

Resources

Books about Virtual Worlds

Au, Wagner James. *The Making of Second Life: Notes from the New World*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

James Wagner Au presents the story of how Second Life grew from a conceptual idea to a virtual world with fifteen million registered accounts. The book also provides the backstory of the company Linden Lab (the owner of Second Life) and traces its growth and development along with the virtual world. Au discusses many of the critical incidents that occurred between users of Second Life that eventually led to the development of the current policies and terms of use, including the ability of content creators to maintain their intellectual property rights.

Balkin, Jack, & Beth Noveck, eds. *The State of Play: Law, Games, and Virtual Worlds*. New York: NYU Press, 2006.

This book includes essays by game designers, policy makers, scholars, and legal experts, all weighing in to discuss the implications of the real-world use of virtual worlds. Topics include copyright, player's rights vs. developer's rights, and free speech. This book is a great course supplement for Internet policy.

Bartle, Richard. *Designing Virtual Worlds*. Indianapolis, IN: New Riders Games, 2003.

Bartle's book is a foundational work for virtual world researchers. Librarians will find chapter 1 very useful as a history of virtual worlds, and chapter 3 is often cited when discussing different types of *players* in virtual worlds. A few sections of the book are dedicated to the development of virtual worlds.

Boellstorff, Tom. *Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.

This ethnographic work is an excellent book for people wanting to get an understanding of the culture of Second Life. Boellstorff offers rich detailed descriptions of the Second Life environment and makes excellent use of chat transcripts to give the reader an understanding of how users of Second Life experience the virtual world. Included in this book is a fantastic section about virtual ethnography, which Boellstorff renames *virtual anthropology*. The methods section is a must-read for scholars interested in using qualitative methods in a virtual world.

Castronova, Edward. *Synthetic Worlds: The Business and Culture of Online Games*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Castronova is known for his work in virtual economies and is a key thinker in regard to the social, political, and economic effects virtual worlds may have in American society. *Synthetic Worlds* is a forward-looking book with discussions about player's rights, virtual "property rights," and the real value of virtual currency.

Rymaszewski, Michael, Wagner James Au, Cory Ondrejka, Richard Platel, Sara Van Gorden, Jeannette Cézanne, Paul Cézanne, et al. *Second Life: The Official Guide*, 2nd ed. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, 2008.

The official Second Life guide offers a virtual tour of Second Life to readers. The guide serves as a resource in understanding the user interface and the basics of navigating the virtual world. What I find most useful in this guide are the recommended places to visit. The guide lists many wonderful sites to see, along with a brief history of

how each site was developed and an introduction to the “culture” of the users that frequent the area. This guide is a nice printed resource with wonderful color images that can be passed around an office so that librarians can get a sense of what Second Life is. Most of the content available in the companion CD-ROM can be found online in the Second Life website.

Schroeder Ralph, ed. *The Social Life of Avatars: Presence and Interaction in Shared Virtual Environments*. London: Springer-Verlag, 2002.

Schroeder, Ralph. & Ann-Sofie Axelsson, eds. *Avatars at Work and Play: Activities in Shared Virtual Environments*. London: Springer-Verlag, 2006.

These two edited works offer articles covering a wide spectrum of research in the areas of shared virtual environments and collaborative virtual environments. The articles in this book are all research studies and written for an audience with an understanding of computer-supported cooperative work. With that in mind, the chapters present research in various virtual environments ranging from users collaborating while wearing 3-D helmets and gloves to users playing MMORPGs.

Taylor, T. L. *Play between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006.

Taylor’s work is an ethnographic piece about the players of the MMORPG *EverQuest*. In her book, readers are presented with a firsthand account of the culture, relationships, and value players give to their membership in online groups. Taylor uses her book to explain how players of MMORPGs slowly begin to view their online play as work and how their online play soon infiltrates their day-to-day work.

Weber, Aimee, Kimberly Rufer-Bach, & Richard Platel. *Creating Your World: The Official Guide to Advanced Content Creation for Second Life*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, 2007.

This Second Life guide is a great reference for users who are ready to develop their own content in Second Life. The section and exercises about Linden Scripting Language are very well written and easy to follow. Many of the advanced techniques that are discussed in the book will help users of Second Life create materials that look professional and unique. The guide includes a CD-ROM with supporting material, including freeware allowing users to create animations and land maps outside of Second Life.

Machinima Links

Collaborative Building, www.youtube.com/watch?v=RFzFqqBHE-Y

This machinima is a short project documenting the work of four student groups in an undergraduate information studies course at the University of Texas at Austin. Students had one week to design a “user experience” in Second Life with a general theme and a unique feature. Projects in this machinima include a haunted house, a Wild West town, a medieval castle, and a tailgate party.

Student Fundraiser in Second Life, www.youtube.com/watch?v=ouY0lArtz5s

This is a video produced by four students enrolled in the course Working in Virtual Worlds at the University of Texas at Austin. During this project, students raised \$300 U.S. for an organization dedicated to restoring wildlife habitats destroyed in the San Diego fires in the fall of 2007.

Second Life Idol, www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIFozTbwgPA

In this project, students produced a Second Life version of *American Idol*. They built a replica stage and arranged to have eight contestants perform for a panel of judges. The two-hour event included commercial breaks, a master of ceremonies, and audience voting. The project was created by a team of five students in the fall semester of 2007 at the University of Texas at Austin School of Information.

Exploring Virtual Worlds, www.youtube.com/watch?v=4R1SrZua5ww

This video was created to demonstrate the potential of virtual worlds for teaching and learning. I often show this video in training sessions or to introduce virtual worlds to people who are unfamiliar with them.

Watch the World(s), www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxVDVggLqsA&watch_response

If there can be a “classic” machinima created in Second Life, then this is it. Robbie Dingo shows a virtual remake of Van Gogh’s *Starry Night* created in Second Life.

HVXSilverstar’s Channel, www.youtube.com/user/HVXSilverstar

HVXSilverStar has created many machinima projects representing various library projects in Second Life. Her YouTube channel is worth a visit.

Second Life Video Tutorials, <http://secondlife.com/showcase/tutorials>

Many step-by-step tutorials are available at this site. Torley Linden narrates most of these two to three step how-to videos

Articles for Virtual World Researchers

These are a few articles that I provide to my students to give them an understanding of virtual worlds. Please note that this list is used in a course called Working in Virtual Worlds, so articles about embodiment, fantasy, role-playing, and identity are not included. For a comprehensive bibliography see *Play Between Worlds: Online Game Culture* by T. L. Taylor.

Bainbridge, William Sims. "The Scientific Research Potential of Virtual Worlds." *Science* 317 (July 27, 2007): 472-76.

Becker, Barbara, & Gloria Mark. "Social Conventions in Computer-Mediated Communication: A Comparison of Three Online Shared Virtual Environments." In *The Social Life of Avatars: Presence and Interactions in Shared Virtual Environments*, edited by Ralph Schroeder, 19-39. London: Springer-Verlag, 2002.

Book, Betsy. "In Moving Beyond the Game: Social Virtual Worlds." Paper presented on the panel "The Culture of Play" at the conference State of Play 2: Reloaded, New York Law School, October 28-30, 2004.

Castronova, Edward. "Virtual Worlds: A First-Hand Account of Market and Society on the Cyberian Frontier," 2001, *The Gruter Institute Working Papers on Law, Economics, and Evolutionary Biology*, vol. 2, article 1, www.bepress.com/giwp/default/vol2/iss1/art1 (accessed Dec. 5, 2008).

Hudson-Smith, Andrew. "30 Days in Active Worlds—Community, Design, and Terrorism in a Virtual World." In *The Social Life of Avatars: Presence and Interactions in Shared Virtual Environments*, edited by Ralph Schroeder, 77-89. London: Springer-Verlag, 2002.

Jarmon, Leslie & Sanchez, Joe. (2009 forthcoming). "The Educators Coop: A Model for Collaboration and LSI Communication Research in the Virtual World," *Electronic Journal of Communication*. CIOS.

—Jarmon, Leslie & Joe Sanchez "The Educators Coop: A Virtual World Model for Real World Collaboration." Annual Meeting of the American Society for Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T). Columbus, OH (October 24 - 29, 2008)

Nilsson, Alexander, Ilona Heldal, Ralph Schroeder, & Ann-Sofie Axelsson. "The Long-Term Uses of Shared Virtual Environments. An Exploratory Study." In *The Social Life of Avatars: Presence and Interactions in Shared Virtual Environments*, edited by Ralph Schroeder, 112-26. London: Springer-Verlag, 2002.

Oldenburg, Ray. *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You through the Day*. New York: Paragon House, 1989.

Ondrejka, Cory. "Escaping the Guided Cage: User-Created Content and Building the Metaverse." In *The State of Play: Law, Games, and Virtual Worlds*, edited by Jack Balkin & Beth Noveck, 158-79. New York: New York University Press, 2006.

— "School of the Future: Innovation and Education in Second Life." Paper presented at the Academic Days on Game Development 2007, Feb 22-25, 2008, available online at www.academicresourcecenter.net/curriculum/pfv.aspx?ID=6820 (accessed Mar. 3, 2007).

Peña, Jorge, & Jeffrey T. Hancock. "An Analysis of Socioemotional and Task Communication in Online Multiplayer Video Games." *Communication Research*, 33, no. 1 (Feb. 2006): 92-109.

Penumarthy, Shashikant, & Katy Borner. "Analysis and Visualization of Social Diffusion Patterns in Three-Dimensional Virtual Worlds." In *Avatars at Work and Play: Activities in Shared Virtual Environments*, edited by Ralph Schroeder & Ann-Sofie Axelsson, 39-62. London: Springer-Verlag, 2006.

Sanchez, Joe. "Second Life: An Interactive Qualitative Analysis." In *Proceedings of Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education International Conference 2007*, edited by Caroline Crawford, Dee Anna Willis, Roger Carlsen, Ian Gibson, Karen McFerrin, Jerry Price, & Roberta Weber, 1240-43. Chesapeake, VA: AACE, 2007.

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- . “Virtual Worlds: New Spaces for Service Learning.” In *Service Learning: Linking Library Education and Practice*. Edited by Loriene Roy, Kelly Jensen, & Alex Hershey Meyers. Chicago: American Library Association, 2009.
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