

Resources

Spanning the Globes: InterWorld Organizations

Library-related activities in specific virtual worlds are great, but they run the risk of becoming silos. Being able to port and transport objects, experiences, and services from one world into another world (including the real world, especially the World Wide Web) remains a key challenge. Several initiatives already are underway to try to knit together various activities in various worlds into a rich and useful interworld counterpane.

ALA VCL MIG

The ALA Virtual Communities and Libraries (VCL) Member Initiative Group (MIG) was formed in June 2007 to explore and report out on library-related initiatives in virtual worlds. Like all ALA MIGs, the initial lifespan of the ALA VCL MIG is three years—through June 2010.

Association of Virtual Worlds (AVW) www.associationofvirtualworlds.com

The Association of Virtual Worlds has emerged as a trade association designed for people, businesses, and organizations that are actively developing spaces, experiences, resources, and services in one or more virtual worlds. There is a group within AVW focused on libraries in virtual worlds. As of early July, 2008, there were 108 members in that group. The AVW mission statement, printed on the verso of the title page of the AVW *Blue Book*, states, “The Association of Virtual Worlds believes that virtual worlds represent a major information and technological revolution in how we work, play and live. The Association mission is to serve those companies and individuals who are dedicated to the advancement of this multi-billion dollar global industry and reach out to those who have not yet found virtual worlds.”¹

Virtual Worlds Libraries Alliance (VWLA)

The VWLA has a building on Info International Island in Second Life where it holds occasional presentations and informal discussions.

MyMetaverse

www.mymetaverse.ning.com

A Ning group called My Metaverse has formed to help the creative people involved in virtual worlds to communicate across these worlds. According to the site, “My Metaverse is for original music, machinima, movies, news and entertainment in the virtual worlds. No porn.”

Avatars United

www.avatarsunited.com/en

According to the “About us” page on the Avatars United Web site, “Avatars United (AU) is a community for your virtual avatars. Register your avatar, upload your profile picture, write your biography and share some of your exploits in virtual worlds through pictures, videos and blogs.”

Virtual Worlds Conference and Expo

www.virtualworlds2007.com/

Although it may sound counterintuitive, there actually is a real-world, face-to-face conference about virtual worlds. The conference, held approximately every six months, is managed by Virtual Worlds Management. The spring conference is usually in New York City or somewhere on the East Coast, while the autumn conference is held somewhere in California. If you cannot attend this real-world conference, just scanning and investigating the speakers and exhibitors at this conference can provide useful information and insights into the latest trends, issues, and opportunities in virtual worlds.

Virtual Worlds London
www.virtualworldslondon.com

Another real-world virtual worlds conference, also managed by Virtual Worlds Management, a division of Show Initiative LLC, will be held in London in October 2008.

Follow the Virtual Worlds News

The following sites offer news on the business of virtual worlds.

Virtual Worlds News
www.virtualworldsnews.com

Virtual Worlds Review
www.virtualworldsreview.com

Worlds in Motion
www.worldsinmotion.biz

Selective List of Virtual Worlds

Information included here about a select group of the burgeoning universe of virtual worlds has been gleaned from various sources, including the Association of Virtual Worlds *Blue Book*, Web sites associated with these virtual worlds, Wikipedia entries about these virtual worlds, blogs and, in a few instances, personal visits to the virtual worlds. To paraphrase the first line from “To His Coy Mistress” by poet Andrew Marvel, “Had we but worlds enough and time...”. For a larger list of existing and forthcoming virtual worlds with shorter annotations, please consult the Association of Virtual Worlds *Blue Book*.

There seem to be at least four basic library service possibilities in virtual worlds. First, lamentably, there may be no strong library potential in some particular virtual worlds. The overall owners (prime movers) may not be interested in having a library presence in their virtual world, the resident avatars may not be interested in using library services, or the principal business of the place (e.g., having fun) may not encourage library use.

Second, some virtual worlds may have a strong library potential, but the overall owner (prime mover) may want to build, develop, and brand it. The library becomes in essence just another service in the suite of services and experiences offered by the company or organization behind that particular virtual world. Whyville, a virtual world for tweens, for example, seems to be interested in having one library, with a working name of the Whybrary, but not in having multiple libraries that are branded or co-branded in accordance with the real-world libraries that developed them.

Third, each library and library-related organization—born real, digital, or virtual—that is active in a particular virtual world may be welcome by the prime mover and the resident avatars to design, build, and operate its own library space and services. This seems to be the basic situation in Second Life, where individually and collaboratively a number of real-world libraries are developing libraries and library services.

Fourth, various library-related organizations in a particular virtual world may collaborate to offer library services. One basic goal of these early collaborative efforts is to avoid the balkanization of library districts and services that has happened in the real world. In some virtual worlds, the basic operational attitude seems to be: “Let’s assume that one library is sufficient to meet the information needs of the resident avatars until such time as we perceive that multiple ‘specialized’ libraries are needed.”

“Vaporware” is software that is announced and widely discussed, but never actually materializes as a product. In the same way, some of the virtual worlds in the following list may prove to be vaporworlds. They are announced and widely discussed, and some work may be completed to create them, but they never actually launch. Perhaps a worse fate for a budding virtual world is to actually launch, but then not attract enough people to warrant its continuation.

The list is broken into two parts: virtual worlds that you might want to investigate, and platforms, software, and other tools that you might want to explore using to build a virtual library presence.

Virtual Worlds

3B from Three-B International
<http://3b.net/browser/newhome.html>

3B is a piece of software that enables you to take Web pages and photos and organize them in your 3B room, a personalized three-dimensional space. The Web pages and photo images become the walls of the 3-D space you select. You create your room (selecting from several pre-designed templates), create and customize your avatar, and join one or more groups. The 3B software is free. You may toggle between a three-dimensional view and a traditional browser view of the Web. It runs on computers running Windows 2000, Windows XP, or Vista operating systems. This could be good software to use for poster sessions and library instruction self-paced sessions.

Adventure Rock
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/adventurerock>

Adventure Rock is a virtual world for tweens created by the BBC. Some cultural institutions (e.g., a Music Gallery and a Radio Station) have emerged on Adventure Rock, but no sign of a library yet.

Agape World Fellowship Universe
<http://agapeworldfellowship.org>

Agape World Fellowship (AWF), which launched in May 2004, describes itself as “a Christian universe in a 3D virtual reality environment.” On several places on their Web site they specifically state that non-Christians are welcome, too. There is no direct out-of-pocket expense to visit or become a member of AWF. The group does solicit donations, however, and does have an online shop that sells real-world apparel, toys, etc. Some sort of tithing option is offered, too. AWF is built on the Active Worlds platform. At one place on their Web site, they state, “AWF now host fellowship worlds in AW, AW Europe, Dreamland Park, Outer Worlds, and Spiral Matrix universes.” (www.b2thumpr.com/awfr). The group behind AWF is affiliated with Roots and Wings Ministries (www.rootsandwingsministries.org) and is nondenominational. This virtual world is divided into townships. The caretakers of each township serve as members of the Zoning Board. All building disputes and zoning violations are resolved by the caretakers for that particular township.

Amazing Worlds
www.amazingworlds.com

According to the project Web site, Amazing Worlds is a “mirror world.” Quoting from the rollover definition on the Amazing Worlds homepage, “Mirror worlds are informationally-enhanced virtual models or “reflections” of the real physical world we live in.”

Arts Metaverse
<http://artsmetaverse.arts.ubc.ca>

According to the project Web site, “Arts Metaverse, an immersive 3-D virtual environment, provides an opportunity for scholars, teachers, students, and interested individuals to create and share their own virtual space with others. Developed by the University of British Columbia’s Arts Instructional Support & Information Technology unit, Arts Metaverse is based on the open-source Croquet platform.”²

Barbie Girls
www.barbiegirls.com/homeMtl.html

A virtual world for kids, tweens, and teens where residents can customize their Barbie dolls, create buildings, adopt pets, and communicate with each other via chat. According to the website FAQ, “In the Barbie Girls™ world, you can create and decorate your virtual room, design an online character, play games, earn *B Bucks*™, have a *B Chat*™ with your friends, and more!” Basic memberships are no cost, but a VIP membership costs approximately \$6 per month, with parental permission required.

Blue Mars
www.avatar-reality.com

According to the project website, “Blue Mars is a new online massively multiplayer virtual world (MMVW), featuring stunning graphics, realistic characters and endless social bonding opportunities. Set on Terraformed Mars in the year 2177 AD, players will be able to live out their fantasies through personalized avatars. Blue Mars is scheduled for beta release at the end of 2008.” The CryEngine2 game engine will power Blue Mars.

CC Metro

This is a “virtual island” sponsored by Coca-Cola in the virtual world There.com. It formerly was called Coke Studios.

Club Penguin
www.clubpenguin.com

Club Penguin is a virtual world for children and tweens from Disney.com Games. There are several “book rooms” in Club Penguin, but evidently no full-service library. According to Barnes (2007), the basic membership fee is \$5.95 per month, and as of late 2007 Club Penguin was attracting seven times more traffic than Second Life.³

CyberTown
www.cybertown.com

A virtual world set in the year 2094 for people of all ages. There are some cultural institutions (e.g., music halls), plus shopping and games.

CyWorld
<http://us.cyworld.com>

According to the CyWorld website (<http://us.cyworld.com/main/aboutus/aboutus.php>), “Cyworld has been building our online world since 1999. We currently have members in the United States, China, Japan, Korea and Taiwan. We’ll be bringing our world to Europe, South America and India soon.” The generic name for avatars in CyWorld is Minime.

Dotsoul
www.dotsoul.net

According to the Wikipedia article on Dotsoul (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dotsoul>), “Dotsoul is an immersive 3D Virtual Reality MMORPG based on the Active Worlds application. Created in 2006 by Joseph Bergeron and Laura Herrmann, it has been spoken of as the Greenwich Village/Comedy Central of the Internet. A graphic and relationship intensive cyberpark, designed to facilitate the release of people’s subconscious, the stated goal of the park is to create a dreamscape or playground of the mind where people creatively interact, role-play and build virtual works which bear the stamp of their personal identities.” The avatars of Dotsoul do frequent cultural

institutions, such as art galleries, and they do engage in community service and outreach activities, so a library in Dotsoul would not be outlandish.

Dreamland Park

http://dreamlandpark.de/neu3/main_e.html

Dreamland Park is a series of 3D virtual environments populated primarily by Europeans.

Dubit

www.dubitchat.com

Dubit is a 3D social network frequently primarily by teens in the United Kingdom.

Entropia Universe from MindArk

www.entropiauniverse.com/index.var

In late July 2007, a press release announced that EU had signed an agreement to use the engine CryENGINE 2 from German developer Crytek, the creators of Far Cry and Crysis. The transition of the EU platform should be complete by mid-2008.

Aura Lilly, the avatar in Second Life who built that amazing ancient Egyptian architecture as a memorial to her dead partner, noted that EU is not really for artistic, creative types because avatars are not encouraged to build things themselves.

According to an FAQ on the Entropia Universe Web site (<http://www.entropiauniverse.com/en/rich/5329.html>, last visited on August 14, 2008), "The Entropia Universe is built on a graphics engine from NDL which currently requires DirectX from Microsoft to run. There are currently no plans to make the Entropia Universe available on other platforms than the Microsoft compatible PC."⁴

Anyone in the world may create an avatar. MindArk reports that citizens of almost every nation in the real world have created avatars in EU.

Fighting monsters and mining ore seem to be two of the major occupations of the avatar colonists of EU. A May 2007 article in TechCrunch noted, "Players who prefer a World of Warcraft style experience can undertake quests and join in groups to hunt and fight monsters. Mining is an option for those who don't like swinging a sword. Moving towards a more Second Life experience, players are able to own and run shops, manufacture goods, own land and build on that land, as well as being able to trade, buy, sell and create goods and services."⁵

EU seems to occupy a middle ground between a virtual world and an MMORPG. Although there are no defined levels for avatars, skills and resources create power.

The world of EU consists of a wild planet, Calypso, with two continents, Eudoria and Amethera. Fierce creatures share this planet with the colonist avatars.

Entropia Universe has a real economy based on the PED (which stands for Project Entropia Dollar?). According to the Wikipedia entry on Entropia Universe,

the exchange between the PED and the USD has been fixed at 10 PED = 1 USD.⁶

Gaia Online from GAIA Interactive

www.gaiaonline.com

Gaia Online is a 3D virtual world for teens. According to the "Information for Parents" section of the Gaia Online website (<http://www.gaiaonline.com/info/index.php?mode=parent>, visited on August 14, 2008), "Gaia is an online community with games, message boards, and a virtual economy. Members can hang out, chat, create their own virtual characters and use "Gaia Gold" to outfit them with clothes and accessories." Memberships are free. Evidently there is no library in Gaia Online.

GoPets from GoPets, Ltd.

www.gopetslive.com

Quoting from the GoPets website (http://www.gopetslive.com/en/info/main_gopet.html, visited on August 16, 2008), "GoPets is a 3D world that revolves around virtual pets and their creators, otherwise known as GoPets citizens. Citizens can be land owners, entrepreneurs, landscapers, interior designers, or all of the above!"

Habbo from Sulake Corp. Ltd.

www.habbo.com

Habbo's slogan is "hangout for teens." Registration is free. To register, you need to provide your birth date and your e-mail address. To use this virtual world, you need Adobe Shockwave Player. On Wednesday, November 21, 2007, at 5:22 p.m. Central Time 5,844 members were online.

The spaces within this virtual hotel include both public spaces and guest rooms. Public rooms are open to everyone. A color scheme is used to show how full each room is. A gray room is empty, a green room has Habbos in it, but with plenty of room, a yellow room is busy, an orange room is crowded, and a red room is full. Guest rooms may be open, password protected, or locked.

There is a currency ("coins") in Habbo Hotel. Communication is done via text chatting, with very cryptic communication very common.

There is advertising in Habbo Hotel. Ads appear during room changes, and they also appear as billboards within specific rooms.

A search of the word "library" in guest rooms on November 21, 2007, revealed dozens of rooms called library, with very little to differentiate one from the other in the results list. All of them were empty at the time. Some were furnished to look like libraries, while others were completely devoid of furniture.

HiPiHi from HiPiHi Co, Ltd.

www.hipihi.com

According to the Wikipedia article (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hipihi>, visited on August 16, 2008), HiPiHi was

launched on April 17, 2006. Most residents are from the People's Republic of China.

Idea Seeker Universe from Circle 1 Limited
www.kidscom.com

A series of 3D worlds and interactive games and quests for children and tweens.

IMVU
www.imvu.com

Launched in April 2004, IMVU is a 3D instant message client that allows avatars to communicate in virtual locales. It was developed by Will Harvey, the founder of There.com (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imvu>).

Lively
www.lively.com

Lively, the 3D virtual world from Google, launched a public beta version in July 2008. As of July, only the Microsoft Windows operating system was supported. User-generated content was not yet enabled, but the folks in Google Labs indicated on the Web site that that function will be enabled soon. It is possible to create rooms, and the Alliance Virtual Library created a room in July. It is possible to engage in public text chat with other avatars, or to have a private conversation (called a whisper) with another avatar. It is possible to move your avatar via the familiar mouse drag-and-drop action.

MoiPal mobile platform from Ironstar Helsinki
www.moipal.com/index.jsp

A virtual world game designed to be played by tweens on their cell phones.

Mokitown
<http://www.mokitown.com>

Mokitown is part of a larger initiative by Daimler-Chrysler called MobileKids. According to the "information for parents" section of the website (http://www.mokitown.com/mokitown_prehome/home_en.jsp, visited on August 16, 2008), "Mokitown" is a virtual city where kids from all over the world can play, discover, and chat - all in real time. The award winning multi-player platform is the first global communication network aimed at teaching children about traffic safety."

Monkey World

A virtual world for social networking and an MMORPG reportedly being developed by Nickelodeon. It may have a strong commercial component developed on an original concept not tied to an existing real-world character or brand.

Moove
www.moove.com

According the website, Moove is a 3D virtual environment that resides on your computer. Therefore, it can be used both online and offline.

Moshi Monsters
www.moshimonsters.com

Children use this virtual world to adopt and personalize their own monsters. According to Barnes, Moshi Monsters was developed by a British startup company called Mind Candy.⁷

NeoPets from Nickelodeon
www.neopets.com

In the virtual work of Neopia children and tweens take care of virtual pets, play games, earn NeoPoints currency, and chat. As of mid-2008 NeoPets was one of the most heavily populated and used virtual worlds.

Nicktropolis
www.nick.com/nicktropolis

Fully launched in January 2007 after several public beta versions, Nicktropolis is virtual world where tweens can play games.

ourWorld from Flowplay
www.ourworld.com/v11

According to the Parent's Zone area of the website, "ourWorld is a casual, social gaming site where you child can play online games, win ourWorld money and prizes, create and personalize their character and socialize with their friends." It appears to be geared toward tweens.

Outerworlds
www.outerworlds.com

In this 3D virtual reality chat and social network, avatars can build their own rooms, play interactive games, listen to radio music, and shop in a virtual world mall. It seems to be geared toward young adults.

The Palace
www.thepalace.com

The Palace is a free graphical chat client. InstantPalace is a "lite" version that does not require a software download.

Pirates of the Caribbean from Disney
<http://apps.pirates.go.com/pirates/v3/welcome>

In this tie-in to and extension of the series of films, "...you, alongside thousands of other players, will be able to fully experience the adventure of the films and explore beyond these boundaries to discover new myths and untold stories." This VW works on both PCs and Macs.

Pixie Hollow from Disney
<http://www.disney.go.com/fairies/pixiehollow/comingSoon.html>

According to Barnes, Disney is developing Pixie Hollow internally, using creative executives who design new rides and attractions at Disney's theme parks, for a summer 2008 launch prior to the fall 2008 release of Tinker Bell, a feature film.⁸

Although the Pixie Hollow VW had not made its public debut as of mid-August 2008, it is possible to create a fairy avatar.

Playdo

<http://beta.playdo.com>

Playdo is a virtual community for teens worldwide. Mobile access to Playdo is possible. Spineworld appears to be a specific world or region within the Playdo universe.

Project Outback from Yoick

www.yoick.com/outback

Still in private beta as of mid-August 2008. Users will be able to create their own virtual environments.

Prototerra

www.prototerra.com

One of the strengths of the Prototerra virtual world is the presentation functionality and tools. Representatives from Prototerra have indicated interest in having a library developed in this virtual world.

Rise: The Vieneo Province

<http://rise.unistellar.com>

Here's the first sentence of the homepage description of Rise, "Experience over 100,000,000 km of seamless reality in an accurately simulated extra-solar system."

Runescape

www.runescape.com

Second Life from Linden Lab

www.secondlife.com

See also Teen Second Life

Many library initiatives already are fully underway or in active planning in Second Life. A directory of libraries and library-related organizations in Second Life is located at <http://infoisland.org/directory>.

Solipsis

<http://solipsis.netofpeers.net>

A free open-source peer-to-peer virtual world.

Spiral Matrix

www.spiralmatrix.com

A 3D virtual reality experience for people who like to build and chat in virtual worlds.

Stardoll Platform from Stardoll

www.stardoll.com/en

A web-based 3D designed for females between the ages of 7 and 17. Users dress up dolls, go to clubs, read fashion magazines, and shop.

Teen Second Life

<http://teen.secondlife.com>

The Eye4YouAlliance (<http://eye4youalliance.youthtech.info/>) is one library initiative in Teen Second Life.

There.com from Makena Technologies

www.there.com

Founded in 1998 and launched to the public in October 2003, There is one of the older VWs. Basic memberships are free, with premium memberships for a price. Therebucks (tbux) is the official in-world currency.

Toontown from Disney

<http://play.toontown.com/about.php>

The Web site for Toontown describes its scope and purpose in this way:

Disney's Toontown Online, the first massively multiplayer online game designed specifically for kids and families, is an award-winning, kid-safe, endlessly evolving, and immersive 3-D online world.

In Toontown, players, as Toons, join forces to save the world from the invading robot Cogs – humorless business robots who are attempting to turn the colorful, happy world of Toontown into a corporate metropolis. Because Cogs can't take a joke, Toons use cartoon gags to crack them up!⁹

Players are welcome to sign up for a free account. Full access to the massively multiplayer online game can be purchased by the month (\$9.95), six months (\$49.95), or annually (\$79.95).

TowerChat

www.towerchat.com

The website (http://www.towerchat.com/info/pages/learn_more_mponly.html, visited on August 17, 2008) for this UK-based series of 3D chat rooms describes TowerChat is this way: "The slickest online 3D chat room ever gives you a chance to create funky characters in a vibrant, fully interactive environment where you can make anything possible." The AVW Blue Book indicates that romance is one of the key activities.

Traveler

www.digitalspace.com/traveler

Traveler is a 3D VW that enables people to communicate through their avatars via voice chat.

Tronji from NiceTech

www2.nicetech.co.uk/tronji.htm

Tronji will be a VW for children ages 6-8. It is being created by the BBC as a tie-in to a TV series.

TyGirls from Animax Entertainment
<http://ty-girlz.ty.com>

A web-based VW for girls featuring text chat, games, shopping, etc.

Uthervers
www.uthervers.net

The Uthervers Web site describes it as a virtual 3D social network.

Virtual Ibiza
www.virtualibiza.com

A VW with a Mediterranean theme and some emphasis on dating and romance.

Virtual MTV
<http://www.vmtv.com/>

A VW based on the MTV channel and its shows.

Virtual World of Kaneva
www.kaneva.com

First released in a public beta version in mid-2006, Kaneva is a 3D virtual world for adults emphasizing entertainment, video sharing, etc.

Vivaty
www.vivaty.com

The public beta version of Vivaty was released in July 2008. It is a browser-based 3D virtual world that integrates with existing 2D Web social networks, such as Facebook.

Voodoo Chat
www.voodoochat.com

A web-based chat environment that offers voice chat.

VPchat
www.vpchat.com

Virtual Places chat rooms are browser-based and enhanced by the VPchat client.

vSide from Doppelganger
www.vside.com

The homepage of the website says it all: “vSide is your place to party online.”

VZones
www.vzones.com

A 2D virtual environment emphasizing socializing and dating.

Webkinz
www.webkinz.com

According to Barnes, the basic business model of Webkinz “relies on the sale of stuffed animals, which come with tags that unlock digital content.”¹⁰

Whirled from Three Rings
www.whirled.com

A web-based VW for social networking, playing games, and creating games.

Why Robbie Rocks
www.whyrobbierocks.com

A web-based environment for teens focusing on fashion, shopping, and games.

Whyville from Numedeon, Inc.
www.whyville.net/smmk/nice

This is a two-dimensional virtual world designed for tweens. Efforts are underway to develop a “Whybrary” in Whyville.

Wolf Quest
www.wolfquest.org

A World of My Own
www.awomo.com

AWOMO is a 3D virtual world dedicated to games and gamers. The public beta version was released in August 2007. It is owned by GDI Game Domain International Ltd. in the UK. Probably few library-related activities would make sense in AWOMO.

World of Warcraft from Vivendi
<https://signup.worldofwarcraft.com/trial/index.htm>

According to Barnes, World of Warcraft has over nine million members and annual revenue exceeding U.S. \$1 billion.¹¹

Worlds.com
www.worlds.net

Worlds is a relatively old 3D entertainment portal, first launched back in 1994.

Yumondo from Metaversum
<http://yumondo.com>
www.metaversum.com

Still in private beta as of mid-August 2008, Yumondo will be an “international network of urban stylesharers.”

Platforms, Software, and Tools

3Dxplorer from Altadyn
<http://www.3dxplorer.com>

3Dxplorer is a three-dimensional Java application that works with your browser software (Firefox, Safari, or Internet Explorer) to construct 3D immersive Web pages.

This 3D generator evidently does not enable the creation of avatars and communication, but it could be used for library exhibits, displays, poster sessions, and tutorials.

Active Worlds

www.activeworlds.com

Active Worlds tend to be enterprise-wide 3D virtual worlds that run on the enterprise's computers. According to the Web site, there are over 1,000 unique Active Worlds. Avatars exist in Active Worlds, and chat is the primary means of communication. Active Worlds may have had one of the first virtual-world libraries, called Librarea. According to a comment submitted to a blog post on the ALA TechSource Blog: "Many years ago, in Activeworlds (www.activeworlds.com) a world called Librarea was set up by a group of international librarians. There was a series of subject themed library buildings (based on Dewey!) built by individual librarians who had taken on the subject area."¹² Eastern University in Pennsylvania has been very active in Active Worlds. Mark Puterbaugh, a librarian at Eastern University, has been, well, very active in Active Worlds. Cindy Hart at the Virginia Beach Public Library also has been using Active Worlds to create library quests for tweens.¹³

Conduit Labs

www.conduitlabs.com

Croquet

www.croquetconsortium.org

Open-source software developed and used by an academic consortium. Cobalt is the new interface for Croquet.

Distributive Interactive Virtual Environment (DIVE)

www.sics.se/dive

Forterra/Proton Media

www.forterrainc.com

Forterra is one of three VWs (along with Protosphere and Second Life) being studied by graduate students at the University of Washington iSchool during the fall semester of 2008.

Icarus Platform from Icarus Studios

www.icarusstudios.com

Immersiv Platform from View 22

www.view22.com/immersiv.html

The Manor

www.madwolfsw.com

The Manor from MadWolf Software allows you to create your own 3D space.

Metaplace

www.metaplace.com

Quoting from the website (<http://www.metaplace.com/>, visited on August 16, 2008), "Metaplace is a next-generation virtual worlds platform designed to work the way the Web does. Instead of giant custom clients and huge downloads, Metaplace lets you play the same game on any platform that reads our open client standard. We supply a suite of tools so you can make worlds, and we host servers for you so that anyone can connect and play." As of August 2008, the software had not yet been released for public beta.

Microsoft Virtual Earth

www.microsoft.com/VirtualEarth

MPK20 from Sun Microsystems <http://research.sun.com/projects/mc/mpk20.html>. Project Wonderland serves as the client for this prototype virtual world.

Multiverse from Multiverse Network

www.multiverse.net/index.html

Ogoglio from Transmutable

<http://logoglio.com>

OLIVE platform from Forterra Systems

www.forterrainc.com

OpenSim

http://opensimulator.org/wiki/Main_Page

According to the project Web site, visited on July 8, 2008, "The OpenSimulator Project is a BSD Licensed Virtual Worlds Server which can be used for creating and deploying 3D Virtual Environments. It has been developed by several developers. Out of the box, the OpenSimulator can be used to create a Second Life(tm) like environment, able to run in a standalone mode or connected to other OpenSimulator instances through built in grid technology."¹⁴

OpenSource Metaverse Project

<http://metaverse.sourceforge.net>

Project Wonderland (Sun-sponsored, but open source)

<https://llg3d-wonderland.dev.java.net>

<http://metaversed.com/31-jul-2007/first-look-suns-project-wonderland-3d-enterprise>

Protosphere from ProtonMedia

www.protonmedia.com

Protosphere is one of three VWs (along with Forterra and Second Life) being studied by graduate students at the University of Washington iSchool during the fall semester of 2008.

Qwaq Forums from Qwaq www.qwaq.com

Qwaq Forums is a collaboration platform designs for teams and work groups. This virtual world environment attempts to replicate the “talk-gesture-sketch” style of group communication that characterizes effective teamwork in real-world environments. This virtual world is primarily being used for enterprise-wide work, such as program and project management, operations centers, facilitated meetings, corporate training, and virtual offices.

This virtual environment enables real-time document sharing and editing. Avatars provide the bodily presence. Qwaq Forums also sport built-in VoIP, text chatting, interactive whiteboards, and the creation on-the-fly of virtual spaces, such as breakout rooms and rooms for private and confidential communications. Webcams also are possible in Qwaq.

According to the Qwaq datasheet, Qwaq Forums are secure, dedicated environments, not open virtual worlds that anyone may join and contribute to. Users must be explicitly invited to join a Forum. Different users may have different levels of access and rights and roles in a Forum.

In version 1.1, it is possible to drag and drop the following document types into a Qwaq Forum: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel spreadsheets, ASCII text, GIF, JPEG, PNG, BMP, and Adobe PDF. It also supports the following 3D file formats: 3dsMax (.ase), COLLADA from Google SketchUp (.kmz), and 3D point clouds from text files.

Qwaq Forums are powered by Croquet. It integrates into corporate authentication systems (LDAP and Microsoft Active Directory).

Client requirements include Windows XP, Vista, or Mac OS X (Intel CPU); 1 GB of RAM; 100 MB of free disk space; and a graphics card with OpenGL support.

Three-dimensional objects, such as buildings, can be uploaded to Qwaq directly from SketchUp.

Learning Times has selected Qwaq as its virtual world platform.

realXtend www.realxtend.org

Torque Engine www.garagegames.com

Ugotrade www.ugotrade.com

Unisfair www.unisfair.com

WebFlock from Electric Sheep

<http://www.electricsheepcompany.com/webflock>
Quoting from the WebFlock website (visited on July 18, 2008): “WebFlock is an application for private-labeled, Web-based virtual experiences.... A basic implementation, which includes the out-of-the-box feature set, custom 3D avatars and 3D space, and 12 months of the application services fees, is available for under \$100,000.”

Zwinktopia from IAC/InterActiveCorp www.zwinky.com

Books and Articles

Association of Virtual Worlds. *The Blue Book: A Consumer Guide to Virtual Worlds*, 3rd ed. Ponte Vedra Beach, FL: Association of Virtual Worlds, July 2008. Available online in PDF format at www.associationofvirtualworlds.com/publishing.htm

Contains brief listings of over 250 virtual worlds, broadly defined to include major social networks, with brief, often one-sentence descriptions and category tags.

Barnes, Brooks. “Web Playgrounds of the Very Young.” *New York Times*, Dec. 31, 2007.

Gibson, William. *Neuromancer*. New York: Ace Books, 1984.

One of the classic novels, along with *Snow Crash*, about the possibilities of the metaverse.

Peters, Tom. “Pre-Teen Avatars on a Library Quest.” *Smart Libraries Newsletter* (June 2007): 4

Peters, Tom. “Holo Emitter: Cool Tool for Virtual Libraries.” *Smart Libraries Newsletter* (November 2007): 7.

Peters, Tom. “The Cost of a Virtual Presence.” *Smart Libraries Newsletter* (June 2008): 6-7.

Seiler, Joey. “Lively—Google’s Contribution to the 3D Social Web.” *Virtual Worlds News* (July 8, 2008). Available online at www.virtualworldsnews.com/2008/07/google-announce.html (accessed July 8, 2008).

Stephenson, Neal. *Snow Crash*. New York: Bantam Spectra, 1992.

One of the classic novels, along with *Neuromancer*, about the possibilities of the metaverse.

Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). “Virtual Worlds,” Tune In: Teen Tech Week 2008 @ Your Library, Tech Guide Number 3, 2008. Available online at www.acrl.org/ala/yalsa/teentechweek/ttw08/resourcesabcd/techguide_virtualworlds.pdf (accessed April 25, 2008). Also is available as a wiki entry at http://wikis.ala.org/yalsa/index.php/Virtual_Worlds:_A_Teen_Tech_Week_Guide

Notes

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2. "About the Platform," Arts Metaverse Web site, <http://artsmetaverse.arts.ubc.ca> (accessed July 8, 2008).
3. Brooks Barnes, "Web Playgrounds of the Very Young," *New York Times* (December 31, 2007).
4. Entropia FAQs? (accessed Jan. 30, 2008).
5. Duncan Riley, "Entropia Universe: A Better Second Life?" TechCrunch blog, May 17, 2007, www.techcrunch.com/2007/05/17/entropia-universe-a-better-second-life (accessed July 14, 2008).
6. "Entropia Universe," Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entropia_universe (accessed Jan. 30, 2008).
7. Barnes, "Web Playgrounds."
8. Ibid.
9. "What Is Toontown," Disney's Toontown Online, <http://play.toontown.com/about.php> (accessed Dec. 31, 2007).
10. Barnes, "Web Playgrounds."
11. Ibid.
12. Val Ghose, comment posted April 18, 2006, in response to "A Library for Avatars," April 17, 2006, ALA TechSource blog, www.techsource.ala.org/blog/2006/04/a-library-for-avatars.html (accessed July 14, 2008).
13. Tom Peters, "Pre-Teen Avatars on a Library Quest." *Smart Libraries Newsletter* (June 2007): 4
14. "About OpenSimulator," OpenSimulator Web site, <http://>