



Second Life

Second Life (abbreviated as SL) is an Internet-based virtual world launched in 2003, developed by Linden Research, Inc (commonly referred to as Linden Lab), which came to international attention via mainstream news media in late 2006 and early 2007. A downloadable client program called the Second Life Viewer enables its users, called "Residents", to interact with each other through motional avatars, providing an advanced level of a social network service combined with general aspects of a metaverse. Residents can explore, meet other Residents, socialize, participate in individual and group activities, create and trade items (virtual property) and services from one another.

Second Life is one of several virtual worlds that have been inspired by the cyberpunk literary movement, and particularly by Neal Stephenson's novel *Snow Crash*. The stated goal of Linden Lab is to create a world like the Metaverse described by Stephenson, a user-defined world in which people can interact, play, do business, and otherwise communicate. Second Life's virtual currency is the Linden Dollar (Linden, or L\$) and is exchangeable for real world currencies in a marketplace consisting of residents, Linden Lab and real life companies.

While Second Life is sometimes referred to as a game, this description does not fit the standard definition. It does not have points, scores, winners or losers, levels, an end-strategy, or most of the other characteristics of games, though it can be thought of as a game on a more basic level because it is "played for fun".

In all, more than 20 million accounts have been registered, although many are inactive, some Residents have multiple accounts, and there are no reliable figures for actual long term consistent usage. Despite its prominence, Second Life has notable competitors, including *There*, *Active Worlds*, and the more "mature" themed *Red Light Center*.

Appearance and Identity

Residents are the users of *Second Life*, and their appearance is their *avatar* (often abbreviated to *av*, *avi* or *avie*). The basic avatar is human in appearance, but avatars may be of either sex, have a wide range of physical attributes, and may be clothed or otherwise customized to produce a wide variety of humanoid and other forms.

Avatars may be completely creative or can be made to resemble the person whom they represent. A single person may have multiple accounts, and thus appear to be multiple Residents (a person's multiple accounts are referred to as *alts*). However, the use of additional accounts requires the Resident to register them and pay a small fee, though after May 2006, there is no verification process preventing users from creating multiple "first" accounts using false information, a common practice. Also, a

single Resident's appearance in *Second Life* can vary dramatically at will, as avatars are easily modified.

While in-world appearance may bear no resemblance to the player's real-world looks, a player's identity is generally less anonymous in this than in other virtual worlds. Any avatar and any object in the world can establish whether or not real payment info is on file for your avatar, although they cannot access any of personal details from this payment information. (This was implemented to provide age verification and also to enable users to distinguish between established paid-for accounts and free alts which can be thrown away at any moment.) Some in-world services also require you to disclose your real name or other personal data to another source, although this must be done voluntarily and you can choose not to use the services which require this.

Your creations are likewise far less anonymous in this virtual world. The Linden servers register your avatar as the content creator of the design of any thing you create, in an explicit virtual copyright notice that travels with the thing you create.

Chat

Within *Second Life*, there are two main methods of text-based communication: local chat, and global "instant messaging" (known as IM). Chatting is used for public localized conversations between two or more avatars, and can be "heard" within 20 m. Avatars can also 'shout' ('audible' within 100 m). IM is used for private conversations, either between two avatars, or among the members of a group. Unlike chatting, IM communication does not depend on the participants being within a certain distance of each other. As of version 1.18.1.2, voice chat is also available on the main grid using technology licensed by Vivox, a provider of similar services to other MMO worlds.

There are some external websites that allow Residents to locate each other from outside of the virtual world, and SLurl.com allows external links through the *Second Life World Map* to locations in-world.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Life

TASKS

1. What is Second Life? What could be the secret of its success? Give reasons.
2. Imagine you were to apply for a job at Linden Labs (Linden Research, Inc) as a programmer. Write down:
 - 2.1 A suitable application letter.
 - 2.2 A CV/Résumé (no longer than a page) underlying why you are the perfect candidate. Where possible, your application letter and CV should follow the general guidelines included in <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/> (you may use any language version).
3. Your group should be finishing the presentation material. Start rehearsing to check times, language, slides and media, and support material.
4. By now, your Computer Science Glossary should be finished, comprising around 400-500 common terms. Be ready to hand an electronic version, if required to do so, during your final presentation.