

# Public Libraries in Second Life

## *Expanding Service to the Virtual Environment*

by Jane D. Stimpson

**T**his morning I wandered through the grounds of the Cleveland Public Library, admiring the ornate gates of the Reader's Garden and poking my head into the offices of the Cleveland library consortium. Four life-size chessboards dot the landscape, and I have just browsed an exhibit about CPL's chess collection, the largest in the world. The grounds are beautiful and expansive, the main library building gleams in the sun, and the sounds of soft winds and running water surround the landscape. So why am I the only person around?

The answer is that I am not actually in Cleveland, but sitting in front of my computer and logged in to the virtual world called Second Life. I have visited the virtual home of the Cleveland Public Library, which occupies an entire island in Second Life, many times, and not once have I seen another avatar roaming its lands.

Cleveland is one of a growing number of public libraries that have established a presence in Second Life. The Second Life Library Project, a creation of the Alliance Library System, lists over 120 libraries and library organizations within Second Life on the project directory on its website.<sup>1</sup> I have visited many of these institutions during the course of my research, and while most have built beautiful sites and offer thoughtful, innovative resources, it is also true that visitors have been scarce.

I started my inquiry into this trend with the intention of discovering why, over and over again, in libraries of all types, these virtual locations struggle. My intention was to research the tactics that public libraries use to market themselves in Second Life; this included both promoting the brick-and-mortar branch with an “inworld” presence and promoting the site in Second Life using “real-world” marketing tools. At an early stage of my research, however, I realized that before we can ask questions about

marketing efficacy inworld, we must first ask fundamental questions about public libraries in Second Life.

This chapter will examine how and why public libraries establish a presence in Second Life. What benefits, if any, do public libraries hope to gain for the institution and their users by being part of Second Life? What resources do inworld libraries offer, and how are those resources distributed around the virtual space? I will attempt to help address perhaps the two most important questions for public libraries contemplating a virtual branch: where is the Second Life trend heading, and are librarians wasting their time and efforts?

### Scope of Study

Although public libraries have established a presence in a variety of multi-user virtual environments (MUVEs), including Active Worlds and There, I chose to study public libraries in Second Life as an outgrowth of the coursework I completed in INF 315E: Working in Virtual Worlds, at the School of Information at the University of Texas at Austin. While the class examined issues relating to a number of MUVEs and MMORPGs, the bulk of our experience was with Second Life, so I have confined myself to that particular virtual world.

I further narrowed the scope of the study by choosing to focus on public libraries, not only because I plan to become a public librarian after graduation, but also because user outreach in new environments is an especially critical issue facing public library staff. I chose to make my inworld visits and evaluations only to institutions listed as “public libraries” on the Alliance Library System's project directory. This choice excluded academic libraries, special libraries, school libraries, information

schools and other educational organizations, as well as libraries that exist only inside the virtual world with no corresponding brick-and-mortar presence. The eight public libraries I studied were:

- Cleveland Public Library (Cleveland, Ohio)
- Glenview Public Library (Glenview, Illinois)
- Mark and Emily Turner Memorial Library (Presque Isle, Maine)
- Maryland Library (Harford County, Maryland)
- Monroe County Library System (Rochester, New York)
- Society Hill Public Library (Society Hill, South Carolina)
- Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County (North Carolina)
- Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library (Kansas)

Public libraries are doing exciting, creative, and innovative work in Second Life, and it seems as though the profession is on the brink of discovering the full potential of libraries in virtual worlds. Despite public libraries' enthusiasm, however, institutions hoping to establish themselves in Second Life need to ask tough questions regarding what they hope to achieve inworld.

As this chapter will demonstrate, public libraries need to incorporate certain elements into their builds in order to avoid turning the area into a "ghost sim" like the Cleveland Public Library, which has been described as "pretty to look at but empty,"<sup>2</sup> and even worse, a waste of staff time and effort. In addition, libraries also need to make sure that their Second Life presence is promoted in their real-life marketing efforts in order to give their institution the best chance for a successful virtual life.

## Why Should Public Libraries Be in Second Life?

There are many reasons that public libraries should consider a presence in a virtual world like Second Life. Wagner James Au asserts that "Avatars could very well be the e-mail address of the future Internet."<sup>3</sup> For residents who are already public library patrons, a presence would mean that the library has simply added another way to access its resources, in addition to its website and brick-and-mortar presence.

It is also possible that a resident who is not a regular public library patron may search Second Life for the name of her town and discover that the local library owns land in Second Life. There is a good chance she may teleport to the area to see what's there. If the site provides features

and events the resident likes or finds useful, she may be likely to return sometime, either to the virtual library or even the brick-and-mortar building someday.

Public libraries in Second Life have the ability and the opportunity to attract users from all over the world. Consider the Cleveland Public Library, which houses the largest collection of chess-related materials in the world, including hundreds of chess sets from around the globe. CPL's entry in the Alliance's project directory notes that "Second Life provides an opportunity to bring some of those items to the unique and international audience that inhabits the SL metaverse."<sup>4</sup>

Cleveland has showcased the chess collection in its build, erecting four life-size chessboards where residents can play against each other as well as beautiful photographs and informative "notecards" about some of the different sets in the main building. There is another gallery that contains a display of antique sheet music covers, all of which relate to the state of Ohio in some way. By including these elements in its build, CPL aims to attract new users not just from the Ohio area, but also from the global community of Second Life residents.

Another reason for public libraries to consider joining Second Life is the opportunity to offer services that the library might not otherwise be able to offer, either on its website or in the brick-and-mortar space. CPL's chess sets clearly fulfill this function, since they offer a unique opportunity to view and interact with the chess collection in a way that would be impossible to replicate in the real world.

Many of the libraries that I visited have built gardens or auditoriums with plenty of seating in order to provide a place for book groups to meet and hold discussions inworld. These spaces can also be used for lectures, tutorials on using Second Life and talks from visiting authors. Virtual meeting spaces benefit not only the public library, which is spared the cost of a visiting speaker's travel expenses, but also members of the user community, who might not otherwise be able to attend the event in person.

The Mark and Emily Turner Memorial Library, for instance, recently hosted a reading with poet Keith Ainsworth in a Zen rock garden. Recent events in the library's space on the Cybrary City island include a event called "Advanced Second Life Features and Gadgets," an opportunity for residents to share questions and tips, and a lecture titled "The Palestinian Librarian: A View on Library Services in an Arab Place," given by Palestinian and Second Life resident Heyam Enzo.<sup>5</sup> Events like these, which would be difficult to host physically given the library's remote location in northern Maine, are easily organized virtually in Second Life and can attract a wider community of users.

Public libraries can also be valuable providers of reference services in Second Life. The Alliance Second Life Library has the most visible reference service inworld

at the Info Island International Reference Desk, which boasts

an array of resource information about International and nearby islands on the Alliance Information Archipelago available through posters, monitors and notecard vendors. A volunteer library staffer is often on duty to answer questions.<sup>6</sup>

Public libraries are in a unique position to connect residents to information not only about the virtual world, but also about the real-world location of the library. The Glenview Public Library, for example, offers Second Life building tutorials, but also posts plans for the proposed renovation of the brick-and-mortar library in suburban Chicago.

The Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library also provides video tutorials about navigating Second Life. In addition, residents can follow links to view the library's website and OPAC, as well as Kansas state resources, Shawnee County and Topeka resources, and Kansas history and genealogy sites.

The Society Hill Public Library, the Maryland Library, and the Mark and Emily Turner Memorial Library all offer Second Life residents a set of links to statewide information resources. Providing reference services and helpful resources about both inworld and real-world locations is an excellent way for public libraries to reach out to users, and allows them to "adapt our services to be at the user's point of need when they need us, where they already are."<sup>7</sup>

Finally, public libraries in Second Life have the opportunity to establish themselves as a "third place" as Ray Oldenburg describes it in *The Great Good Place*,<sup>8</sup> a place for leisure and relaxation outside of the work and

home environments. In that sense, the library's presence can provide residents with a place to gather when they enter the virtual world, a place to attend events, and a place to meet other residents.

Michael Casey and Laura Savastinuk advise librarians to ask themselves this question: "What are your users doing elsewhere that they could be doing through your library?"<sup>9</sup> I believe public libraries can ask the same question about their sites in Second Life. One of the most popular activities in Second Life is content creation. Residents can build anything their imagination conjures up using a palette of basic shapes, tools, and textures. However, residents who do not own land can build only in public lands called "sandboxes," where anyone in the area is allowed building privileges. Objects created in sandboxes are usually deleted within a day or a week.

The Glenview Public Library has a large sandbox where its visitors can build whatever they please. In addition, visitors to Cybrary City Island, where many public libraries are located, are allowed to build in almost every area. Wouldn't it be wonderful to log in to Second Life, teleport to your local public library's sandbox, and meet with librarians or other patrons to build something together? Turning library lands into a sandbox and providing a gathering space offers residents the chance to view a virtual public library as a valuable "third place" in their Second Life experience.

## What Are Public Libraries Building in Second Life?

With the exception of the Cleveland Public Library, which owns an entire island, each of the public libraries I visited occupied a small piece of land carved out of an island



**Figure 4**  
The virtual (left) and the brick-and-mortar (right) main buildings of the Cleveland Public Library.

belonging to a larger entity. The Glenview Public Library is located on EduIsland 4, for example, and the remaining six libraries are located on one of several Cybrary City islands. The EduIsland and Cybrary City islands are managed by educational organizations and are funded in part by sponsorships from library software vendors like Talis and SirsiDynix. While educators and librarians are offered a discount on real estate prices, buying a large piece of land requires a substantial financial commitment.

Some structures, like the Cleveland Public Library, were built to resemble the real-life building (figure 4). CPL has an enormous build: in addition to the main building, the site boasts a gallery space, an amphitheater, a re-creation of the real-life Eastman Reading Garden, four life-size chess courts, and the offices of the Clevnet consortium that serves the state of Ohio.

The other public libraries in Second Life occupy more modest compounds. Most libraries I visited featured a main building, usually two to three stories high. Gazebos, pavilions, and rooftop terraces are also common architectural elements and are often equipped with screens where visitors can view video tutorials, as is the case with the Glenview Public Library.

The only exception is the Monroe County Library System. Located on a small plot of land, the area contains a gateway bearing its name, a seating area, and a video-equipped meeting space open to group members only. This would seem to indicate that MCLS is using its space to allow its librarians and staff members to meet and hold presentations, rather than for MCLS users to access the library virtually.

As I noted above, I rarely saw any other any other residents—library patrons or staff members—on my visits. With the exception of the Info Island reference desk, none of the public libraries in Second Life hold regular hours in which librarians are inworld and on hand to greet patrons, answer questions, or conduct tours of the virtual library. Several libraries, however, use some kind of device to inform residents if the librarian is inworld and available to instant message (a color-changing kiosk, for example).

## What Are Public Libraries Doing Right?

While researching this chapter, I observed many of the projects that public libraries are launching in virtual environments. I believe the following features are noteworthy because they combine the best of the library with the best of the virtual environment in order to provide innovative services in Second Life. Librarians are now offering collected resources via linked virtual objects, appealing to new users by learning from popular Second Life sites, and partnering with teens to develop valuable visual literacy skills.

## Creative, Quality Resources and Programming

Most of the public libraries I observed provided resources in Second Life using links to websites or databases. Instructions to follow a link usually hover above an object. Clicking on the object will open the selected resource either in a new browser window or in a window within Second Life, depending on the user's preference. In most of the libraries, the objects displaying linked resources were usually laptop computers, touch-screen monitors, and photographs.

While almost all of the public libraries in Second Life have filled their sites with links to online resources, some of the most surprising and creative features I saw on my visits were built completely within the virtual environment. The Glenview Public Library, for example, is currently undergoing a renovation of its brick-and-mortar building. Librarians have posted pictures of the existing building alongside the proposal for the new building so residents can view them side by side. The Mark and Emily Turner Memorial Library incorporates an RSS news feed that residents can use with their aggregators, inside its front door. Finally, the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County houses a kiosk that allows cardholding patrons to pay library fines and fees in Linden Dollars, the Second Life currency. The kiosk was actually built by teens working on the Eye4You Alliance Island, where a similar machine is also operating.

Few of the public libraries offer anything more than linked resources at their virtual locations, but some are actually hosting or promoting events. The Mark and Emily Turner Memorial Library prominently features event billboards in front of its building. On my latest visit, the boards promoted a presentation titled "Stepping into Virtual Worlds: Stepping into Literature." There was also an advertisement for "Live at Inka's Place Opening Night," the launch of a virtual hangout. In addition, METML hosts readings and book discussions, as well as lectures and Second Life help sessions, as described above.

In August 2008, the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County hosted the 2008 Technology Summit "Digital Youth Wired for Action."<sup>10</sup> PLCMC broadcast a live audio stream of the keynote speaker's presentation into Second Life. Anastasia Goodstein's presentation was titled "Totally Wired: What Teens and Tweens are Really Doing Online." It is interesting to note that, although PLCMC sponsored the streaming audio, the Alliance Library hosted the event by making the broadcasts available in the Open Air Auditorium on InfoIsland. This choice could have been made due to space constraints—the auditorium seats thirty to forty avatars—or perhaps because librarians and educators in the Main Grid are more likely to recognize the Alliance Library and InfoIsland destinations, rather than PLCMC.



**Figure 5**  
Building at the Glenview Public Library sandbox.

### Second Life Popular Culture

Some of the public library sites I visited have keyed into elements that appeal to residents in entertainment, or even commercial sims and are offering them to library visitors. For example, one of the most popular, defining features of Second Life is the ability to build objects. As I discussed earlier, “sandboxes” are open areas where residents may practice their building skills and experiment with new techniques. The Glenview Public Library was the only public library I visited that has a clearly defined sandbox (figure 5).

Tutorials are also popular, since residents like to learn from and build off of other residents’ creations, a phenomenon called “Bebop Reality” in Au’s book.<sup>11</sup> A search of YouTube for “Second Life tutorial” turned up over 1,300 hits. The Glenview Public Library and the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library have both built areas with flat-screen monitors that play video tutorials on a variety of topics, from building “tiny prims” to using the Linden Scripting Language.

Residents also like to join groups in Second Life. Groups are built around shared interests and locations inworld, and members can send instant messages to one another to inform other group members about upcoming events. At the Mark and Emily Turner Memorial Library, residents can join the Rural Libraries in Second Life group, although membership seems to be geared more toward librarians than toward METML patrons.

The only public library to offer virtual visitors membership is the Glenview Public Library, which has a group especially for its patrons to join. Although there are only five patrons (including myself) in the group at this time, it is nonetheless an easy way for librarians to inform patrons of upcoming events in the virtual world and instill a sense of identity and belonging with the library in patrons.

Finally, in a clear analogue to the real world, Second Life residents like free things: free clothing, free furniture and accessories, and free Linden Dollars, especially. On my public library visits, I picked up a T-shirt and coffee mug from Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library

and some “goodie boxes” of assorted items from the Glenview Public Library.

### Outreach to Teens

Two public libraries, the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County and the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library, run programs for teenagers in Teen Second Life.

At TSCPL, young adult librarians run the club “Second Lifers,” which meets twice a month. Teens can meet in person in the library’s computer lab or connect to Teen Second Life from home. On Oz Island, the land owned by TSCPL, the club is currently recreating the landscape and architecture of the Topeka Riverfront. Club members have the chance to win \$100 for the best build along the virtual riverfront as part of Topeka’s real-life campaign to rejuvenate the area.<sup>12</sup>

Another public library project in Teen Second Life is the Eye4You Alliance Island, a creation of the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County in partnership with several organizations, the Alliance Library System among them. Since October 2006, Technology Education Librarian Kelly Czarnecki and her colleagues have recruited teens from all over the world to design, manage, and stage events on the Eye4You Island.

In the last two years, teens have taught classes about how to build objects and use the Linden Scripting Language, attended talks by a number of young adult authors and musicians, hosted art shows and concerts featuring work by teens, and created a blog and a Flickr account for the group. In addition, PLCMC hosted a Machinima Camp in August 2008 and has numerous Teen Second Life events posted on the library’s online calendar. The article “Meet the New You” and the Web seminar “Teen Second Life: Library Services in a 3D World” provide more detail about Eye4You Alliance activities.<sup>13</sup>

*Eye4You Alliance Blog*

<http://eye4youalliance.youthtech.info>

PLCMC believes that hosting a virtual space for teens to gather is important to the library’s effort to engage teen users that may not otherwise set foot in the building. According to Czarnecki, “Teens we work with aren’t frequent brick/mortar library users.”<sup>14</sup> In addition, PLCMC’s Teen Second Life web page highlights the collaborative and visual literacy skills teens learn when they participate in the virtual world:

Because PLCMC contributes to a literate community, giving teens tools for self-expression and communication is a step in that direction. When teens can share

and produce things in a 3D environment, and with teens from all over the world, it helps to develop a stronger community that can be far reaching. Visual literacy is an important skill to be able to have for school and beyond.<sup>15</sup>

Czarnecki has estimated that the Eye4You Alliance Island has received as many as 9,000 visitors on a single day, usually due to special events taking place on the island. Nevertheless, administrators are still seeing “steady numbers every day.”<sup>16</sup>

The Teen Grid is accessible only to teens 13 to 17 years old and to adults who sponsor projects and have passed comprehensive background checks. The time constraints of this project did not allow me to establish access to the Teen Grid, but it is possible to stay updated on the progress of the Second Lifers and Eye4You Alliance via the blogs and websites both public libraries maintain, as well as the articles mentioned above.

## What Are Public Libraries Doing Wrong? Or, Why Are Public Libraries Turning Into Ghost Sims?

This section hopes to answer the question I posed in the opening paragraph: with excellent exhibits and an impressive build, why was it so rare for me to encounter another avatar browsing the Cleveland Public Library island?

Sitearm Madonna, a consultant for Second Life projects, has written about “ghost sims,” ambitious builds that see little or no resident traffic. Although a sim may see a spike in traffic from a “big kickoff event” at the proj-

ect’s inception, “then nothing further is scheduled and the attraction of the novelty of the build wears off. Soon it is empty.” It is not enough to have ambitious architecture and static displays: “Successful projects require a substantial ongoing component of events and communications past the actual building.”<sup>17</sup>

The previous section described some of the events that have been happening on public library lands in Second Life: book talks, lectures, classes, and audiovisual presentations. At the Cleveland Public Library, however, there is no evidence that any of these activities are taking place. The sim is by far the largest and most technically skilled build of the libraries I studied, and yet there is no schedule of events advertised outside its spacious amphitheater. The Reader’s Garden, ideally suited for holding more intimate discussions, has only a few scattered benches (figure 6). There is no place for residents to gather and take a seat, such as a lecture podium or even a circle of chairs.

People do not spend time in Second Life in order to be passive consumers of the landscape; they stay inworld to participate in content creation and to interact with other people. When a resident strolls through the Reader’s Garden at CPL, she may admire the flowers and the whimsical statues. Unfortunately, with no events posted and no evidence that other residents spend time in the area, she is also not likely to find a reason to return.

Sitearm Madonna believes that successful Second Life projects require not only an ongoing schedule of events, but an ongoing communication effort as well. Keeping the public informed about available services and the value of the library is not a new challenge for librarians. I surveyed the websites of each of the eight public libraries to find out how the staff marketed its Second Life branch,



**Figure 6**  
The CPL Reader’s Garden in Second Life (left) and real life (right).

or if they did so at all. While some public libraries are promoting their presence on their websites, too many are neglecting to mention their virtual existence entirely.

On the Mark and Emily Turner Memorial Library website, there is a prominent link (though it is “below the jump”) to “Visit our library in Second Life.” The link opens a page devoted to METML’s activities in Second Life. The “Online Resources” and “Library Events” pages of the website also feature information about METML and Second Life, describing the virtual presence as “an online version of itself in which you can access various services.”

The website of the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County devotes an entire page to the Eye4You Alliance, as well as posting events that have to do with Second Life on the library calendar. In addition, in the “highlights” section on its home page, PLCMC has added an icon that says “Teen Library in Second Life: Teens, help PLCMC build a virtual library.”

Finally, the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library links to its Teen Second Lifers club page from the “library clubs” menu, where librarians update events using the club’s blog. The TSCPL home page also has an icon with the Second Life eye-in-hand logo, alongside icons for Facebook, Flickr, MySpace, and YouTube. The Second Life icon is actually a SLurl link, meaning that when a patron follows the link, she is taken to a bird’s-eye view of the Cybrary City island and has the option to teleport to the location. If Second Life is already installed on her computer, the program will open with her avatar already standing in front of TSCPL.

For the remaining five public libraries, I could not find any similar pages or context about the virtual environment. I could not find that the Society Hill Public Library, the Maryland Library, or the Glenview Public Library posted any information about Second Life on their respective websites, despite searching archived press releases.

After searching the Monroe County Library System website, I found an entry for an October 2008 event at one of the branch libraries titled “Second Life Introduction.” The event is billed as a “tour” of noncommercial Second Life sites, including libraries, but there is no mention in the event description that MCLS has its own presence inside the virtual world.

Finally, a search of the Cleveland Public Library website turned up a single archived blog post about the grand opening of CPL in Second Life, which featured tours of the island, two musical performances, and even a costume contest that awarded a Linden Dollar prize to the best chess-related costume. There seems to be no further indication on CPL’s website that the library has explored Second Life, much less that it owns an entire island.

It is possible that the previous four libraries I have cited do not make their Second Life presence known on

their website, for the simple reason that the virtual sites are either not intended for, or are not yet ready for, patron use (as opposed to a major error in marketing strategy). This does not seem to be the case with CPL’s, however, so the lack of promotion is especially baffling.

## Libraries Promoting Second Life Branches

*METML on Second Life*

[www.presqueisle.lib.me.us/SLlink.html](http://www.presqueisle.lib.me.us/SLlink.html)

*Eye4You Alliance at PLCMC*

[www.plcmc.lib.nc.us/teens/secondlife.asp](http://www.plcmc.lib.nc.us/teens/secondlife.asp)

*TSCPL Teen Second Lifers Club*

[www.tscpl.org/teens/section/second\\_lifers](http://www.tscpl.org/teens/section/second_lifers)

*MCLS website*

[www2.libraryweb.org](http://www2.libraryweb.org)

*CPL Second Life blog announcement*

[www.cpl.org/?q=node/2311](http://www.cpl.org/?q=node/2311)

It appears as though CPL has fallen into a situation Casey and Savastinuk describe as “Plan, Implement, and Forget.” This can occur

when a library decides to start a service, plans for it, rolls it out—and then promptly forgets all about it. When this happens, it does not take long for library customers to forget about the service as well.<sup>18</sup>

This progression echoes Sitearm Madonna’s description of the decline of ghost sims. After what sounds like a fun opening event, CPL has not posted any more events or blog posts about Second Life. CPL patrons and Second Life residents, in turn, have forgotten about the virtual branch, which exists now as a beautiful—but desolate—ghost sim. In order for public libraries to attract and retain real-world patrons and residents alike as virtual branch users, librarians cannot fall into the Plan, Implement, and Forget trap.

To give their libraries the best chance at having a successful project in Second Life, librarians must be able to devote the time and the resources to host ongoing events in the virtual environment. This includes building a site with inviting areas for residents to gather and interact, as well as planning an interesting program of events. In addition, librarians should include information about Second Life on the library’s website and regularly update a blog post about Second Life events and features. By hosting events and keeping the community informed, public libraries in Second Life can reduce their chances of becoming a ghost sim.



## Conclusion

In many of the articles that dismiss the possible benefits of Second Life to public libraries, the authors tend to portray participating librarians as too eager to jump on the latest technology trend in a misguided attempt to reach out to new users. I believe, however, that it is irrelevant to try to pin down where Second Life is on the “hype cycle.” It may, as Au predicts, become as ubiquitous as e-mail in the next ten years, or the entire metaverse could be taken offline if Linden Lab shuts its doors someday.

In order to justify serious research about libraries in Second Life, however, it is enough to know that virtual worlds are growing, that many librarians have decided it is important to establish a virtual presence, and that all types of libraries are already there. As the founders of the Second Life Library write, “Although not everyone agrees about the value and importance of virtual worlds, and although virtual worlds are not for everyone, libraries need to be there.”<sup>19</sup>

It remains to be said, however, that before rushing into Second Life, a public library should evaluate its user population to find out if a virtual environment is an appropriate platform to reach and engage users. Librarians should also think critically about the resources and events they will be able to offer, what benefits the library will gain from being in Second Life, and whether or not their library has adequate funding and technological capabilities to support an ongoing virtual presence. A concerted effort to market the virtual space to existing patrons on the library’s website should go hand-in-hand with these elements. If public librarians research the possibilities of Second Life and find they can make the commitment to offer engaging, innovative content, I believe we can expand library services into the virtual environment to the benefit of our institutions.

## Notes

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