the program and then "teleporting" to that location.

While there is a large commercial presence in Second Life, educators are beginning to take advantage of the medium as well. And that is what this column will be exploring next month.

Be warned. Yes, Second Life has an "adult" side to it. Yes, it is crash prone, slow and unreliable. Yes, there is a steep learning curve to creating content for it. Yes, it sounds just like the WWW of about 10-12 years ago. (Doesn't anyone else remember Mosaic and three-minute page re-draws?)

Unfortunately, many of us can't quite reconcile "fun" and "useful." Every time I've gone into Second Life I've really had fun and I wonder if anything this enjoyable can possibly be good for a person. It's my inner Puritan.

But these three dimensional worlds may well be the next incarnation of our interface with information and others online. Gartner Group predicts 80% of all Internet users will be using a form of MUVE by 2011.

My avatar's name is BlueSkunk Johnson. Fly over and say "hi" if you see me!



Doug (aka BlueSkunk) Johnson relaxing in his Second Life home away from home.

From **Gartner: Five Laws For The Virtual World**

<www.webpronews.com/topnews/2007/04/24/gartner-five-laws-for-the-virtual-world>

Virtual worlds are set to take off and by 2011, 80 percent of active Internet users will have a presence in a virtual world according to Gartner.

The first law states that **virtual worlds are not games or a parallel universe (yet)**. "Growth in virtual worlds is significant but lower than it appears; the overall population of non-game virtual worlds is still small compared to massively multi-user online games (MMOGs) and the totality of community-oriented and niche-targeted environments," Mr. Prentice said.

The second law is that **behind every avatar is a real person**. Gartner believes that people cannot be fooled by the fantasy elements in the virtual world and that there are unwritten rules and expectations for behavior as culture develops. Companies need to be concerned with their corporate reputations.

The third law is to **be relevant and add value**. "Do not expect to undertake profitable commercial activities inside most virtual worlds in the next three years," Mr. Prentice said.

The fourth law is to **understand and contain the downside**. Gartner points out that companies should be prepared for interruptions that can range from strange behavior from new residents to vandalism.

The fifth and final law is **that it is a long haul**. Gartner predicts, "There is significant probability that, over time, market pressures will lead to a merging of current virtual worlds into a smaller number of open-sourced environments that support the free transfer of assets and avatars from one to another with the use of a single, universal client."

The One Afternoon Plan for Second Life: "must-see" sights for educators

Below is that list compiled from my experiences in Second Life, from reading the blogs of Ryan Bretag <www.ryanbretag.com/technologist> and Kevin Jarrett <www.storyofmysecondlife.com>, attending presentations by Lisa Perez <blogs.cuip.net/dlis/about/>, studying the “best of” sites (listed below), and just being a collector of the odd article.

On the advice of Sean Fitzgerald, co-author of the terrific wiki *Second Life in Education*, these sites admittedly stress the “wow” factor of a 3-D virtual environment. As Sean suggests, once you are hooked, *you* can find the more practical, but less dramatic, places. Even if one doesn’t understand the “content” of some of these places, their beauty is still breathtaking.

The addresses following the names of the SL sites are SLURLs - Second Life URLs. These will take you to a website from where you can teleport directly specific locations in Second Life itself. You need to be logged into Second Life, of course.

Here’s my tour plan for if you had but an afternoon - or a few - to spend in Second Life.

1. *NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory* <slurl.com/secondlife/Meteora/177/161/27/> Perhaps the coolest site in all of Second Life. From the NOAA website: “On NOAA's island, one can soar through a hurricane on the wing of a research aircraft, rise gently through the atmosphere atop a weather balloon, or search for a hidden underwater cave on a side trip from a NOAA submarine.” And you can!
2. *InfoIsland* <slurl.com/secondlife/Info%20Island/90/128/34> This is an entire collection of libraries on issues as diverse as health and genealogy. My personal favorite is the SF/Fantasy Center. InfoIsland is rapidly developing into an Info Archipelago with the additions of InfoIsland II, EduIsland, Cybrary City, and HealthInfoIsland.
3. *Temple of Isis* <slurl.com/secondlife/Themiskyra/72/241/35> This realistic and colorful ancient Egyptian tomb was created using maps drawn by one of Napoleon’s engineers. See if you can find the hidden mummy’s tomb. (No curse of which I am aware.) It’s just one example of many historical replicas on Second Life. Hmmm, I’m thinking these just might make a nifty History Day projects.
4. *Island of Svarga* <slurl.com/secondlife/Svarga/7/124/22> Jump in the hovercraft and take the guided tour of this amazing recreation of an entire ecosystem. While on Svarga, play in a band, get your fortune told by an oracle, or simply admire the scenery.
5. *Second Louvre Museum* <slurl.com/secondlife/Tompson/153/96/100/?title=The%20Second%20Louvre%20Museum> Both inside and out, the SL Louvre has been designed to replicate the original in Paris – without the long admittance lines, of course. You may need to fly toward the ceiling to get a good look at some paintings.
6. *International Spaceflight Museum* <slurl.com/secondlife/Spaceport%20Alpha/48/83/24> For those of us who have always wanted to be astronauts, the ISM gives us the chance to take a ride into space and “do” lots of other space-related activities. Stop at the sign a few paces from where you are teleported for a good overview of the area. Spaceport Alpha is just one many “scilands” in the region.
7. *Genome Island* <slurl.com/secondlife/Genome/137/87/29> OK, I must admit this one is *way* over my head. I’m not really sure what a genome is let alone terms like “electrophoresis” or “eukaryotes.” But I’ll bet we have students here in our district who know this stuff! If nothing else, the greenhouses are fun to wander through. Games, models and more

Just as a reminder, the best way to get an introduction to this strange new world is by making a friend who’s willing to give you a personal tour and answer your questions. You can find such friends at the ISTE social on Thursday evenings at 6PM Pacific Coast Time (also Second Life Time) at the ISTE Skypark.

<slurl.com/secondlife/ISTE%20Island/93/83/30>

Have fun, don’t take any wooden Linden nickels, and don’t do anything I wouldn’t do...

Resources:

Here are some outstanding resources for Second Life for educators:

- Chicago Public Schools Department of Libraries and Information Services in Second Life <blog.cuip.net/dlis>
- ISTE in SecondLife <www.iste.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Membership/Member_Networking/ISTE_Second_Life.htm>
- Lighthouse Learning Island <nausetschools.org/lighthouselearning/index.htm>
- Second Life in Education <sleducation.wikispaces.com>
- Sites of interest to educators in Second Life edumuve.com <edumuve.com/tour>
- SLTutorials.net <www.sl tutorials.net>
- Top 20 Educational Locations in Second Life <www.simteach.com/wiki/index.php?title=Top_20_Educational_Locations_in_Second_Life>



A map of NOAA's Earth System Research Laboratory from its website at <www.esrl.noaa.gov/outreach/sl/>



The SF/Fantasy Center on InfoIsland.