

Remember that until you hit Save, your changes exist only in the text editor and haven't actually been uploaded into *Second Life*. When working on really complicated or critical scripts, it is often a good idea to use a text editor outside of *SL* and then cut and paste the text into *SL*, since that way you'll always have backups. The LSL Wiki has a list of external editors that have syntax highlighting for LSL (<http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=AlternativeEditors>).

It is also important to realize that once you have added a script to an object, the script will remain on the object, even if you derez and rez the object into and out of your inventory. If you want to remove the script permanently, the best way is to delete it from the object's inventory.

To fully understand the connection between the text you type and what actually runs on *Second Life*, you need to dig a little deeper into LSL.

CHAPTER 8 DEEPER INTO LSL

Now we'll focus on compilation, uploading, and execution (Figure 8.2). LSL is a scripting language that runs server-side, on a piece of software called the simulator. The simulator does just what its name implies—it simulates the virtual world of *Second Life*. Each simulator runs everything for 16 acres of virtual land—buildings, physics, and of course, scripts. While you manipulate the script text in a form that is somewhat easy to

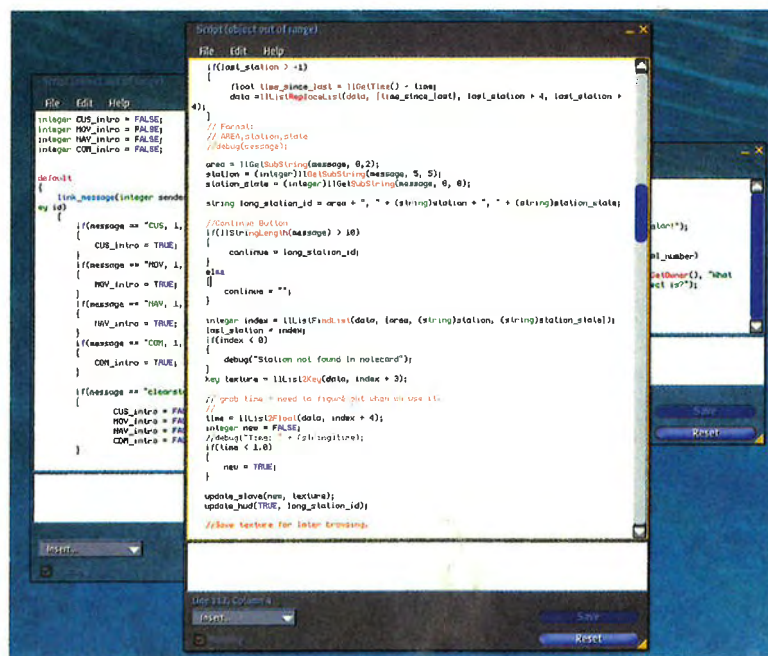


Figure 8.2: A bunch of more-advanced scripts



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read, the actual code that runs on the simulator is compiled. A compiler is a piece of software that takes the text version of the script and converts it into something that can actually run. In the case of LSL, the compiler exists within the *Second Life* viewer itself. In the future, it is likely that the compiler will move from the viewer into the *Second Life* simulators, but where the code is compiled isn't very important. What matters is that the text is converted into a form that can run on the simulators.

Compilers also serve the function of detecting errors in the code you've just written. Although compilers can't detect all errors, it can detect common mistakes like syntax errors (Figure 8.3). Let's return to our "Hello, Avatar!" script. We can introduce a syntax error in many ways, but one example would be to remove the trailing brace, }, from the end of the `state_entry` event. Since we have modified the text, the Save button lights up; click on it to attempt to compile the text. Rather than the "Compile successful, saving..." and then "Save complete." we've become accustomed to, we instead see "{7, 4} : ERROR : Syntax error" and the cursor moves to the first letter of the `touch_start` event.

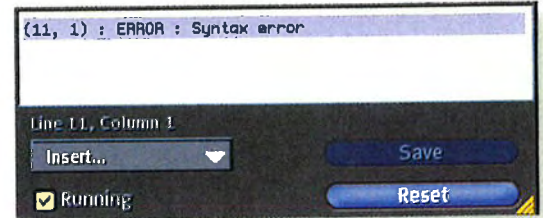


Figure 8.3: ERROR: Syntax Error

What does all this mean? The "{7, 4}" tells us that the error is at or near row 7, column 4 of the script, which we also know because the cursor has been positioned there. The "Syntax error" tells us that we've probably made a relatively simple typing error. If we examine our script, we see that the braces don't match. The compiler, upon reaching the `touch_start` event, was expecting a trailing brace, so it flagged this as an error and stopped compiling the script.

Notice something else. If you exit the Build tool and click on the box, it fails to respond with "Touched." When a script fails to compile, *Second Life* stops executing the script on the target object. This is to reduce confusion and prevent broken or mismatched scripts from continuing to operate with *Second Life*. Simply add the trailing brace back in and save the change to both fix the error and to recompile the script.

When a script properly compiles, it generates LSL bytecode. Bytecode is a simple form that is relatively easy to execute. In the future, LSL may compile to a different form for execution, but that won't change how you write scripts. It will simply change how *Second Life* handles things under the hood. Why would we be contemplating these types of changes? Performance, primarily. LSL currently executes quite slowly, so we will continue to make changes to improve what you can do within LSL.

Either way, once the compiled code is on a simulator, it can actually be executed. Execution is simply the process of checking to see whether the script needs to do anything. In our example script, when an avatar clicks on the box, *Second Life* checks to see if any `touch` event handlers exist. Since one does (`touch_start`), the code within the handler executes. Once that code is complete, the script goes to sleep until it needs to do something else.

This process of doing work only when required is key to both how LSL is structured and to writing good LSL scripts. It requires you to understand states and events, however. We'll discuss states first. As was covered earlier, all LSL scripts need to have at least one state, denoted by the `default` keyword. A state is a collection of code between the opening and closing braces of the state. In its simplest form, a script has a single state and all of its code lives there.

For example, imagine that you are creating a script to manage a very simple door that you touch to open or close. Using states can clarify what your code does:

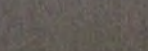
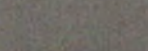
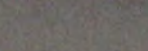
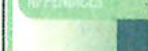
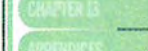
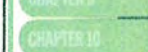
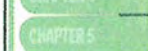
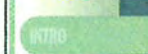
```
// default state is closed
default
{
    touch_start(integer tnum)
    {
        // insert code to open the door here
        // . . .
        state open;
    }
}

state open
{
    touch_start(integer tnum)
    {
        // insert code to close the door here
        // . . .
        state default;
    }
}
```

Note that this is different from the traditional way of writing this, where you would maintain whether the door was open or closed in a global variable, something like this:

```
// default state is closed
integer is_closed = TRUE;

default
{
    touch_start(integer tnum)
    {
        if (is_closed == TRUE)
        {
            // insert code to open the door here
```



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```
// ...
is_closed = FALSE;
}
else
{
    // insert code to close the door here
    // ...
    is_closed = TRUE;
}
}
```

In this simple case, it may look like the global variable option is easier, but when other behavior also has to change between the `open` and `closed` state, splitting the code into multiple states is much simpler than having to wrap everything in `if` statements.

These code samples illustrate some other basics of LSL syntax. First, the `/**` denotes a comment. A comment allows you add text to your script to remind you of why you wrote the code a particular way, to lay groundwork for later coding (such as “insert code to open the door here”), or to make it easier for someone else to follow your work. Note that only the text to the right of the `/**` is part of the comment, allowing comments to be added to a line that contains code. For example, in the line

```
state open /** this is entered when the door opens
```

`“/** this is entered when the door opens”` is the comment.

Second, we introduce global variables and the variable type “integer.” Global variables, like `is_closed`, are available anywhere in the code. They are similar to global variables in other programming languages, such as C, and they can be any of the types available to LSL (see the section “What Are Types?”). LSL is a statically and strongly typed language, meaning that variables are given types when created and generally require typecasting to convert between types.

SIDEBAR

FROM LINDEN LAB:
AN ANIMATION OVERVIEW

Animations are the personality of an avatar. They're the finishing touches after you've gotten your hair, outfit, and body just right. Sure, you could use the standard animations to get your point across, but with patience, software, and a bit of luck, you can bring your favorite real-world movements into your Second Life experience.



➡ *The first thing needed is software to create the animation outside of Second Life. There are several free options; for example, Avimator, Slat, DAZ Studio, Blender, and QAvimator, as well as commercial software like Poser, Maya, and Posemaker. Each system has its own advantages, but all make superb animations. SL uses the BVH motion format, so be sure to export this way.*

The jargon related to animations is the same regardless of the software. A key frame is a frame in the animation sequence with a specified joint location, and the program will fill in all the frames between key frames to create a smooth motion. A spline is the set of equations the program uses to generate this smooth motion; if you find that your animation is moving past the key frame or in other odd ways, breaking the spline on the key frames often fixes the problem. Inverse kinematics (IK) is an option that allows you to move the entire arm or leg by moving the hand or foot along the three axes, but if you turn this option on and off, it is important to check your key-frame splines again. Playing with IK can create amazing motions, but it can also have difficult-to-predict consequences, so always save before changing the IK settings.

Now that you have the software, check that the avatar loaded into it is compatible with SL. SL cannot accept information from finger, toe, genitalia, or facial joints, so you may have to use an imported or outdated avatar. You can also edit the key frames after creating the animation to delete the information from these joints.

Let's animate! All joints used in your animation must be in a different position between the first frame and the second frame. The second frame is the first frame you will see in SL, and a good first frame often twists the avatar into a ball. If you want to exclude a body part from the animation so that only part of the SL movements are overridden, the excluded joints should be in the same position in both the first and second frames.

In the second frame, the avatar should be in the starting pose for the animation. Depending on your software, each joint can be dragged by the mouse into position or selected and then moved through parameter dials.

The next key frames will be the different poses your avatar will move through to complete the animation. Remember that humans rarely coordinate moves precisely, so when moving your avatar from one pose



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← to another, set different body parts to arrive in the target pose a few seconds within one another.

There are a few different ways you can end your animation. The most common way is with the same pose as the second frame (allowing for a seamless loop to be uploaded), or in a unique pose from which the avatar will shift back into normal SL animations. You may also create an animation with a beginning animation, a section with matching key frames at each end that can be used as a loop, and a leading-out animation. If you plan on creating this type of animation, write down the numbers the loop begins and ends at.

Once you have your animation done, export it as a BVH motion and log into SL. SL's uploading process allows you to finish customizing the animation. Here you set a priority level for your animation. The higher the number, the higher the priority. The default animations are a two, so to completely override the SL default, upload a three or four.

Timing your loop can make or break an animation. Avoid a jerky animation with a bit of math. Each end of the looped section should have the exact same key frame, and dividing the key-frame number by the total number of frames will give you the in and out percents within a degree or two. Preview the animation a few times from different in and out percents to check the loop, and don't be afraid to make the matching key frames into two or three static frames to give yourself more leeway.

Hand poses and facial expressions can be set at this stage, and beyond that, ease-in and ease-out settings define how fast your avatar will transition between animations. Now you can upload and begin testing your animation. The test server is a great place to practice. There you won't have to spend your hard earned Lindens getting that hand motion just right.

There are some limits. Subtle movements aren't always picked up by SL, and animations are limited to 30 seconds. While you can upload an animation with 60 frames per second, users will likely only see between 15 and 20 frames per second, so animations are often best in this range. Full-body movements must come from the hip joint, not the body joint, and smaller- or larger-than-normal avatars will require custom animations to maintain the motion. The fastest way to get used



➡ to the quirks of the system is to dive right in and start testing it out for yourself. In no time, your avatar will be able to do your favorite dance move or develop a signature walk or strut as unique as the rest of you.

—Kiari Lefay and Leslie Havens

WHAT ARE TYPES?

A type determines what kind of data can be stored and LSL supports seven distinct types:

INTEGER

An integer is a whole number between $-2,147,483,648$ and $2,147,483,647$. The following are some examples of integers in use:

```
integer int = -23; // in the language C, integers are called int. Don't be
                    confused by this!
integer foo = 235632;
integer blar = 0;
```

FLOAT

This is a floating point (or decimal) number with seven significant figures that can be positive or negative. The largest positive or smallest negative number that can be represented is $\pm 3.4028235E38$, while the smallest positive or largest negative number that can be represented is $\pm 1.17549351E-38$. Examples of floats are as follows:

```
float e = 2.718128; // the decimal point indicates that this is a float
float f = 0.f; // a trailing ".f" can also be used
float one = 1; // even though the literal "1" is an integer, this assignment
                will work.
integer i_one = 1; // note: if (one == i_one) is a BAD idea! More on this
                  later.
```



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STRING

A string is a collection of characters, such as the following:

```
string name = "Exposition Linden";  
string character = "c"; // single characters in LSL are just string  
string number = "1"; // note: "1" != 1
```

VECTOR

A vector is three floats representing x, y, and z components. A vector is generally used as a position, velocity, acceleration, or color. All three values can be set simultaneously, or they can be set as individuals:

```
vector pos = <123.3, 54.f, 32>; // vectors will promote entries into floats  
vector vel;  
vel.x = 12.f; // this is much  
vel.y = 23.f; // slower than initializing via a  
vel.z = 36.f; // vector!!
```

LIST

Since LSL doesn't have arrays or structures, the primary method for storing collections of data is lists. All the other data types may be placed in lists (but a list can't be placed in a list). There are many different ways to work with lists; this chapter will cover some of them, and the LSL Wiki (<http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=list>) has excellent examples. More on lists later.

ROTATION

A rotation is four floats representing the x, y, z, and s components of a quaternion rotation. Although quaternions are extremely complicated and often confusing, LSL allows them to be used without your having to master the underlying theory. We'll talk more on rotations later, and you can check out <http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=rotation>. Here are some sample rotations:

```
rotation rot = <0.f, 0.f, 0.f, 1.f>; // Rotations in LSL are internally  
normalized  
rotation rot = <32, 2, -9, 128>; // even if your initialization is not
```

KEY

A UUID, or Universally Unique Identifier, is used to identify many objects within *Second Life*. Like rotations, keys allow you to use UUIDs without having to write a lot of code to support them. We'll go over details later, but you can also consult <http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=key>.

```
// you almost never need to initialize keys with literals like this.
key object_id = "00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000";
```

Typecasting is used when variables of different types are assigned to each other. LSL supports two implicit conversions: integer to float and string to key. These allow the following statements to work correctly:

```
float my_float = 4; // although you really should write this as 4.f
// data between " and " can be either a string or a key.
key object_id = "00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000000";
```

For any other conversions, explicit typecasting is needed. Like C, a typecast is the type you wish to cast to inside parentheses:

```
integer bad_pi = (integer)3.1425926; // bad_pi == 3
float good_pi = (float)"3.1415926"; // good_pi == 3.1415926
```

Now let's discuss the `if` statements. The `if` statement is the simplest of the conditional, or flow control, statements in LSL. If the code within the parentheses evaluates to `TRUE`, then the code within the braces is executed. The `if` statement is only type of expression in LSL for flow control. Flow control allows you to make decisions about whether pieces of code are executed (for more detail, consult <http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=FlowControl>). LSL's flow-control statements are as follows:

```
integer expression = TRUE; // TRUE is an integer constant in LSL. TRUE == 1
if (expression)
{
    // do something if expression == TRUE
}
else
{
    // do something else if expression == FALSE
}

if (expression)
    // do something in one line
else
    // do something else in one line

while(expression)
```



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```

{ // do something until expression == FALSE.  FALSE == 0
}

do
{
    // do something until expression == FALSE.  FALSE == 0
} while(expression);

integer i; // an iterator
for (i = 0; i < 100; i++)
{
    // do something 100 times, where i starts at 0 and counts up to 99
    // this code will exit when i == 100
}

@again; // this is a label
// this code will be executed forever
jump again; // move execution to the @again label

```

There are two additional flow-control mechanisms. The first is the `state` transition, which we already covered. The second is the `return` command, which we will cover in the section “Advanced Language Features.”

In all of the flow-control examples, the decision of which path to take was determined by the value of an expression. In LSL, an expression is a combination of operators and functions. Functions will be explained in more detail in the “Advanced Language Features” section. Operators are divided into several broad categories. As with other categories, the LSL Wiki covers this in great detail (<http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=operators>).

OPERATOR TYPES

UNARY

Unary operators are arithmetic operators that modify one value, as in the following example:

```

integer count = 1; // create a new integer variable and assign it the value
of 1
count++; // the "++" operator adds 1 to "count" and assigns the result to
"count"
llSay(0, (string)count); // says "2" -- note the type conversion

```

BINARY

Binary operators are arithmetic operators that act on two values to produce a third, as shown here:

```
integer a = 5;
integer b = 2;
integer c = a % b; // compute a modulo b, so c = 1
```

BOOLEAN

Boolean operators always generate TRUE (1) or FALSE (0) results:

```
integer a = 5;
integer b = 2;
integer c = a != b; // "!=" returns TRUE if its arguments are not the same.
```

BITWISE

Bitwise operators act on the bitfields that make up integers. Here are some examples:

```
integer a = 5; // 0x101 in binary
integer b = 2; // 0x010
integer c = a | b; // a or b = 0x111, so c = 7
```

ASSIGNMENT

Finally we have the assignment operators, which take the result of an expression and assign it to a variable. In addition, LSL supports several variants of the assignment operator that perform an arithmetic operation along with assignment, as in the following example:

```
integer a = 5; // assigns 5 to a
a += 5; // adds 5 to a, then assigns the result, so a = 10
```



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ADVANCED LANGUAGE FEATURES

Like other languages that share C-like syntax, blocks and scope are fundamental to understanding how to write good code in LSL. Generally speaking, in LSL a code block is any code set off by braces within a global function or an event handler, as shown here:

```
string GlobalString = "Hi!"; // this global variable is
                             // visible anywhere
                             // in the LSL program

integer factorial(integer n) // this is a user-defined
                             // function more on them
                             // below

{                             // this brace begins the code
                             // associated with
                             // the function factorial

    string local = "Bye!";    // a local variable is
                             // visible in the block it is
                             // created in and any new
                             // blocks created within that
                             // block

    llSay(0, GlobalString);   // global variables can be
                             // used anywhere in the LSL
                             // program

    llSay(0, local);          // local is available anywhere
                             // inside the factorial

    if (n < 3)
    {                          // the if statement creates another code block

        float pi = 3.14;      // pi is only available
                             // inside the if block

        llSay(0, local);      // local is available
                             // anywhere inside factorial
                             // including inside new
                             // blocks created within it

        llSay(0, (string)pi); // this works since we're
                             // still inside the block

        return n;             // the return statement
                             // jumps back to the calling
                             // function or event handler

    }                          // end of the if block
    else
    {                          // the else clause creates another block
```



```

float e = 2.71828;    // e is only available inside
                     // the else block

llSay(0, (string)pi); // ERROR!! We aren't in the
                     // block that made pi
                     // so this is an error!

return n*factorial(n - 1); // this is recursion,
                          // more later

} // end of the else block

llSay(0, local); // local is available
                // anywhere inside factorial

} // end of the factorial block

default
{ // states create scope in the sense that they
  // determine which event handlers will
  // be called

  state_entry()
  { // this starts a block in state_entry()

    integer num = 1; // the variable do_something
                    // is a local

    if (num)
      num = 4; // even though there are no braces,
              // this line is actually a code block

    llSay(0, GlobalString); // global variables may
                           // be used anywhere in the
                           // LSL program
    llSay(0, (string)factorial(num));
                           // user-defined functions may be
                           // called from any event handler.
                           // This will say "24".
  } // end of the state_entry block
} // end of the default state

```

There is a lot going on in the simple example program. Although it is a rather silly bit of code, it shows where blocks begin and end, and introduces the idea of scope. For variables and functions, scope defines when they may be called or used. Within LSL, there are two levels of scope: global and local.

Global scope applies to user-defined functions and global variables. Both global variables and user-defined functions may be used anywhere in an LSL program; thus they are considered to be "globally accessible" and therefore of global scope. In the preceding example, the function `factorial` and the string `GlobalString` are globals.

Local scope applies to variables created within code blocks (there are no local functions in LSL). As the example shows, functions, event handlers, and flow control create blocks, and these blocks may have further blocks nested within them. The



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scope for a local variable is the code block it was created within, as well as any new blocks created within that block. Consider this example:

```
{
    // a code block
    integer true = TRUE;
    list foo = ["I", "am", "a", "list"];    // a local list
    if (true)
    {
        // a new code block

        foo = [];    // we can still see foo,
                    // so assigning an empty
                    // list to it
    }
}
```

Note that these scope rules can allow some really bad coding habits, like in the following example:

```
{
    float pi = 3.14;
    if (pi)
    {
        // if a floating point value
        // is used in an
        // expression, it is FALSE
        // if it is exactly
        // equal to 0.f,
        // and TRUE for any other value
        // This is a bad habit,
        // since floating point
        // values are often near to 0.f
        // but not exactly
        // equal to 0.f.

        integer pi = 3;    // start of if code block
                           // this local pi has the same name
                           // as pi from
                           // the earlier scope and
                           // is said to "shadow"
                           // the other variable.

        llSay(0, (string)pi);    // Which pi will be used?
    }
    // end of the if block
else
    {
        // start of the else block
        string pi = "3.1415";    // Ack! Another pi
        llSay(0, (string)pi);    // Now which pi will be
                                // used?
    }
}
```

Please do not ever write code like this! Although it compiles and (if you are very fortunate) may even work, it will cause you—or anyone you share your code with—headaches and confusion.

Now that you understand scope, let us turn to functions. In the last section we introduced global functions, the first of the two types of functions in *Second Life*. The second type, library functions, will be discussed shortly.

User-defined functions allow you to create blocks of code that perform a specific task or calculation. They are placed above the default state, either before or after global variables, and are written as follows:

```
type function_name(type parameter1, type parameter2, . . .)
{
    // do something in here
}
```

The type is the function's return type, which means that if you want the function to return a value after it is called, you need to specify the type. For example, if you wanted to take the absolute value of a float, you could write the following function:

```
float fabs(float num)
{
    if (num > 0.f) // already a positive number, just return it
        return num; // the return command returns the value of
                    // the expression that follows it
    else
        return -num; // the negation operator returns the -1*num
}
```

This would be used as follows:

```
float negone = -1.f;
float posone = fabs(negone); // passes -1.f to fabs, returns 1.f
llSay(0, (string)posone); // will say "1.f"
```

Notice that `fabs` takes one parameter of type float. Functions can have any number of parameters (including zero). So, the following are all legal formats for naming a function:

```
do_something()
string do_something_else()
vector do_something_too(string target)
list do_something_now(integer number, rotation rot1, rotation rot2)
```

Two important features of LSL functions are that their parameters are passed by value and they support recursion. To understand the concept of pass by value, look at the following function:

```
integer add_one(integer n)
{
    n = n + 1;
```



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```
return n;
}
integer number = 10;
number = add_one(number);
```

So, what is the value in `number`? As you would hope, the value is 11. This is because when `number` is passed into `add_one`, it is passed in as its value, 10. Thus, any operations on `n` within the function are acting on a local copy, not on the variable `number`. Generally, this is what you want to have happen, but it means that in order for your function to return a value, you have to use the `return` command. If you had written `add_one` as follows, the `number` would still be 10:

```
add_one(integer n)
{
    n = n + 1;
}

integer number = 10;
add_one(number);
```

User-defined functions are covered in considerable detail at <http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=UserDefineFunction>.

The second type of function in LSL is library functions (Figure 8.4). They are built-in functions that are there to perform common tasks or to provide functionality that would be difficult to write in LSL directly. More than 300 functions are built into LSL, and more are being added regularly.) For a comprehensive description of all of the functions, check out <http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=functions>.) It is important to recognize that LSL functions operate just like the user-defined functions. They are available within any event handler or user-generated function, their arguments are passed by value, and they may or may not return a value. One additional aspect is that some of them have a delay value associated with them. This delay exists to protect *Second Life* from certain types of abuse.

lIAbs
lIAcos
lIAddToLandBanList
lIAddToLandPassList
lIAdjustSoundVolum...
lIAllowInventoryDrop
lIAngleBetween
lIApplyImpulse
lIApplyRotationalImp...
lIAsin
lIAtan2
lIAttachToAvatar
lIAvatarOnSitTarget
lIAxes2Rot
lIAxisAngle2Rot
lIBase64ToInteger
lIBase64ToString
lIBreakAllLinks
lIBreakLink
lICSV2List
lICeil
lIClearCameraParams
lICloseRemoteDataC...
lICloud
lICollisionFilter
lICollisionSound
lICollisionSprite
lICos
lICreateLink
lIDeleteSubList
lIDeleteSubString
lIDetachFromAvatar
lIDetectedGrab
lIDetectedGroup
lIDetectedKey
lIDetectedLinkNumbe...
lIDetectedName
lIDetectedOwner
lIDetectedPos
lIDetectedRot
lIDetectedType
lIDetectedVel
lIDialog
lIDie
lIDumpList2String
lIEdgeOfWorld
lIEjectFromLand
lIEmail
lIEscapeURL
lIEuler2Rot
lIFabs
lIFloor
lIForceMouselook
lIFrand
lIGetAccel
lIGetAgentInfo
lIGetAgentSize
lIGetAlpha

Figure 8.4: Library-function list



CONNECTING TO THE WORLD

LSL's real power is in its ability to allow an object to communicate and interact with the rest of the world. To cover everything you can do with it would require a separate book, but the following should get you started.

CHAT

In our first example, we showed that an object can chat to the rest of the world using the `llSay` function. This is handy for communicating to people near the object, and it can also be useful for local object-to-object communication.

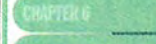
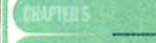
```
default
{
    state_entry()
    {
        llListen(0, "", llGetOwner(), "");
    }

    listen(integer channel, string name, key id, string message)
    {
        llSay(0, message);
    }
}
```

The preceding script is a simple chat repeater that illustrates the basics of scripted chat. All it does is repeat everything the object's owner says. When the script starts, `llListen` sets up the `listen` event so that the object can listen for chat. `llListen` lets you filter what you want to listen for by chat channel, name, UUID, and message.

```
integer llListen(integer channel, string name, key id, string message)
```

In the example, the script listens on channel 0, which is the public chat channel that all avatars chat on. There are a few billion chat channels so that objects can chat to each other without fear of message collision. The name and message parameters are left blank in this case so the script will listen for all names and messages. `llGetOwner` returns the UUID of the owner, so in this case the script ends up listening for public chat made by the script's owner.



When the script "hears" something that matches the requirements set in `llListen`, the `listen` event will be triggered. In this case we just pass the message that was heard to `llSay`.

Chat sent with `llSay` can be heard in a radius of 20 meters; alternatively, chat can be sent with `llWhisper` (10 meters) or `llShout` (100 meters).

Because there are times when you want to use chat but keep it private, there is also `llOwnerSay`—a special chat that only the object's owner can hear.

IM

There are times when you want to send a message to someone who is not within Whisper, Say, or Shout radius, or you want to keep your message private. The easiest way to do this is through an instant message (IM). IMs can be "heard" anywhere in *Second Life*, but only by the intended recipient. To send an IM, you need to know the intended recipient's UUID.

```
llInstantMessage(key uuid, string message)
```

If the resident is offline, the message will be saved until they log in next. Objects cannot IM other objects.

SENSORS

Sensors allow you to gather information about avatars and objects near your object. Setting up a sensor is somewhat like setting up a listen for chat. When `llSensor` is called, the parameters filter out the results, and if there are any matches a sensor event is called. The major difference is that whereas `llListen` is continuous, `llSensor` is a single request. The following script is an example using a sensor.

```
Default
{
    state_entry()
    {
        //Set up a repeating sensor, that once a second looks for any
        //avatars within a sphere with a 20 meter radius.
        llSensorRepeat("", "", AGENT, 20.0, PI, 1.0);
    }

    sensor(integer detected) //A sensor returns the first 16 items detected.
```

```

{
    // Say the names of everyone the sensor detects
    for(i=0;i<detected;i++)
    {
        llSay(0, llDetectedName(i));
    }
}

```

PAY

Scripts can also give and take L\$ (Figure 8.5). This is handy for creating vendors, gambling games, and more. In order for an object to accept money, the script must have a money event:

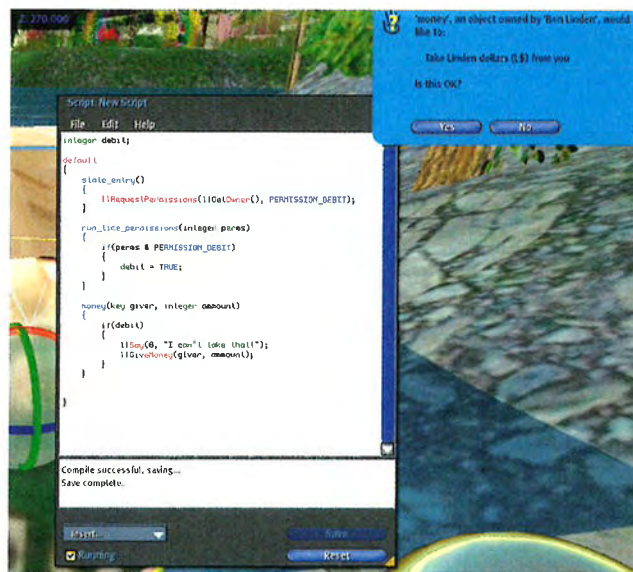


Figure 8.5: Giving and taking money

```

default
{
    money(key giver, integer amount)
    {
        llSay(0, "Thanks for the " + (string)amount + "L$ donation!");
    }
}

```

Giving money via a scripted object is a bit more complicated. The script needs to request permission from the object's owner to debit L\$ from their account.



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```

default
{
    state_entry()
    {
        llRequestPermissions(llGetOwner(), PERMISSION_DEBIT);
    }

    touch_start(integer number_touching)
    {
        llGiveMoney(llDetectedKey(0), 1);
    }
}

```

The preceding script gives L\$1 to whomever clicks on the object that's using `llGiveMoney`. This script will not work unless when the `llRequestPermissions` function is called, the owner grants permission to let the object give money.

INVENTORY

An object has an inventory (Figure 8.6)—this is where the script lives, but it can also contain most of the things a resident's Inventory can. The script can give, take, and use inventory. For instance, a gun would need `llRezObject` to shoot a bullet. A vendor would use `llGiveInventory` to give a single item, or `llGiveInventoryList` to give a folder.

The following is an example of a drop box that shows how to give and take inventory;

```

default
{
    state_entry()
    {
        //Allows anyone to drop inventory
        llAllowInventoryDrop(TRUE);
    }

    touch_start(integer number_touched)
    {
        //Only the owner can take it out.
        if(llDetectedKey(0) == llGetOwner())
        {
            //Make a list of all the objects in the inventory
            list contents = [];
            integer i;
            for(i=0; i<llGetInventoryNumber(INVENTORY_OBJECT); i++)
            {
                contents += llGetInventoryName(INVENTORY_OBJECT, i);
            }
        }
    }
}

```



Figure 8.6: Object inventory



```
//Give all the objects in a folder  
llGiveInventoryList(llGetOwner(), "Drop Box", contents);
```



PHYSICS AND MORE

Second Life has a server-side physics simulation, which means objects will fall, bounce, and collide correctly. A script can change how the built-in physics affect an object.

By default, an object in *Second Life* is "pinned." This means that if you lift it up and let go, it will not fall down. To make it fall, you can set its status to physical:

```
default  
{  
    state_entry()  
    {  
        llSetStatus(STATUS_PHYSICS, TRUE);  
    }  
}
```

An object can also change its collision status by becoming "phantom" with the `llSetStatus` function:

```
llSetStatus(STATUS_PHANTOM, TRUE);
```

APPLYING FORCES

By changing the forces on a physical object, you can control how it moves. There are several ways to do this; the easiest way is to use `llSetForce` or `llApplyImpulse`. These work just like your high-school physics class taught you: a force is a continuous push, and an impulse is a single, instant push. A simple example:

```
default  
{  
    touch_start(integer touched)  
    {  
        // bounces the object up in the air.  
        llApplyImpulse(<0,0,100>, FALSE);  
    }  
}
```



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VEHICLES

For more control, there is a suite of functions that let you change over 20 parameters to alter every aspect of how a physical object moves, from buoyancy to friction (Figure 8.7). The vehicle code is much more complex but correspondingly more powerful. For more information, check out the vehicle page at <http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=vehicles>.



Figure 8.7: A scripted airplane in flight



CONTROLS AND DISPLAYS

You probably don't want to interact with an object via text and clicks alone. Flying a jet across a sim will be tough if you have to type "up" over and over again. Likewise, no one wants to watch your slide show if it is just text describing the pictures you put inside.

TAKING CONTROL

A scripted object can take over the normal movement controls from an avatar. This makes it easy to create guns that shoot when you click the mouse, or a car that drives when you use the arrow keys.

A script needs to request permission to take over the controls from the avatar. In the special case of attachments and vehicles, permission is granted automatically, but the script still needs to make the request.

The following example is a portion of a very basic gun script:

```
default
{
    // If we attach the gun, request permissions; if we detach, release
    // control.
    attach(key attachedAgent)
    {
        if (attachedAgent != NULL_KEY)
        {
            llRequestPermissions(llGetOwner(), PERMISSION_TAKE_CONTROLS);
        }
    }
}
```



```

else
{
    llReleaseControls();
}

// When permission is granted, the run_time_permissions event is triggered
// Use this as a cue to take controls.
run_time_permissions(integer permissions)
{
    if (permissions == PERMISSION_TAKE_CONTROLS)
    {
        //We want to take the left mouse button in mouselook.
        llTakeControls(CONTROL_ML_LBUTTON, TRUE, FALSE);
    }
}

control(key name, integer levels, integer edges)
{
    // After taking controls, if those controls are used, take the
    appropriate action.
    if ( ((edges & CONTROL_ML_LBUTTON) == CONTROL_ML_LBUTTON)
        &&((levels & CONTROL_ML_LBUTTON) == CONTROL_ML_LBUTTON) )
    {
        // If left mouse button is pressed, fire
        fire();
    }
}

```

DISPLAY

Scripts can also control the appearance of an object. Probably the most used example of this is changing textures for things like slide shows. To change a texture, it is easiest to use a texture in the object's inventory. If you have a bunch of great snapshots, you can drop them into a box with the following script to watch them display:

```

integer i;

default
{
    state_entry()
    {
        // Change image every 10 seconds
        llSetTimerEvent(10.0);
    }

    timer()
    {
        if(i < llGetInventoryNumber(INVENTORY_TEXTURE))
        {
            i++;
        }
    }
}

```



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```

else
{
    i = 0;
}
// set the texture on the "0" face of the object.
llSetTexture(llGetInventoryName(INVENTORY_TEXTURE, i), 0);
}
}

```



HOW TO LEARN MORE

If this brief introduction to LSL has left your head spinning, don't worry! If you haven't programmed before, the promise and power of adding code—of adding behavior—to objects in *Second Life* can be overwhelming. Even if you are an experienced software developer, the quirks and unique aspects of LSL can take a while to wrap your brain around, but once you do you will have opened up entirely new worlds of possibilities. No matter what, you're going to be hungry for more—more knowledge, more examples, more people to learn with. Fortunately all of these exist, both within *Second Life* and on the Web.

Let's begin inside *Second Life*. The Event Calendar is a great place to start looking for help about LSL. Every week there are many classes on LSL, ranging from Scripting 101 to Advanced Vehicles. Not only do these classes provide concrete information on the mechanics of scripting in *Second Life*, but they also can connect you to the community of scripters within the world. By meeting the other students and instructors, you can build a strong network of friends and fellow scripters to question, to collaborate with, and to find new challenges.

There are many different communities of scripters within *Second Life*, from the professional content developers doing large real-world projects to the beginners gathering to play in the sandboxes. You are certain to find one that matches your skills and interests. Like other forms of creation within *Second Life*, scripting is the most fun when done with others, so use the time when you're learning LSL to meet other people and groups.

Classes in *Second Life* are only one resource for learning about scripting. Two *Second Life* forums exist as resources for scripters; The Scripting Library forum (<http://forums.secondlife.com/forumdisplay.php?f=15>) acts as a repository for various scripts, new ideas, and the basic building blocks every scripter would otherwise have to reinvent. The Scripting Tips forum (<http://forums.secondlife.com/forumdisplay.php?f=54>) allows scripters to share knowledge on a daily basis.

Both forums see daily contributions by a many scripters, and both are worth reading and contributing to. They will connect you to other scripters rapidly.

A more specialized support option is the *Second Life* Scripters mailing list (<http://secondlife.com/community/maillinglists.php>). It tends to cover very specific questions about or problems with LSL, often before they show up on either the forums or the LSL Wiki. The mailing list is a good place to lurk as an intermediate scripter, but really it's best used by expert scripters looking to connect with other advanced scripters. However, like mailing lists in general, it isn't the best resource for general searches or broad questions. Fortunately, another option exists.

That resource is the LSL Wiki (<http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/>), a wonderful resource for all things *Second Life*. Beyond the most comprehensive documentation of all LSL functions (<http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=functions>), it also calls out known bugs (<http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=KnownBugs>) and gotchas (<http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=annoyances>). Moreover, it has numerous tutorials (<http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=LSLTutorials>) and links to many of the scripting groups, mentors, and teachers (<http://lslwiki.com/lslwiki/wakka.php?wakka=ScriptingMentors>) in *Second Life*. Most importantly, the LSL Wiki is a wiki, so it is constantly being added to, always being updated by the *Second Life* community. As you begin to learn about LSL, you should become familiar with the LSL Wiki and contribute to it yourself. It is yet another way to meet other scripters and to become part of the LSL community within *Second Life*.

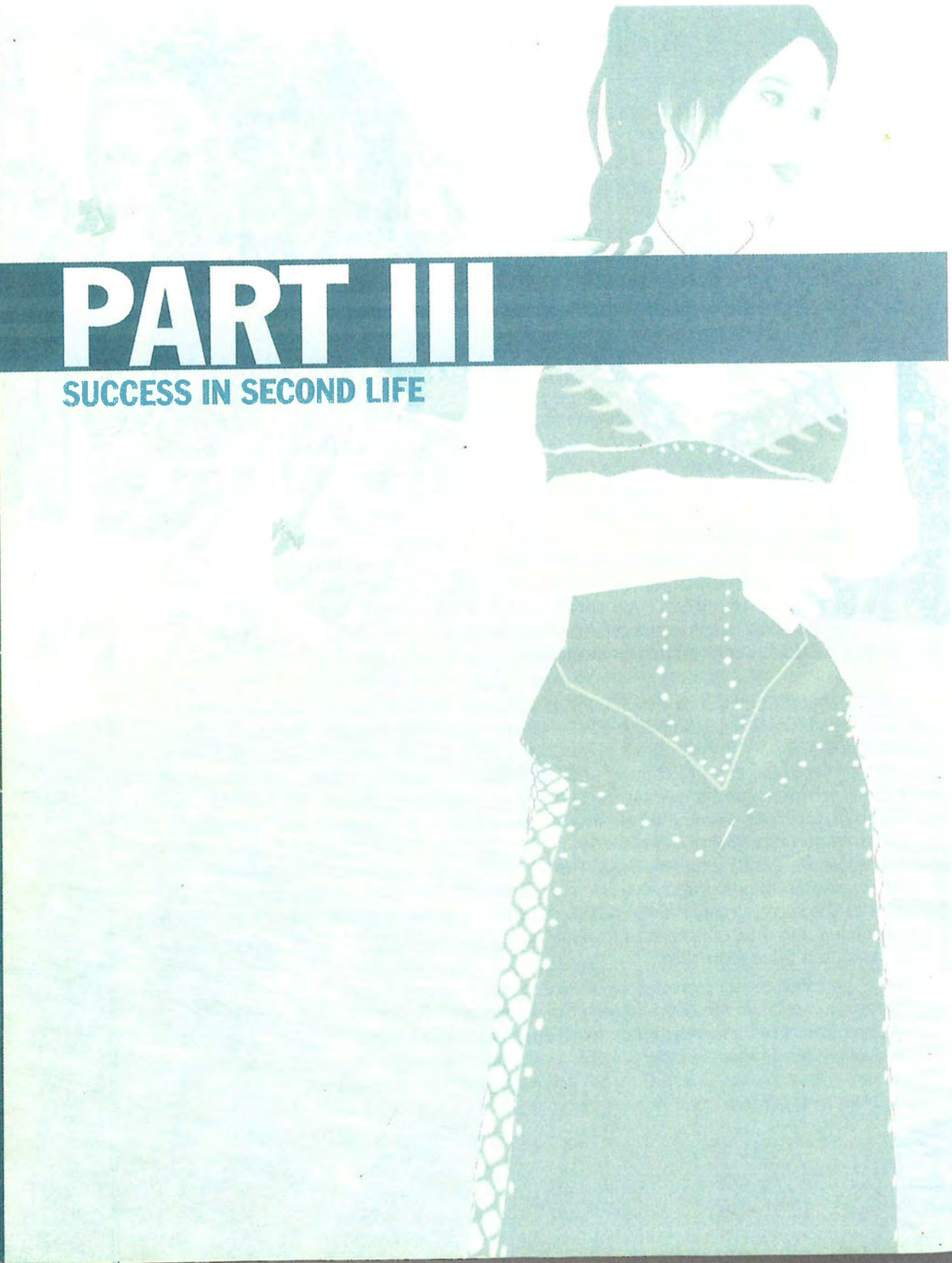
A final resource for LSL is the *Second Life* Education Wiki (http://www.simteach.com/wiki/index.php?title=Second_Life_Education_Wiki). The *Second Life* Education Wiki provides up-to-date information on the education and research projects going on in *Second Life*. Educators and researchers provide both a resource to scripters and a market for specialized scripts and builds. Campus:*Second Life* (http://www.simteach.com/wiki/index.php?title=Campus:Second_Life), as well as other university and education builds within *SL*, often brings groups into contact with LSL, either because their students are exploring LSL or because of specialized needs. As you become more confident with LSL, you will find educators to be some of the most collaborative and open scripters in *Second Life*. If you are looking for interesting and unusual projects to apply your budding scripting skills to, look no further than the Education Wiki.

Of course, no book can keep up with the resources constantly appearing on the Web in support of LSL, so new options will have appeared by the time this book is on shelves. Seek them out!



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PART III

SUCCESS IN SECOND LIFE



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CHAPTER 9

WHO ARE YOU?

What is best about *Second Life*? If you've made it this far, you know the answer: it is the chance to be whomever you want to be. Practically all the restraints and limitations of real life are absent. The virtual world lets you look the way you've always wanted to look via your *SL* alter ego—your avatar. It lets you play, it lets you work, it lets you fly. Apart from the few rules that apply when you're outside your virtual home (see Chapter 1), you're free to pursue the dreams you cannot realize in real life.

This chapter discusses some of the choices you can make in *Second Life*—there are almost as many as there are *SL* residents. It describes aspects of a virtual existence as seen through the eyes of residents. Their virtual lives are a good cross-section of what goes on in *Second Life* and should provide you with both entertainment and food for thought. The voices featured are those of the residents themselves—real-life people who have agreed to share their experiences and observations. There is a twist: the first three avatars featured all belong to Michael Rymaszewski—the writer talking to you right now. The observations of Michael Control, Frank Freelunch, and Delia Ellsberg provide a general idea of what life is like in *Second Life*; the other residents provide different perspectives.





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LOOKS, LIFESTYLE, AND CAREER

Most of the choices you make in the virtual world impact your looks, lifestyle, or career. However, the boundaries of those topics are drawn differently from the way they are defined in the real world:

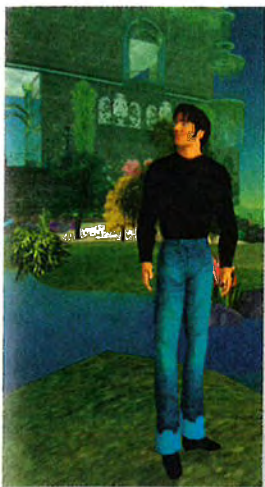
- ✦ Your avatar's appearance can be completely changed within a couple of seconds with a single mouse swipe; all it involves is dragging a new shape and outfit folder onto your avatar. What's more, you can do this as often as you like.
- ✦ In the real world, lifestyle is strongly influenced by income. That's not as true in *Second Life*. Every *SL* resident is rich enough to live pretty much the way they want and to do pretty much whatever they want. In this context, the notion of lifestyle acquires a different meaning: it mostly applies to how you spend your time in the virtual world.
- ✦ A virtual career works the same way it does in the real world, with one exception: everything happens much faster. The *SL* notion of full-time work illustrates this well—in the virtual world, full-time means eight to ten hours a week instead of 35 and up. Things are sped up to the max when it comes to building new stuff: an experienced builder can build a family house from scratch (including furniture, decorations, and streaming music) in less time than it takes to fill out an application for a building permit in real life.

One of the biggest differences between real and virtual life, however, is the amount of control you have over your existence. Virtual life offers you total control of everything—you even choose when to enter the world and when to leave, an ability that's sadly lacking in real life. You are truly the master of your destiny.



MICHAEL CONTROL

I've always wanted to be Everyman. I'm a professional writer in real life, and writers aren't average people—that's why they're writers, for better or for worse. And if, like me, you're stuck with distinctive looks (not necessarily in the fortunate sense), this yearning to merge into the masses can grow to obsessive proportions.



Second Life gave me that option: a ready-made, cookie-cutter, aesthetically pleasing avatar. I made a few adjustments mainly because I spent a lot of time fooling around with avatar-appearance tools. Lesson one—if you want to be Mr. Incognito in *Second Life*, stick with the default avatar and make just a few changes. If you don't make *any* changes, you *will* get noticed, as in "Who is that noob who still hasn't sussed out you can change your avatar's appearance?"

Although given Premium-member privileges by the generous folk at Linden Lab, I wanted to experience *SL* the way a shipwrecked sailor experiences an uninhabited island: no help from the outside world in the form of generous cash transfers, and no purchasing anything—everything I wore or owned was to be made by myself. To this end, I practically memorized the building tutorials and parked myself in an

empty sandbox. After a few hours, I was able to quickly build uncomplicated objects with simple animations (I ruthlessly copied the existing scripts that fit instead of scripting from scratch). It made me feel very proud, and then a woman appeared—a very beautiful woman equipped with a pair of wings that would be the envy of most angels. In the space of maybe five minutes, she built a beautiful double bed, complete with elaborately decorated headboard and footboard. She didn't invite me to try it out, and I slunk away, feeling very small. So this was what being an Everyman was about! Not so nice when you're looking for action.

Fortunately, this incident let me discover something I overlooked at the outset of my virtual life: you don't have to do a thing if you don't enjoy it. You can have almost anything your heart desires for free, or possibly for one Linden dollar. The only exception is when you want a virtual place of your own, regardless of whether you buy or rent. Personally, I didn't feel the need for that—for me, one of the most exhilarating things about *Second Life* is that you don't need the things you need in real life. You don't need a home and it never rains—in fact, you can set the sun to shine the way you like most.



Well, I had an advantage: this Michael Control guy shared his wisdom with me before I even stepped into *Second Life*. Among the things I heard was that everyone's sooo good-looking it almost hurts to watch.





I didn't want to be a hunk, though; I took the other route. Some fooling around with the avatar appearance tools, and presto!—I was your friendly construction worker from the bar that sells cheap beer. The standard white T-shirt, jeans, beer belly, shaved head; I threw in a pleasant but definitely low-IQ face for full effect. First observation: I was the only ugly guy in the whole virtual world. That got me noticed! But other people were kind of nonplussed, and whenever I talked to someone there was this unspoken question

hovering in the air: "That's what you look like in real life, right?"

Being a construction worker, I decided to do some construction work. I got my little First Land parcel and set about building a house. First I had to level the land and you know, it's not that easy—I guess that's why you see so many plots for sale that are advertised as flat and green and cost many times more than the original price. The thing to do is to first get a small area exactly right—flat and as high as you want it. Once I got one corner of my plot right, it was easy to work from there. When I was half done, I split for a beer break—you can get beer in *Second Life*, and you can get a fridge, too, so that it stays cool. Then when I got back to work, something caught my eye. I looked up and there was this beautiful house that wasn't there before, floating maybe a hundred feet above the neighboring land parcel. So I said a few words to myself and went to get another beer.

My favorite activity in *SL*? Playing games. I got hooked on the *Space Invaders* on Help Island—it was a fave of mine in the real world when I was a kid. So once I was done with building, I hit the games emporiums for a little fun. You have to pay to play most of the games, but almost every game place has camping chairs and money trees. You play for a while, and if you run out of money you just relax for a bit on one of those paying chairs, maybe also pick up some cash from the money tree if you're lucky. (There are money tree scavengers around who go from tree to tree picking up free money, and most times the trees are picked clean.)

I also like sightseeing, so I wandered around a lot and visited various places. The place I liked most? Well, you'll be surprised. It wasn't an exotic island or a Japanese village; it was that part of the mainland they call Grignano. They have a streetcar service there, and it wasn't until I sat down inside it after waiting at the stop that I felt at home in the virtual world. You should walk or drive or ride the streetcar in *SL* instead of teleporting or flying—it makes the whole experience seem much more real.



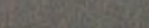
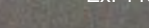
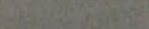
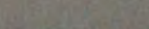
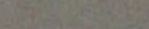
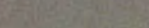
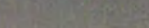
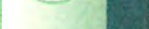
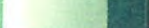
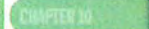
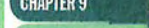
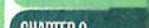
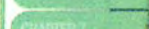
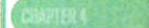
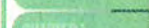
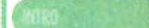
I wanted to see what it was like to be a chick in *Second Life*. Not a virtual *woman*, but the nice, girl next door who's popular with everyone. A lot of guys choose avatars of the opposite sex, and I wanted to see why.

I found out why right away. When you enter *SL* as a woman, you're young and beautiful, with a body many models would kill for. I was hit on for the first time maybe five minutes after I arrived—I was still standing in the arrival area. Despite my positive reception, I hated the original color of my hair and switched to jet black. When I tried out the freebie clothes from Help Island and found I didn't like them much—nice, but not me—I just dyed my jeans a different color, did some work on my face, put on some makeup, and made myself a nice-looking long-sleeved zebra-striped T-shirt

and a pair of stilettos to match. I can tell you, making a pair of shoes that look good with the tools you get is a drag; no matter what you do, the heel is always ugly. There are lots of good shoes for women on the mainland, though—guys don't have even a third of the choices, by comparison. Just keep your feet size 0: they look cute and most shoes are made to fit that size.

Anyway, to get back on track: those two guys I know—Michael Control and that fatso Frank Freelunch—complained no one ever wanted to talk to them. I know why. A guy has to look real sharp in *SL* to get attention. It's completely different if you're a girl. I told you I got hit on even before I got off the arrival area on Orientation Island. Well, after I got the zebra shirt and high heels and generally made things nicer, I got hit on several times with each venture into the world. Guys just bend over for you in *SL*—that's my experience. Example: I wanted to switch my First Land for a plot owned by a local business king who advertised he'd buy any First Land for a good price. Cool guy, him—hair in a topknot, samurai pants, naked tattooed chest—and he gave me 10% more than advertised for my plot.

I never had any problem getting help from anyone, either, and Control and Freelunch moaned about people not giving them the time of day. Well, what do they expect? If you're a guy and you're reading this, get this into your head: you're stepping through the looking glass when you enter *SL*. Here things are the other way around: it's guys who have to make themselves look real sharp to get any attention. And forget the clothes you get for free—they aren't sharp enough.



My favorite way to spend *SL* time? I like meeting and talking to new people. *Second Life* gave me a chance to use my French for the first time in quite a while—there are more and more residents from non-English-speaking countries. (Everyone will communicate in English of course, but you can quickly tell it's not their first language.)

CHAPTER 9



DESMOND SHANG



My *Second Life* experience is quite astonishing, really. I make normal, antiquated, ordinary things commonly found in the 19th century, just for fun. Everything from lamp posts to Victorian homes.

For some reason, this sort of thing seems to be popular. I never expected it. Perhaps for many, the "anything goes" culture that pervades the online experience quickly becomes irksome.

So rather than taking money out of *Second Life* I bought an island, just for fun. Perhaps three or four people would enjoy living in a 19th-century seaside village to offset the cost a bit?

I made a little tartan flag, opened the island Caledon, and the village filled up quickly. Suddenly there was a waiting list of about 50.

I didn't expect this kind of response. Nothing else to do but buy more land and make people happy, I suppose. The experience of it was rather like that of lighting a firecracker.

The community took off by itself quite without me, and as of this writing, hasn't slowed down. Within short order there were homes and shops, tea societies, formal parties, and this incredible sense of fun and growth. The sense of being a part of something both wonderful and larger than oneself seems to infect everyone.

I'm stunned by the community accomplishments. We have a trolley created by some talented residents that has become somewhat of a landmark, and the community raised thousands of real dollars for the American Cancer Society in the Relay for Life events. It's an honour to know them all.

The day-to-day is a bit like that of a handyman. I make sure Caledon is reasonably clean, fix a few things that need fixing, and answer questions. There are plenty of questions from the West Trade Imports Ltd antiques customers, as well. Now and then I add more land, which is always fun. It's all very low-key; I've yet to have even one nasty experience with anyone staying in Caledon.

Likely if I had done something else in the beginning, things would be very different now. This seems to be a perfect example of how a little decision has vast consequences down the line. I must confess, *Second Life* has been very much more rewarding than I ever thought it would be.



FRANCIS CHUNG



There's two things you need to know about me for this story to make sense.

Firstly, I love cars. I obsess about them. There's this route between San Francisco and Tahoe that takes you on some nice windy asphalt through the mountains—just a really great drive. I made that trip a few times in my Accord EX-R back in 2000, during my little stint in the bay during the whole Dot Com era. I have this recurring dream of taking that drive again in something with rear-wheel drive.

The second thing you need to know about me is that I'm a grad student, and the truth is, this isn't the glamorous and lucrative profession that they portray in movies and television. It's vaguely like taking a vow of poverty in the name of science. What this means is, tragically, that my means of getting around town consists of a pair of New Balance sneakers and public transit.

So this is where *Second Life* comes in—despite all its flaws and limitations, it does this one thing that you can't get anywhere else—it gives you this tool that lets you *make stuff*—a way to realize your dreams, albeit in a virtual space. One day I just decided, if I can't have a car in my first life, I'm going to have one in my second life. I'd live vicariously through *SL* until the day I can have a set of real wheels to call my own.



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And if I'm going to have a car in my second life, I'll be damned if I can't have the coolest ride around. To me, there's absolutely nothing cooler than a '60s muscle car: V-8 in the front, drive at the back, dodgy handling, and way too much power. Guts and glory. That's what I was thinking when I started out on what eventually became the Dominus Shadow.

This being *Second Life*, it would just be inappropriate to just build a car and call it done. That would clearly be too mundane. Forgive the pun, but this pony's one trick would be to do *everything*. It had to do all the tricks that you might want, and then some; suicide doors, a gargantuan supercharger, hover-car mode, the list goes on. I think I have this personality type that's not really complete unless I'm obsessing about something. For now, though, I'm stuck on cars, and I guess that shows through just a little.

CHAPTER 9



TAO TAKASHI

PART III

WHO ARE YOU?



I first heard about *Second Life* in fall 2005 in a report on the video blog Rocketboom. It sounded very interesting back then and I planned to join, but for some reason it took me four months to do so. But when I did it was immediately apparent to me that *Second Life* is my thing. Partly it's because of all the creativity you can see happening and you can take part in yourself, and partly it's because of the great community.

So I started immediately with doing all sorts of creative things like building my first house, designing my first T-shirt, programming my first script. After a while I heard about machinima and planned to check it out for myself. And as I have a video blog in real life I thought about doing the same in *Second Life*. And so *Tao Takashi on Air* was invented first as an experiment, but it's now an ongoing series. It covers various topics, like concerts from *Second Life* and real-life musicians, community events such as the *Second Life* Relay for Life or the *Second Life* birthday, and much more.

Doing machinima is great and challenging at once. On the one hand it's like most parts of *Second Life*: still a new field and you have great freedom in doing what you want. On the other hand you have to deal with certain limitations, such as not having a speech animation, or dealing with lag.

But while doing machinima is probably the area for which I am mostly known, it's not the only field I am working on. As I am a Python and Web developer in real life, I also try to combine these things with *Second Life*. One project coming out of this is the creation of *Second Life TV*, which reads RSS feeds from video blogs and displays those videos in-world. It's more of a research project, though, to experiment with different mechanisms of interaction, and thus might never be finished.

Also related is the creation of <http://planet.worldofsl.com/>, a *Second Life* blog aggregator which displays the most-recent blog posts from the *Second Life* blogosphere on one page. This gives the reader a quick overview of what's happening right now in the *Second Life* blogosphere and also gives new users a list of noteworthy blogs. Part of this is, of course, also my own blog at <http://taotakashi.wordpress.com>, in which I write about what I am doing and about what's going on in *Second Life* from my perspective.



BACCARA RHODES



Since making my first appearance in July of 2003 as Baccara Rhodes, I have been referred to as the "Social Doyenne" of *Second Life*. First and foremost, and setting the tone for my tenure in *Second Life*, I have tried to set a standard for taste, manners, and a life well-lived while building a personal community that I can be proud of. Although I always try to refer to this eloquent and elegant woman in the third person, she is an extension of my being and here I will refer to Baccara as I.

An early review from *The New York Times* in June of 2003 brought me to *Second Life*. From the beginning, it was clear that I would be here a very long time, so I laid a clear-cut path for the woman that I wished to be. In those early days, everyone learned together and shared each bit of knowledge—

each day akin to an adventure, each tidbit of new information shared willingly among new friends.

Prior to *Second Life* becoming such a vital part of my everyday existence, I was an event planner in my "real life" as well as being in the flower business on a



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wholesale level for many years. I had retired from those occupations; I had all kinds of visions for the road that lay ahead.

However, virtual life had other plans for me, and I found myself becoming the "event diva" within a short time. Shortly after I met Fey Brightwillow, one of *SL*'s earliest and best designers, we cofounded Spellbound Events. Early in *SL*, we put together the largest cohesive building, scripting, and animating team to date and staged the very first social- and community-service programs. On the Spellbound resume, you will find tributes to the imaginative stories of L. Frank Baum (author of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*) and J.M. Barrie (author of *Peter Pan*), as well as the largest weddings constructed in *Second Life*. Today I continue hosting large-scale weddings and social events at sim Stardust, as well as coordinating corporate and private projects.

Mash Mandala is my dear friend and *SL* partner. Together we operate the *SL* Depoz Ink and Stardust. First opened in April of 2005, Depoz became the first complete building center in our world, where residents could shop for everything needed to put together their own homes, and it expanded to a multisim location soon after. This has been a most successful collaboration as well as an extraordinary friendship across 2,500 miles. Together we operate several regions and make all decisions together in a "drama-free" partnership, enjoying good friends and good times for close to two years.

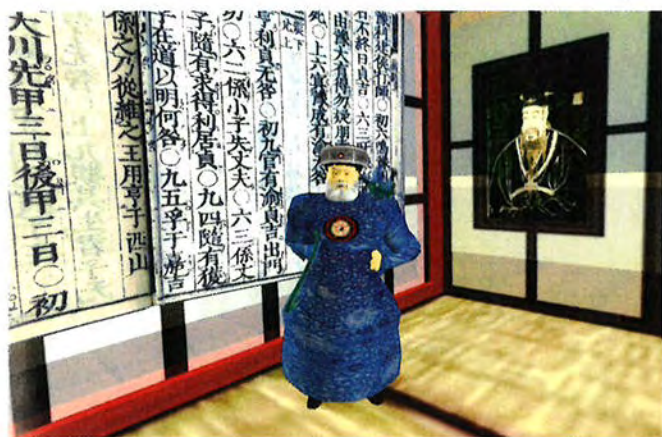
In *Second Life* virtually anyone can continually expand their horizons by having a battery of projects at one time. I participate in different arenas and today am preparing work with some exciting projects, such as languagelab.com and the new Eros Continent debuting toward the end of the year.

I have acted as project coordinator for some stages of the building of <http://languagelab.com> and will conduct user-interface classes for instructors who will begin learning to use *SL* in preparation for the teaching of English as a second language, as well as [teaching] foreign languages to English-speaking computer users. I am very excited to join longtime associate Stroker Serpentine at the Eros Super Continent Project by being the hostess and manager of a very special event sim for private group members to have special weddings and parties in the grand fashion for which I am well-known.

As one of the more "mature" [residents] of *SL*, I look at my world with a dewy-eyed wonder each morning. It is a world I have helped to create, and one of which I am very proud.



TARAS BALDERDASH



When I came to *Second Life* I didn't know I was on a spirit quest. I also didn't know I was a charity monk. But after a week of looking around at the miasma of casinos and clubs interspersed with homes, gardens, and wonders, I did know that *SL* was the next "big thing." OK, perhaps not *SL* itself, but the 3D metaverse of which *SL* is the best current implementation.

My avatar evolved quickly: first black clothing, then a beard, then something close to clerical robes using the built-in appearance editor. The result was a Russian monk avatar. But after another week the monk changed again, this time becoming the Taras of today: short, bald, tubby, 850-year-old Mongolian monk (sometimes shape-shifting into a shaman or dragon). In a world of 2D-something hard-body avatars looking for a date, it was natural for me to want to stand out by being an ancient and celibate curiosity. I took up residence at the Elven Maiden Mausoleum, a place I still visit daily.

I began to evolve a new *SL*-only culture. This culture is the Avatarian Way, and the organization formed to pursue it is the Avatars of Change (AOC). I rewrote the ancient Chinese Yi Jing (I Ching) oracle, creating a version for *SL*. This "Oracle of *SL*" contains many instructions specific to our world, like "Fly out, teleport back" or "change your head." The texts are stored in an Oracle Orb, which hands them out in exchange for charitable donations.

It was in these early days that I met Kami Akula. She became a major AOC patroness, providing us land for our monastery. The AOC has group land now, but we will always be grateful to Kami.

Today the AOC has 70 members, more than 10K meters of land, and is sending contributions to Support for Healing in *SL* and Modest Needs (<http://www.modestneeds.org>) in real life. We have eight sacred spaces and more than 20 Oracle Orbs around *SL*. I have started to instruct members in the Avatarian Way,



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given them the Avatarian Script to write in, and placed the first Orthodox Christian object in *SL*, St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Church. We are preparing the first "well-field community" in *SL*, and adding two more Oracles of *SL*: the Yellow King's Garden Oracle and the ancient Chinese Forest of Changes Oracle.

More info at my blog: <http://tarasbalderdash.blogspot.com/>.



ANGEL FLUFFY



I do many different things in *Second Life*, using it for business, education, social interaction, exploration, and of course relaxation. To me, *SL* is a sort of shared dream free of annoying restrictions like the laws of physics. The dream is the sum of our choices and thus is empowering to participate in. I believe dreams tend toward goodness in the long term, because negativity is ultimately self-destructive, and when it ceases to be useful it becomes ugly. My

dream is to understand the beautiful dreams around me...to make real the ones that only exist as ideas, and to improve upon the ones that already exist.

To make dreams into reality, I seek out other people who have good ideas, and I work with them to bring those ideas into (virtual) reality. I bring them into reality as a business, for fun, for a challenge, and simply for the joy of helping others. I improve upon existing dreams by first understanding them, then considering how they could better meet their purpose. I sometimes wonder what the purpose of the entire dream of *SL* is, and how I can improve that, too.

Each person creates their own purpose, both in *SL* and in real life. I think this is a large part of *SL*'s appeal—the ability to define your purpose free of real-life constraints. I firmly believe that no person is born with an intrinsic purpose—but that each person can make and then choose their own purpose in life. After all, if a purpose exists for you, yet it exists independently of you and not due to any of your choices, then how is it your purpose? Surely it would just be someone else's purpose which they have assigned to you? I believe that each person must one day accept the challenge of creating a purpose in life for themselves, and that some purposes are

better than others. Specifically, purposes which help other people and improve the world are better than purposes which don't. Each of us is challenged by life to choose to be on the side of the angels, to be for the glory, and then to find a way to make the good things from our dreams into reality.

That is why I am in *Second Life*, and what my lifestyle here is based on: making dreams into reality and making reality better.



IRIS OPHELIA



One of the biggest problems with the Internet since day one has been a lack of expression. Emoticons help, but there's always an uncrossable line where expressions, tones, and body language lie. *Second Life* has the means to break through it and, at the same time, remains just as far as any instant messaging service.

Most of us don't think about *SL* like a chat room. *Second Life* has become more than just a machine to support sellers and buyers. Subcultures and even castes from the real world, and also completely unique to this virtual world, have formed, building spaces and communities of their own within it. We have more than just businesses supported by these communities; we have magazines, newspapers, and mercenary-style blogs and websites, and even sets of unique celebrities. There is official government and policing, as well as militaristic and militia groups. There are preachers and criminals, weddings and divorces, dogs and cats. *Second Life* is a microcosm of reality. It's not the Internet, it's not a freeware game; sit down and think about it. It's something completely different. All this and, as it's still small in comparison, everyone is given much more power and much more potential to do good or bad than they are in the real world.

A lot of this goes without saying, so why would flighty little Iris waste her space on it? *Second Life* isn't just an IM program with bigger user pictures and emoticons. We have gestures, which move our whole avatar, play sounds, send messages, all depending on how they're set. The problem is that this whole world has been created, with so much to see and do and experience, and yet there's so little genuine emotion. The crying gesture is used as a joke 90% of the time. If you were really crying, how



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could you convey it in *Second Life*? The bigger problem that comes from this is that you can hurt someone and never even know it...or hurt someone and never feel the guilt you deserve.

How I earn my second living, how I craft my second look—those aren't the most important parts of how I live my second life. The most important aspect of how I interact in this virtual world is in emotions. There's a heart beating behind every avatar, including yours. We're not that far from the real world here, and we all have to make a choice to respect that—or ignore it. Here, there are fewer repercussions for a bad attitude. I choose to live my second life positively, helpfully, and passionately, and I hope you do too.

CHAPTER 9



CHERI HORTON



Cheri Horton might look like somewhat of a character—and perhaps an intimidating one, at that. I mean, she does have a pair of devil's horns, which, by the way, quickly became a permanent part of her appearance soon after she first began inhabiting the virtual world back in September 2005.

But the truth is, she is my genuine digital incarnation—a personal carbon copy who's made of pixels, yet exists as

levelheadedly, organically, and sincerely in 3D simulated space as my physical-world self exists in meatspace. The traits that seep effortlessly through the permeable boundary from physical to virtual space include everything from philosophical principles to sexual predisposition. Only difference is, I am biologically male. But because I am transgender and identify partly as female in the physical world, it's really no big leap interacting in a 3D digital environment as the opposite sex. In fact, it's a pretty comfortable fit, just like the devil's horns.

The horns are highly symbolic. They represent individualism and independence, as well as defiance toward didactic and repressive values and restrictive, narrow-minded social mores.

And let's face it—they just look sexy as hell, not to mention the fact that they befit my interests, which I give voice to in *Second Life*, albeit only under controlled and consensual circumstances, just like offline. But I'll spare the juicy details of my physical-world deeds for perhaps another book, and instead stick to the grid, where I own a rather large castle that houses the Dashwood Dungeon, the place where I take on clients as a dominatrix.

True, I get paid to dominate my in-world customers, but money is far from the sole incentive. My *SL* gig as a dominatrix—and just interacting in *Second Life* in general—also provides a good vantage point to observe and write about simulated sex, gender, and adult avatar relationships, which I cover for my web site, <http://apogeevr.com>. Because in a virtual space like *Second Life*, as it turns out, one is oftentimes granted a more candid glimpse of true human nature.

But hey, don't let the horns and the penchant for BDSM give you the wrong impression. Cheri is no rogue, raging beast. And neither am I. Quite the contrary: thoughtful, and polite, just like yours truly.



I am Forseti Svarog, aka Giff Constable, VP of Business Development, The Electric Sheep Company. I discovered *Second Life* in late 2004 through a Linden Lab press release. I was hooked just by reading: User-generated world? Open IP rights? Virtual economy? Creating entrepreneurs out of creative talent? Oh, man! I created the avatar name Forseti Svarog on a whim, and realized too late that once you've built a reputation under one name, you can't really change. For a long time, Forseti was nonhuman because I did not like the way male human avatars looked, plus I enjoyed making avatars from scratch. At some point, my friend Launa [Fauna] gave me a skin to try, and Torrid [Midnight] made some hair I liked, and Forseti evolved into a human.

For a long time, *Second Life* was primarily a creative outlet for me. I am a painter, and prims and textures became an amazing new canvas. I have not actually picked up a brush since discovering *SL*. I also enjoyed the entrepreneurial spirit within *SL*. I



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have been an entrepreneur several times in my career but at the time I was advising other technology entrepreneurs on how to sell or IPO their companies. *SL* became a fun hobby which kept my entrepreneurial flame flickering even in an amusingly non-serious way.

I have always been an art-history buff, but *SL* awoke a love of architecture and kicked off an incredibly fun learning curve. I started walking around New York

City translating everything I saw into prims and textures. I decided I wanted to become a really good builder and realized the importance of great texturing. I devoured *Photoshop CS2 Bible: Professional Edition*. I examined how other builders I respected, like Barnesworth Anubis, Cory Edo, Aimee Weber, and Neil Protagonist, were solving problems.

In late 2005, I decided to start a company around *SL* and figured I would start on the creative side, build up a reputation, then shift into the business gears. Right around the same time, I met the Electric Sheep team and realized that it was silly to create my own when I could work with such smart, talented, and fun people.

My fascination with *SL* originated around ideas and concepts. I never expected the many relationships I have formed within the community over the years. The friends I have made from all walks of life—you know who you are—have turned out to be the most wonderful surprise of *Second Life*.

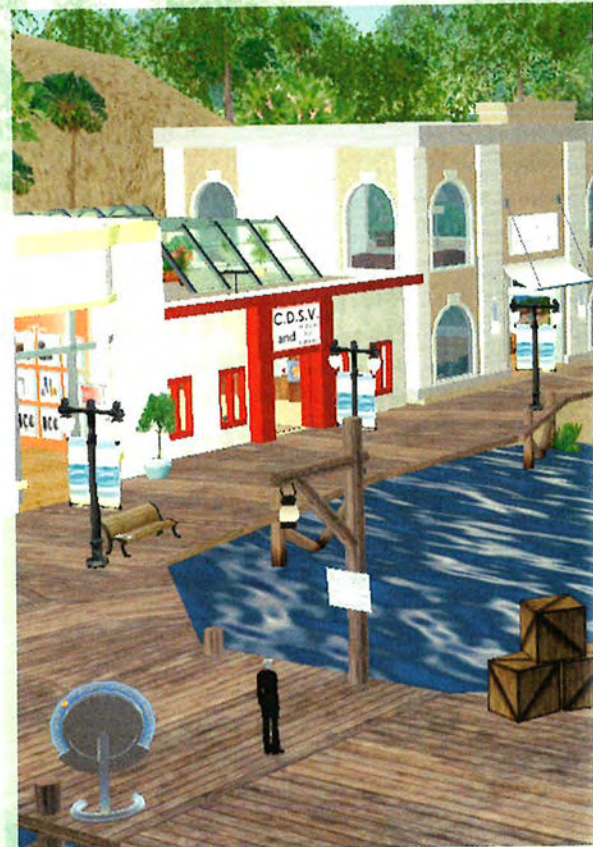


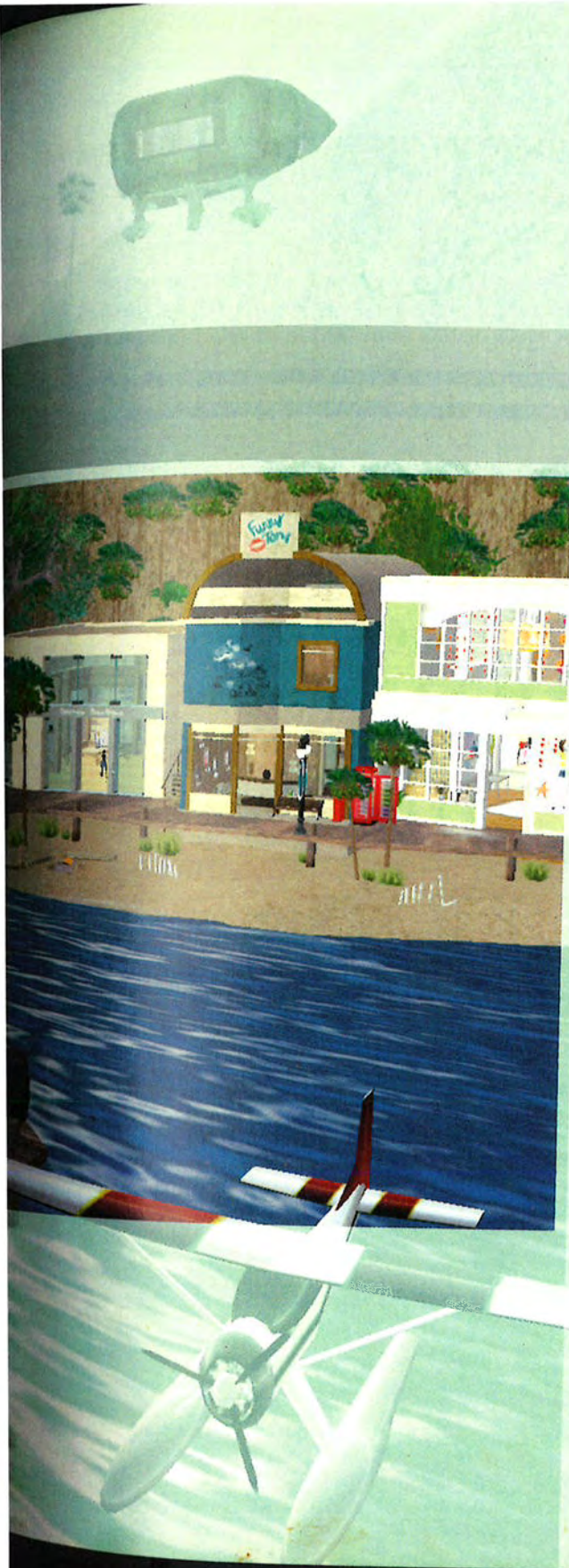
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MAKING MONEY

In recent years, virtual riches that translate into real-life wealth have become a very hot topic. There are more and more articles and stories about people earning a comfortable real-life income through their activities in virtual worlds. The vast majority of people who sign up for *Second Life* expect to make some money, and many freshly born residents hope to make a *lot* of money. After all, quite a few have succeeded, and their example continues to excite and motivate many thousands of would-be online millionaires.

So, can you get rich in *Second Life*? This chapter gives you a very detailed answer to that question. Briefly, the answer is yes you can—but only if you make the required effort. Getting rich in *Second Life* requires roughly as much effort, skill, and luck as getting rich in real life. Surprise, surprise! However, it *is* possible, and this chapter should increase your chances.





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MONEY: THE COLD, HARD FACTS

There's one fact you have to keep in mind at all times: there are 250–320 Linden dollars to one good old US dollar. That means it costs hundreds of L\$ to buy bubble gum in the real world—chew on that. The exchange rate fluctuates, but 90% of the time it has stayed within the limits quoted. It may surge or drop suddenly following an *SL* update that introduces a new money source/money sink such as a new stipend, or higher fees for sound and texture uploads. However, even then it is unlikely to break out of the 220–350 range in the foreseeable future.

The awful truth is that if you want to make meaningful money in *Second Life*—money that will actually make a difference in your real life—you must be prepared to put in quite a lot of time and effort. Simply getting an *SL* job isn't likely to make you a lot of dough; most likely, you'll have to be a little more skilled and/or inventive, and start a profitable virtual business of your own (Figure 10.1). *SL* job and business choices are discussed later in this chapter.



Figure 10.1: Owning a virtual business can give you plenty of real-life thrills.



ADDITIONAL INFO:

GETTING PAID

Many SL old-timers, when asked how they get L\$, tend to shrug and state they simply buy 10 bucks' worth of Linden dollars from time to time. This is probably the best thing to do if you treat Second Life primarily as an opportunity to socialize and have adventures of all kinds and colors (see "Money Realities" sidebar).



RESIDENTS SPEAK:

MONEY REALITIES

"It is possible to make money in SL, but it's like living in a poor country where the exchange rate to the dollar is terrible. The most I can make in a day is about L\$1,000, or approx. US\$3. I'd rather do a day's work in real life and get paid £150. I think if you really put your heart into it, you probably could make about \$100 a week from it, but it's going to take time, and a lot of hard work.

"You should view the game as a place for fun, or a profitable hobby. Don't think you're going to make your millions here, because that's very unlikely."

—stove Lu

"When you are first getting started, you are really better off just buying Lindens with a credit card or PayPal. Seriously. Work in SL pays less per hour of effort than any minimum-wage job in RL."

—Ceera Murakami



TWO WAYS TO PROFIT

Fortunately, you can enrich yourself in more than one way in *Second Life*. You can make money in *Second Life*, and you can make more real-life money through or



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thanks to *Second Life*. One often leads to the other. Making money in *SL* means you're earning money directly and solely through activity in the *SL* world: an *SL* job or running an *SL* business. Making money through *SL* means you apply knowledge and/or skills gained or perfected in the virtual world to real-life situations. In addition, you'll also encounter real-world companies making money on/in the virtual world, and *Second Life* business ventures making money in the real world.

Most *SL* members tend to think solely of making money in *Second Life*—after all, it's much more fun that way. However, *SL* magnates tend to make money on their *SL* activities both inside *Second Life* and in real life, and most professionals use their real-life skills in *SL*.

One *SL* resident who symbolizes success on the virtual path to riches is Anshe Chung, *Second Life*'s wealthiest denizen and owner of a virtual real-estate empire with an estimated worth of US\$250,000 at the time of writing—that's right, a quarter million real American dollars (according to a May 2006 *Business Week* article). Anshe Chung's annual income is rumored to be in the low six figures. However, it is driven by both real estate sales/rentals and a money-exchange system that converts euros and US dollars into Linden dollars, and vice versa. The commissions charged on this real-world service mean that Anshe Chung makes money both inside and through *Second Life*.

Another notable symbol is the *SL* resident Kermitt Quirk. His Tringo game stands as an example of how *Second Life* can translate into real-life financial success. Having created Tringo as a game to be played inside *Second Life* only, Quirk went on to sell the game to a real-world game company, which developed it for the Nintendo Game Boy Advance—this on top of selling many copies inside the *SL* world at L\$15,000 a pop.

NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

GAMING IN SL

Games of all sorts are a big feature of the SL landscape. You get a taste on Help Island—its take on Space Invaders is a real blast. Once you're on the mainland, you'll have plenty of gaming choices (Figure 10.2). For more on gaming, see Chapter 3.

These two examples underscore what many new *SL* residents forget about: *Second Life*'s virtual world is part of the real world. You do not have to be another Kermitt Quirk to profit from that connection. For example, if your poor sales or salary-negotiation skills are preventing you from making more money in your real-life job,

SL can serve as your training arena. Or if you're having trouble breaking into an arts-related profession in real life—if your ambition is to be writer (an iffy choice, let me tell you), but real life isn't giving you a break because you have no experience, a job with one of the SL papers could be the first step to a literary career (see the "Help Wanted: Journalism" sidebar).



Figure 10.2: Second Life is a gamer's heaven.



RESIDENTS SPEAK:

HELP WANTED: JOURNALISM

Hello everyone,

I am the publisher for SL Business and we are currently looking for staff writers, columnists, and freelance writers. You can reach me in-world, of course, and also by email: highlyfocused@gmail.com.

Here is a list of opportunities that are available:

• **Staff writer:** The staff writer works closely with the editorial team in the coverage of the monthly editorial outline. You will be given subjects from the outline to research and draft content for submission to the editors. This is a salaried position and requires regular attendance in SL. Salary is discussed in-world.

• **Columnist:** The columnist covers one particular area and is usually a subject-matter expert. A columnist's submissions



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will appear in the monthly magazine and possibly in the weekly supplements. Columnists are paid per column at a rate of L\$1,500/US\$5.



Freelance writer: The freelance writer picks up work that the editorial team may not be able to get to or lightens the load per se. Freelance writers that seek work from the magazine will receive subjects from the editorial team to research and draft for submission. Freelance writers are paid per article at a rate of L\$1,500/US\$5.

I'm looking forward to your response and if interested I'm looking forward to introducing you to the SL Business team. Thanks!

Hunter Glass
Publisher
SL Business Magazine

SL can also be very helpful in unearthing a hidden talent. If your everyday life doesn't give you the chance to develop your creativity, *Second Life* can be a very rewarding change of scenery. Chances are, sooner or later you'll be able to make a few hundred Linden dollars doing something you enjoy. Enjoyment is key to choosing the right money-making activity!

NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

MAKING REAL-LIFE MONEY IN SECOND LIFE

The Electric Sheep Company is a good example of a real-world corporation that makes money from Second Life. Its services focus on providing advice and solutions to real-world companies interested in building real business in a virtual world.



Money really does grow on trees. *Second Life's* virtual world features "money trees." Money trees grow fruit that can be picked for money, and they can be hit for up to L\$20 at a time; they're basically L\$-distribution machines meant to help new *SL* residents. They can be loaded up with money through donations from the general public, as well as interested parties such as the owner of a store next to the tree. Money trees are meant to draw people to a certain spot

(usually a commercial enterprise), and they succeed only too well: most often, they're tapped out. Unfortunately, this is partly due to *SL* resident abuse. If you've really set your heart on picking a fruit for L\$10 or thereabouts, you may have to wait for quite a while.



Figure 10.3: There really isn't such a thing as free money—not even in a virtual world.



ADDITIONAL INFO: FREE MONEY

"Free money" is a heavily advertised commodity in the virtual world. However, obtaining "free money" often requires as much or more effort than simply earning it (Figure 10.3).

You may also receive "free" money in the form of a stipend. There have been many changes to the stipend system. At one time, a stipend called "dwell" was paid



out to residents with the highest popularity ratings, with popularity being determined by the amount of traffic to a resident-owned destination (such as a store, or even a private home). At another, both Premium and Basic account holders received a weekly stipend. At the time of writing, only Premium account holders receive a stipend, and since Premium accounts cost money, the Linden dollars you receive aren't exactly free. Whatever new changes come to the stipend system, it seems more than likely that *some* sort of stipend will always be a feature.

It's highly unlikely all your *SL* needs will always be covered by your "free" money. Appetite grows while eating, and sooner or later you're bound to hanker for a top-shelf item whose price runs into the many thousands of Linden dollars. Patiently saving up stipend payments is a pain, and you might have to buy a few real-world dollars' worth of Linden dollars.

However, if you're not willing to stoop to that level, or if you actually *want* to make money in-world because it's fun, you have plenty of possibilities to choose from. At the time of writing, there aren't as many professions as in the real world—*Second Life* does not need the services of dentists or plumbers, for instance (however, there is at least one practicing psychologist). Don't worry—there are more than enough job types to choose from! The following sections cover *Second Life* employment and money-making opportunities, with comments on their earning power (at the time of writing).

NOTE

ADDITIONAL INFO:
THE TAX MAN

Keep in mind that you may be required to report your virtual-world income to real-world tax authorities. The exact rules may differ depending on your place of residence in the real world; make sure you know what they are.

As you know by now, the money you make in *Second Life* is rarely worth much in real-world terms. However, it may be still worth your while because inside *Second Life*, the Linden dollar enjoys purchasing power that puts the US dollar to shame.

Generally speaking, things are cheap in *Second Life*. It is a world in which—right off the bat—you get stuff such as free houses and vehicles, to say nothing about all the clothes and various other items. On top of that, you can acquire tons of cool stuff for free, or at the symbolic price of L\$1. And the "expensive" stuff simply isn't very expensive: at the time of writing, a state-of-the-art *SL* weapon firing "smart" projectiles costs less than L\$3,000, or US\$10. A few US dollars won't buy you much in real

life; but in *Second Life*, the same money buys you a whole lot of fun (Figure 10.4).

What's more, there is special magic in making money inside a virtual world. Earning the equivalent of a single real-life dollar feels more satisfying than making 50 dollars in real life. No matter how much effort you invest up front, money made in *Second Life* always feels free, and thus counts more. This special trait of virtual earnings is one of the most important reasons why almost everyone is willing to invest an hour to make the equivalent of US\$1, including many people who would recoil in horror upon being asked to work for US\$20 per hour in real life. It's not hard to imagine numerous real-world companies holding intense meetings, even as you read this, to determine how to profit from that phenomenon....

The bottom line is this: making money in a virtual world is much more fun than in the real world. To keep it that way, don't focus on making money in itself, but on doing something you like that just happens to be profitable.



Figure 10.4: A lot of the time, *Second Life* fun is either free or inexpensive.



RESIDENTS SPEAK: THE JOY OF MAKING MONEY

"If you enjoy doing something, the money eventually follows."

—Kate Proudhon

"One of the best ways to make money is to sell stuff, of course. Find what you are good at and what you have a passion for and build it."



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← *With time and practice, residents will begin to show an interest and offer to buy whatever you have made. That's how I was eventually able to afford land, by designing and selling aircraft."*

—Dustin Pomeray

"For most people, earning money is probably easier in the real world, so do enjoy Second Life, first and foremost. It is not a money-making tool; it is a game, a virtual community, a creative environment, and so much more."

—Elgyfu Wishbringer

In addition to the fun factor, the other big consideration in your choice of money-making activity is your money-making goal. Decide up front how much you need or want:

- ☛ Enough money to buy the *SL* items you want, and engage in activities you want. This sets your Linden-dollar needs in the low thousands per month. You can make enough to cover needs like that even by taking relatively low-paid, unskilled *SL* jobs.
- ☛ Enough money to cover the above, plus the real-life costs of a Premium membership, and possibly also low land-maintenance fees: To make that much money, you'll have to show some skill at an *SL* job, or run a modestly successful business of your own.
- ☛ Enough money to cover all *SL*-related costs, including low land-maintenance fees, plus put a meaningful amount of real-world currency in your pocket: Unless you're a genius scoring big with a brilliant business idea, a money goal like that means a commitment equivalent to a part-time job in real life. You have to be highly skilled, and/or run a successful, highly profitable business (Figure 10.5).
- ☛ Enough money to live on in the real world, nevermind *SL*-related costs: Face it—if that's your goal, you're looking at the time commitment of a regular full-time job. Not only that, but you have to be a razor-sharp businessperson willing to make a big up-front investment of time and money. Top *SL* animators can also make this income bracket.

In short, the only people likely to have the motivation to turn *Second Life* into a source of regular income are those who could easily make that much or more money in real life—but prefer to do it in *Second Life* because it's more exciting and fun. According to believable rumors, at the time of writing, the number of people living on income from *Second Life* is in the low three figures, and the number of people earning a meaningful real-life income in the low four figures. This isn't much in the scope of a quarter million active SL residents.



Figure 10.5: It isn't easy to make it big in Second Life.

NOTE



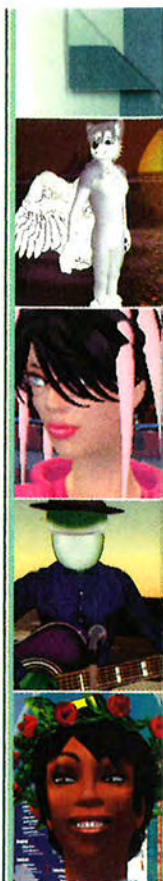
ADDITIONAL INFO:

LIFE IMITATES SECOND LIFE

You may find a real-world job in or through Second Life. It does not have to be in network marketing or something similar, either. For example, a business or a social services organization may be looking for contractual employees for an online program that's being run in Second Life's virtual world.

Remember, the name of the game is fun. If making a financial killing in a virtual world turns you on, don't let anything stop you. Because if something can, it will—that's always how it goes with truly ambitious goals.

Now let's take a more detailed look at how you can earn money in SL.



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JOBS

The *Second Life* Knowledge Base contains a job guide at <http://secondlife.com/knowledgebase/article.php?id=077>. It is full of information but isn't comprehensive at the time of writing.

The Knowledge Base's job guide classifies jobs as skilled or unskilled according to whether they require real-life skills. However, special virtual-world skills do exist: you'll find many *Second Life* skills are mandatory for certain jobs. Note that *SL* skills often assume a different *form* than real-life skills do: for example, being a good dancer involves having good dance animations and has little to do with your dancing abilities in real life. A *Second Life* skill may simply be a script that gives its owner a certain ability.

NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

SPEND MONEY TO MAKE MONEY

Many SL jobs require you to own certain items; others require an avatar with both outstanding looks and moves. Acquiring these could require a big investment. For example, to become a professional model, you'll need a great custom shape, skin, hair, and fairly expensive custom animations.

We'll now cover the most popular jobs in *Second Life*. Keep in mind that there are others, and that new job categories appear all the time. However, the professions listed here account for more than 90% of *SL* jobs.

CAMPING

"Camping" is *SL* slang for a job that does not require anything more than your presence. It often consists of sitting in a chair in exchange for L\$10–20 per hour, with money being paid out every 5–15 minutes. These very, um, virtual jobs were highly popular when dwell stipends were paid out, and it made a lot of sense to pay people to stick around. In spite of the death of the dwell stipend, camping jobs still appear because there's a real-life rule that applies in *Second Life*: people draw people. *Second Life* is not a densely populated world. When you look at the world map while you're in the world, you'll see that green "people" icons tend to form

clusters. Therefore, it still makes sense for many business owners—especially retailers—to hire avatars to hang around for the equivalent of a few real-life cents per hour (Figure 10.6).



Figure 10.6: “Camping” acquires a new meaning in Second Life.

GREETER

A greeter job is an upscale camping job. In addition to simply being there, you’re required to speak (type) a simple greeting from time to time, possibly perform a simple gesture such as a bow. As you would expect, you won’t make a fortune even when your avatar looks really sharp. At the time of writing, the standard salary is L\$50–100 per hour; you may also get tips. Naturally, this requires an avatar of above-average appearance, social skills, and charm. You may work as a temp—a couple of hours at a specific event—or you can work the *SL* version of full time, which tends to hover around 10 hours a week. Don’t expect to earn more than a few thousand Linden dollars a month—10 or 12 real-life bucks. To make a couple of thousand more, you’ll have to develop outstanding social skills and invest in your avatar’s appearance.

However, being a greeter can be lots of fun if you simply like meeting lots of new people and watching action happen. It certainly gives you the opportunity to make new friends and can be the right choice if socializing is what you want most out of *Second Life*. The temp or one-off greeter jobs can be handy if you have a Basic membership. They’ll let you pay rent on a little *SL* space of your own to store your prims. They also let you have a little pocket money for all those L\$1 bargains that abound in the virtual world.



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ADDITIONAL INFO:

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Jobs that involve plenty of socializing and meeting new people, such as greeter or event host, can be very helpful if you're trying to get your newly formed business off the ground. You're likely to gain many customers from among SL residents you meet through your job. Just don't be too pushy! Some extra info in your profile and a custom calling card work just fine to draw attention to your other money-making activity.

SECURITY

Security jobs range from being a simple bouncer to an armed bodyguard; as you might expect, there are many more of the former than the latter. The simplest security jobs pay as little as L\$50 per hour and usually do not require you to have any special equipment or to engage in any sort of combat. Bodyguard or special armed guard jobs are negotiable, but don't expect to get more than the high three figures. Very few security guards earn more than L\$150 per hour.

Do *not* view a job in security as an open-ended opportunity to shoot people. As explained in Chapter 2, this makes you as much of a miscreant as any offenders you're dealing with. If shooting people is what you crave, go to a combat sim. That being said, the job does give you some virtual authority and can be great fun if you enjoy watching what people are up to in their second lives. These are basically the only reasons to take a security job; the pay is poor, and you don't get the same opportunities to socialize as a greeter does.

Most security-guard jobs require a steady time commitment of a few hours a week. There are not very many of them around, because a security guard is mostly for show; automated security systems do the job much better, and there are models available free of charge.

SHOP ATTENDANT/SALES REP

Most items you can buy in *Second Life* are sold directly by their owners—via ads in-world and in *SL* publications, through automated vendors, or in stores. Most stores

employ automated sales, but at the time of writing there's a new trend toward sales staffing. There are two kinds of jobs within that category. Being a shop attendant requires your physical presence in the shop and usually pays a low (two-figure) hourly wage, plus a small commission on sales made. Being a sales rep doesn't require scheduled presence inside a shop—it's roughly the SL equivalent of real-life traveling sales reps. At the time of writing, neither job offers an opportunity for big income. However, this particular job sector is set to grow along with *Second Life*.



Figure 10.7: Developing a social network is crucial to business success in Second Life.

NOTE

ADDITIONAL INFO:
JACK OF ALL TRADES

If you're a new SL citizen without a defined skill that would let you choose one of the SL professions without hesitation, consider trying out various jobs or working at two or more jobs in different professions at the same time. This makes it easier to find your true SL calling and also lets you develop a bigger social network—possibly the number-one prerequisite for success in money-making activities (Figure 10.7).

EVENT HOST/DJ

Event hosts organize and manage social events inside the virtual world: games, parties, fashion shows, etc. Of all the SL jobs discussed till now, this is the first that



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has true career potential. To begin with, event hosts make decent money, and there's a big market for their services: business owners stage many events to attract new customers. Although the hourly rate isn't great, tip income is higher than a greeter's. In addition, event hosts often receive a cut of event profits. However, be warned that the job's money-making potential greatly depends on your skills and experience. Obviously, a good Tringo host who makes the game more fun attracts more players, and an experienced, well-known event host boosts event attendance simply by being there. However, being there is the catch. Attaining an income of L\$10,000 a month or better is likely to require a serious time commitment.

NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

HOSTING AS A STEPPING STONE

An event-hosting job is the ideal first step if you want to open an entertainment business of your own. Once you're an experienced event host, all you need is a copy of the game of your choice, and a space to hold game events. Game fans are likely to follow the host they like, so you'll have an audience right away. You may also rent both the game and the space, or possibly even negotiate a lease in exchange for a cut of the profits.

In return, you get a great opportunity to socialize in the virtual world. Event hosting makes it easy for you to build a large social network, which can pay off big time—your virtual friends are likely to show up at events you host and give you good tips. SL event hosts who also run businesses of their own are likely to profit even more: some of the people they meet at events become their customers.



Figure 10.8: Get basic event-host training by attending the kind of events you'd like to host.

A successful event host must have strong social skills. A sense of humor, good writing skill, and the ability to type fast are essential. Attractive avatar appearance is another must—the more attractive, the better. Acquiring custom skin and clothing is a priority, and custom animations and gestures are very desirable too. Naturally, if you host specialized events such as games, you have to know how the games work (Figure 10.8).

A DJ is basically a highly specialized event host. You have to understand how audio streaming in MP3 format works—if you don't, consult the *SL Knowledge Base* at <http://secondlife.com/knowledgebase/article.php?id=083>. Naturally, you also have to have real-world DJ skills: you have to sense what your audience would like to hear next and react accordingly. Disc jockeys are both well-paid and in high demand. If you're good, you can expect to earn several thousand Linden dollars for a single session (two to four hours). This includes the hourly wage paid by the club/casino/establishment that hired you, plus tips from guests. Talented disc jockeys might well make the DJ job their *SL* career of choice: the high hourly earnings mean that working just a few hours a week can bring in a comfortable *SL* income (see the "Working as a Musician" sidebar).

NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

WORKING AS A MUSICIAN

The Second Life Wiki's Guide to SL Jobs lists being a live musician as a viable job. It definitely is technically viable—basically, you're a DJ playing your own music, except that you need an instrument (an item attached to your avatar), plus a few custom animations. However, do not expect to make a living at this; at the time of writing, the chances of making it big as a musician in SL are roughly the same as in real life.

Event hosting and DJing are professions, not just jobs for unskilled workers. As you'll see, this also applies to many jobs listed as "unskilled" by the *SL Guide to Jobs*. Happily, it isn't hard to find entry-level positions that will let you gain experience (see the "Help Wanted: Various Fields" sidebar).



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HELP WANTED: VARIOUS FIELDS

JOB FAIR FOR ENTRY-LEVEL AND EXPERIENCED POSITIONS THIS SUNDAY

Expansion and growth! Two Island Sims of virtual entertainment need more Part Time staff. Job Fair is in the front courtyard of the Black Dragon Pub on VooDooLive Island. Managers will be on hand to interview and hire on the spot.

THESE JOBS DO NOT REQUIRE ANY PRIOR EXPERIENCE—TRAINING PROVIDED:

-  *Dancer/Model—L\$30 an hour to dance plus tips/FREE Designer clothes to participate in monthly designer showcase. Free Photoshopped portfolio and profile pictures.*
-  *Event Host—Day and late-evening positions available—L\$50 an hour plus tips*
-  *Slingo/Bingo Host—After midnight SL time—L\$50 a hour plus tips*
-  *DJ (Drum N Bass, Hip Hop, Rave, Rock, Salsa, Top 40, '80s)—We give you the software and training you need to get started. 4 practice rooms available at all times. 4 radio streams available.*

SOME EXPERIENCE NEEDED FOR THESE POSITIONS:

-  *Venue Manager & Assistant Manager—Six hours a week on-site. Knowledge of event posting and land tools a must.*
-  *Magazine Associate Editor (Must have Photoshop)*
-  *Writer for Magazine—L\$500 per 400 word article*
-  *Web Master—We have the domains and servers. We need simple websites developed and maintained to support our banner ad sales—flexibility and great income.*



← If you can't make it to the Job Fair, please send an e-mail to voodooisland@gmail.com.

DANCER/STRIPPER

The virtual world of *Second Life* features clubs and casinos galore (Figure 10.9). Practically all of them employ dancers to attract as many *SL* residents as possible. Most dancing jobs have set hours, but one-off gigs are a possibility and tend to pay more than regular jobs on a time-expanded basis. The pay varies widely and depends on a dancer's skill and appearance. As you would expect, a successful dancer looks great (meaning an investment in avatar appearance) and moves great (meaning an investment in custom animations).

In addition to an hourly wage, dancers receive tips. Truly good dancers derive most of their income from tips, even allowing for the 20% cut that usually goes to the event holder/club or casino owner. Top dancers can make good money, with hourly earnings in the high three figures.

In *Second Life*, the line between dancers and strippers is thin: many *SL* residents do both. If that's what you'd like, you should invest in suitable animations. Strippers make even more money than dancers do, and it's an investment that quickly pays for itself.



Figure 10.9: There's no shortage of clubs in *Second Life*.



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Given all the job flavors, it's not surprising that monthly earnings can vary widely. A beginner needs to try hard to make two or three thousand L\$ per month, while a top dancer/good stripper will make that much in the course of a single working session (two to three hours). To stay at the top, you'll have to repeatedly invest in updating your avatar's appearance, and in new animations. It's the ideal job for anyone who yearns to be admired and likes to see practical proof of that admiration.

MODEL/PHOTOMODEL

This is another job that should appeal to anyone with an admiration deficit in real life. Modeling jobs are relatively scarce, however. If you want to embark on a modeling career, it might be wise to start out as a dancer and continue making money dancing while you invest in all the prerequisites to become a successful model. These involve great shape, skin, and animations (including special poses and catwalk animations). What's more, you'll need to work on your avatar's appearance constantly; modeling is a very competitive field. If you're interested in finding out more and possibly getting a lead on your first job, visit one of the modeling agencies that operate inside the virtual world (use the Search function).

There are two types of modeling jobs available: modeling in virtual flesh during fashion shows, and working as a photomodel. Pay varies wildly. Beginners make peanuts, but that's usually offset by free appearance enhancers (clothes, animations, attachments). Top models in either category are skilled professionals who may make thousands of L\$ per hour and win prizes in competitions (see the "Help Wanted: Modeling" sidebar). Monthly earnings can reach five figures in Linden dollars.

SIDEBAR



RESIDENTS SPEAK:

HELP WANTED: MODELING

PHOTOMODELS WANTED

I am fixing to open up a studio of photos that I do. I want to post samples of work I do in the studio, so basically your picture would be put up on a wall with other pictures. I will pay you L\$800 for your time. Should be like only 10 mins for me to find a pose for you and take the picture. You will get a free picture out of this.

If you are interested in doing this, send me a notecard in-game with your picture.



← I'm only looking for about 6 people to do this, both males and females. I take all kind of avs. Look at my profile in game to find examples of my work. Thank you for your time.

—Sky Veloce

ALLURE TOP MODEL COMPETITION—ENTRIES DUE NLT SUNDAY AT MIDNIGHT

First Prize L\$25K

Please join us in this exciting competition which will determine the Allure Top Model.

Allure Modeling Group is pleased to announce this competition to recognize the hard work and effort so many in SL put into professional modeling.

It is simple to enter—send three photos to Bruno Buckenburger. One should be a head shot. The other two are completely up to you.

On August 21, Allure will select the top 20 candidates.

Those 20 will have the opportunity to practice runway modeling, receive a free portfolio from Allure, and will be judged by some of the most recognized and admired industry professionals:

-  *Bruno Buckenburger—President, BBVision & AllureNET Media*
-  *Jenn McTeague—Allure Modeling Group Vice-President*
-  *Janie Marlow—Clothing Designer, Mischief*
-  *Alyssa Bijoux—Jewelry/Accessory Designer*
-  *Sophie Stravinsky—Photographer, Sophiesticated Photography*

From this group of 20, five finalists will be selected to return and compete for the top prize and the honor of being named the Allure Top Model.

*******PLEASE** pick up a notecard with complete rules at the Allure Model Group office on the fifth floor of The Offices at Bareum Beach Towers: Bareum (150,99,67) or at Socle—The Allure Model Showcase Center: Bareum (211,9,45). Good luck!



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ESCORT

As discussed Chapters 2 and 3, virtual sex is a popular activity in *Second Life*. Predictably, there are plenty of *SL* people who make money from it—not only escorts, but also animators who create the necessary animations and gestures, and builders who sculpt sexual organs.

Making money on sexual favors is not easy in a virtual world where there's plenty of free sex on offer. A successful escort has to invest plenty of Linden dollars in avatar appearance, including the necessary sex-related attachments (your avatar comes *sans* sexual organs), and other special items (such as a Gensex bed). If you have the money, obtaining necessary gestures and animations isn't difficult (Figure 10.10).



Figure 10.10: *Hmmm, wonder if I can get two moans for the price of one.*

Escort “jobs” in clubs and other entertainment centers are advertised frequently and are much less shameful than in the real world. Pay consists mostly of “tips” paid by appreciative guests, usually minus a 20% cut for the event host/owner; sometimes there’s a low hourly wage as well to discourage absenteeism. Top escorts work the way top call girls do, receiving clients in lushly appointed private surroundings. Earnings go as high as L\$2,500 per half hour, but the average tends to be in the high three and low four figures per half hour. In either case, monthly earnings can be impressive, easily reaching five figures in Linden dollars.



THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

If you're so inclined, being a virtual escort has real career potential. The money's good and tends to get better with time; escorts don't age in Second Life. Many SL dancers and strippers make money on the side as escorts.

TEXTURER

A texturer uses an external application, such as Adobe Photoshop or Paint Shop Pro, to create original textures that are subsequently imported into and used in *Second Life*. Textures are what you apply to the surface of a prim to make it look a certain way (wood, metal, black, yellow, ridged, glossy, whatever). Texturing is a skill that is very much in demand, but there's also plenty of competition. Many builders are also texturers; however, if you're a texturer of outstanding skill, you can count on finding a well-paid job with a busy builder or clothing designer. You can also go into business for yourself—don't expect to earn megabucks on every original texture sale, though. Usually, custom textures are reasonably priced (under L\$100), and you'll have to sell many to earn a meaningful amount of money. A good approach is to market a no-transfer eye-catching texture at an appealing price, and sell many copies. It's the sales volume that determines your profits.

Creating textures pays best if you're also a builder, and your original textures are part of your new products. If you're definitely not into building, do your best to form a mutually profitable partnership with a talented builder. Your earnings may vary wildly and are determined solely by your creativity and marketing skills. If you're a mute genius, you'll most likely give away most of your stuff for free. If you're a marketing genius as well as a talented texturer, you can expect monthly earnings in the five figures (Linden dollars).



CREATIVE INSPIRATION

If you're interested in creating new textures, downloading the high-quality textures from <http://secondlife.com/community/textures.php> is a good start. You'll be able to see what's possible and gain a yardstick to measure your own creative efforts.



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CLOTHING DESIGNER

This is one of the most popular occupations in *Second Life* (Figure 10.11). Everyone tries their hand at it while editing their avatars' appearance, and very many *SL* residents take the next step and download the templates from <http://secondlife.com/community/templates.php>. The downloaded templates come with a tutorial that explains the basics of clothing design. However, if you're seriously thinking about making it a career, you

should attend some of the courses and tutorials offered inside the *SL* world. A few are listed in Chapter 2, including courses available free of charge. Look through *SL* Classifieds to find more.

A clothing designer is a skilled professional who has mastered the art of creating something in 2D and making it look good in a 3D environment. It is not easy to design clothing so that seams, pockets, buttons, etc. stay where they should when an avatar changes poses. Every clothing designer needs to have a few posing stands, which "freeze" avatars in selected poses. This makes it possible to get a better idea of how a clothing item will look when worn by a moving, dancing, gesticulating avatar. In addition, some clothing items may require scripting: a good example is a sequin dress that sparkles.

A *Second Life* career in clothing design is not for the faint of heart. If you decide to go for it, be prepared for very strong competition. *SL* residents aren't likely to spend money on items that are inferior to clothing that's offered for free or at the symbolic price of L\$1, and plenty of designer items can be obtained in this way. Earnings vary wildly: top designers make great money, and achieving a monthly income in six figures



Figure 10.11: In *Second Life*, everyone has a go at clothing design at least once.

isn't impossible. However, most clothing designers make much less than that. Raking in enough to cover standard *SL* expenses plus business-related costs (store rental, texture uploads, advertising) is pretty tough going.

NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

DESIGN SPECIALIZATION

*Many clothing designers specialize in selected items: dresses, jackets, footwear, etc. Some specialize as tattoo artists—in *SL*, tattoos can be created as clothing that's fully transparent except for the tattoo part.*

SCRIPTER

A scripter is someone who writes scripts in LSL—*Second Life*'s programming language. Many *SL* residents have real-life programming skills that they apply in *Second Life*, and there are many tutorials available inside the virtual world, as well as at http://rpgstats.com/wiki/index.php?title=Main_Page. Predictably, there are quite a few scripters in *Second Life*.

It's not easy to make money selling free-standing scripts, and most top-earning scripters are also builders. The best way to maximize scripting income is to write scripts for objects you created yourself, as long as you have the needed building skills. The scripters who don't do this tend to work in tandem with builders who lack scripting skills.

Given all these considerations, income derived from scripting can vary greatly. Top scripters who aren't builders but are part of a well-known team can earn a monthly income in the five figures; however, income depends on the partners' skills and marketing acumen. The hard truth is that adequate scripting skills plus good building skills are more likely to earn you good money than outstanding scripting skills on their own.

NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

SCRIPTERS VS. ANIMATORS

*Don't confuse scripters with animators. To put it very simply, scripters animate objects inside *Second Life* by using LSL; animators animate avatars by using an external application (most often *Poser*).*



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BUILDER/LANDSCAPER

The term "builder" covers a very wide variety of jobs, depending on the builder's specialization. A furniture maker is a builder; so is an architect; and so are jewelry makers, vehicle builders, and gunsmiths.

Every *SL* resident can have a shot at becoming a builder; it's easy to learn how to make basic, one-prim objects with *SL*'s prim-editing tools. However, thereafter the learning curve becomes much steeper. It takes experience to know up front what kind of prim is best for a task at hand. Chapter 7 is full of advice for everyone interested in creating objects inside *Second Life*.

A builder is someone who has conquered the steepening learning curve and reached the level of skill necessary to create attractive and useful items out of prims. A truly skilled builder can create attractive and useful items using the smallest number of prims possible. Prim density is always a concern because a simulator can handle a limited number of prims.

As mentioned earlier, many builders are also scripters, and quite a few are texturers. Skill requirements in each area can vary wildly. For example, a furniture maker has to be a good builder and texturer, but the scripting skill required is next to none (a simple "sit down" script may be copied from the chair in the Library). On the other hand, a gunsmith needs to be a good scripter to build weapons capable of dealing with increasingly sophisticated shields and security systems. Extra skills in other areas come in handy, too—for instance, an architect who builds prefab houses and includes streamed music and sound effects for opening/closing doors will enjoy an edge over a less-versatile competitor.

Most builders have their own businesses—sales outlets for what they build. Thus, the amount of money you can make as a builder in *Second Life* depends not only on your inventiveness and technical skills, but also on your marketing and sales acumen. Builders who are good in all of the mentioned areas can reach a monthly income in the six figures.

NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDERS

Becoming a builder is one of the most exciting career choices in Second Life. Talented builders are the creators of most of the virtual world's content; in that way, they're the creators of fun for everyone else, as well as for themselves.

Landscapers are builders who are also accomplished at using *SL*'s slightly tricky land-editing tools, and at creating plants (Figure 10.12). A realistic-looking plant involves not only delicate prim manipulation, but also scripting (so that it moves in the wind, and so on) and frequently the creation of a new custom texture or two.



Figure 10.12: *Creating realistic-looking plants is a highly specialized skill in Second Life.*

ANIMATOR

Animators are the most highly paid among single-skill professionals. Creating complex animations for *SL* avatars is a difficult job requiring the mastery of an external application: the *SL* Guide to Jobs has the details. There are relatively few animators inside the virtual world of *Second Life*. At the same time, there is a big and constantly growing demand for new animations. Good animators can earn monthly incomes in the six figures more easily than specialists in any other profession.

Many *SL* residents are inspired to try creating animations. If you're interested, a good place to start is the Animation Guide at <http://secondlife.com/knowledgebase/article.php?id=050>. Predictably, it's not an easy career choice if you don't have the real-life skills required. It is a highly specialized job: with few exceptions, the rule is that either you're an animator before you even enter *Second Life*, or you aren't. However, don't let this discourage you if you've set your heart on animating!



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REAL-ESTATE DEVELOPER AND SPECULATOR

In real life, real estate is regarded as a secure if long-term investment. In *Second Life*, real estate is a secure investment that pays off much more quickly. Real-estate speculation offers such attractive opportunities that almost everyone dabbles in it, and many *SL* people make it a permanent side occupation that delivers a steady stream of profits.

Becoming a big fish in the *SL* real-estate pool requires a substantial investment up front: the really big players order entire new islands from Linden Lab. Many real-estate barons are also skillful landscapers, while others order professional landscaping services from a specialist. Once land has been acquired, it is developed to increase its resale/rental value.

The most basic and common form of land development is flattening land throughout the parcel and applying a green grass texture. At the time of writing, the asking price for a First Land parcel like that hovers around L\$3,000—a profit of nearly 600% (and that's after a drop in price of about L\$2,000 over just a few weeks). However, professional real-estate developers go much further than that, often creating elaborate

themed sims complete with custom-made, exotic vegetation; professionally scripted, sparkling waterfalls; and sandy beaches (Figure 10.13). Top developers also offer to customize land to client requests. Of course, all this carries a hefty price. Searching the Classifieds for land sales or clicking on the parcels offered for sale on the world map will quickly give you an idea of how things look, but here's just one example: at the time of writing, a nice, waterfront parcel of modest size (1,024 square meters) rents



Figure 10.13: *Second Life* lets you rent your own little virtual paradise for just a few dollars a week.

for approximately L\$1,500 a week, and sells for between L\$35,000 and L\$50,000 depending on location.

NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

In SL real estate, location rules just like it does in the real world. All waterfront land is especially expensive, followed by parcels that adjoin a public road and thereby guarantee easy access and at least a little view.

Real-estate developers come in many shapes and sizes. Some offer land complete with rental buildings. Others specialize in developing shopping malls and commercial centers, and renting out or selling space within to business owners. There are roughly as many varieties of real-estate opportunities as there are in real life—some may be missing, but there are *SL*-specific opportunities instead: You may not make any money on garages and parking lots, because an *SL* resident can fit a brigade of tanks or a fleet of spaceships into a single Inventory folder or storage prim. However, you can make good money on tiny 16-square-meter lots; renting out a lot like that for advertising purposes in a high-traffic area can bring in a very nice income.

The real-estate business market in *Second Life* is very exciting, with many new players making virtual fortunes—or going bust. Those that fail are usually land syndicates formed by groups of *SL* denizens for the purpose of creating a special community or micronation. Political infighting in a virtual reality is just as common as in the real world, though in *SL* any sad consequences are less painful.

CURRENCY TRADER/FINANCIAL SPECULATOR

Currency traders are businesspeople making real-world money by exchanging Linden dollars for US dollars or euros. Some trading agencies, including Linden Lab's LindeX, make a profit by charging a small commission on transactions; others, like Anshe Chung's currency exchange, make money on the spread between buy and sell rates. What's more, the Linden dollar's exchange rate fluctuates very sharply when compared against real-world currencies. These fluctuations represent good profit potential to financial speculators (see the "Currency Trading and Financial Speculation" sidebar). It does not seem proper to recommend such career choices in this guide: although the profit potential is very healthy, a misfortune can get you in real trouble, just as in the real world.



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If you want to make money on your money in a passive way, you can open an account with one of *Second Life's* financial institutions. *SL* banks admit to being high-risk institutions, but they pay excellent interest rates. Banking operations are usually conducted via automated tellers that dispense notecards with instructions (see Figure 10.14).

Always keep in mind that if you engage in any kind of financial speculation inside *Second Life*, you may lose your entire investment. Bank owners disclaim any responsibility for deposits and openly advise *SL* residents not to bet their life savings. What would you expect? They're virtual banks, after all.

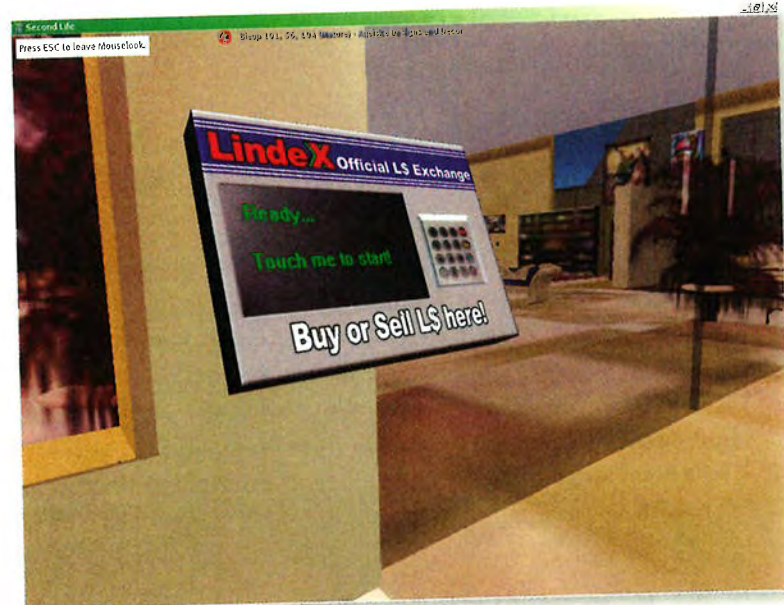


Figure 10.14: *Second Life* offers you the chance to bank via virtual ATMs.

NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

WALL STREET IT AIN'T—YET

At the time of writing, Second Life does not have a stock exchange: the only institution claiming to be one is an operation for trading public shares of a single company (read: a real-estate speculator).

SIDEBAR



RESIDENTS SPEAK:

CURRENCY TRADING AND FINANCIAL SPECULATION

"If you're going to sell Lindens, use a limit sell, timed so you catch the market when it's going down. Your Lindens may take you a few days"



← to sell rather than being instant, but the effect is that you get about 6% more US dollars for your money. Getting a 6% bonus for 5 minutes work reading the LindeX is very worthwhile! Also, I would suggest avoiding using 3rd party exchange sites. The reason for this is simple—their prices will probably be higher than LL charges, because instead of just LL taking a cut, both LL and the site operator take a cut. There are two important business principles here: firstly, 'where possible, cut out the middleman,' and secondly, 'buy low, sell high.'

"If you're not going to sell your Lindens, yet, and you can afford to lose them entirely, stick them in Ginko or another high-risk/high-gain savings account. You might lose your money; there is always a chance of that. On the other hand, if you use it right, you can earn 3.3% interest per month on your balance, which almost offsets the 3.5% fee for selling L\$. I'm not sure if this is a good way to make money on its own, but I think that if you get that 3.3% interest on all L\$ before you sell them, and you time your selling of L\$ to sell when the market is right, using a limit sell, your chances of making money are much better."

—Angel Fluffy

"I'm confused why people don't believe that banks like Ginko can pay their depositors such a robust interest rate. It's Second Life. Where else can someone make an investment of some time and 10 Lindens (to upload a texture), then sell 1,000 copies of their creation for 100 Lindens each, grossing L\$100,000 from their small initial investment?"

"As I explained in my article in The Democrat, banks in Second Life make money not only from high-interest loans (compared to real-world banks), but also from currency speculation, land deals, and lotteries. These are all, undoubtedly, risky 'investments,' but the fact is that some banks are able to return high interest rates to depositors. Ginko, for example, has been around for 2 years."

—Marla Truss

BECOMING A BUSINESS OWNER

Without question, the most rewarding way to make money in *Second Life* is by running your own business. It is rewarding in more ways than one, too. You'll make



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more money working for yourself than working for someone else, and by the very act of creating a business you'll be adding to the virtual world's content.

Starting a business is really easy. You do not need to go through any legalities; you don't even need a Premium account or any space of your own—you can advertise and promote your services through the Classifieds and in person. Remember that a well-developed social network is key!

If you do require space—for storage if nothing else—you can rent it. Special deals are often available as developers open up new malls and shopping centers (Figure 10.15).

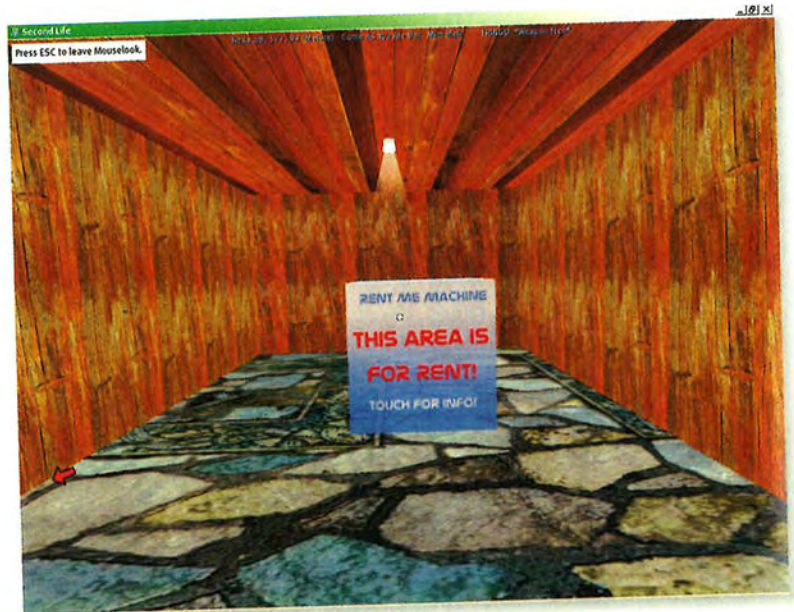


Figure 10.15: Newly opened commercial centers often offer great rental deals to attract business.

NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

FUN BEFORE PROFIT

Running a virtual business has a special magic all of its own; don't pressure yourself into thinking that you must make lots of money. Enjoy what you're doing, first and foremost.

SIDEBAR



RESIDENTS SPEAK:

RUNNING A BUSINESS IN SECOND LIFE

"The big income spinners are land [barons], although you won't make any friends doing that. Some DJs get paid quite well, but you have to



← have the huge amount of time and resources to do it. Designing a line of clothes/furniture, etc. takes time but can pay dividends if you're willing to invest in it."

—Samia Perun

"A lot of people get the impression from their first land sale...that moving land in SL is pretty simple. It's not. To effectively make money as a land baron in SL you have to be able to invest quite a lot of money in tier. Depending on [values] and buyer trends, you can end up sitting on plots of land for indeterminate amounts of time.

"The best thing you can do in SL is develop content that people enjoy. Back in November of last year when I started out, I did club/sim management and made a little cash for a couple of months while I learned the system and applied my inherent talents to it...but in January of this year, I developed my very first product, which turned out to be quite a hit. I haven't paid my tier out of my own pocket ever since...and I'm at the US\$125.00-a-month tier level now.

"Business development in SL can be pretty simple. Many people simply rent mall space and sell their products there. There are thousands of malls in the world, so there's never really an end to mall space availability, and it's relatively cheap. The downside to mall space rental is you have no control over directing traffic to your products.

"However, the best thing you can do if you want to make and sell products is to go Premium, and buy a nice plot of first land. This won't cost you any more than 10 dollars a month (easily payable even on a dancer's in-world salary).

—Suzanna Soyinka

The plan that works best for most SL residents is to try out a few different occupations before choosing the one that's most enjoyable and profitable and turning it into a business. Also, most residents like the role-playing aspect of making a living in *Second Life*. Although they could easily fund a business effort from the everyday spare change in their pockets, they prefer to act as if SL earnings were their only possible source of income. A fledgling business owner often spends several hours a week working as an event host or a dancer to cover business startup expenses that would not buy a cup of coffee in the real world.



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NOTE



ADDITIONAL INFO:

PLAY THE FIELD

Do not limit yourself to any single occupation; try your hand at several to see what they're like. Many SL residents continue to earn income from multiple sources long after their primary moneymaker has taken off. Note also that most successful business owners tend to invest in real estate.

Starting a business is easy; what's not easy is making it a permanent and profitable concern. The final section of this chapter contains advice from a prominent SL businesswoman on how to achieve long-term success.

SECOND LIFE PROFESSIONALISM

Aimee Weber is the founder of Aimee Weber Studio Inc. (www.aimeeweber.com) and is one of *Second Life's* most well-known and respected developers. Recognized for her considerable achievements in virtual fashion, education, marketing, machinima, and writing, Aimee is considered one of the foremost experts in virtual entrepreneurship. What follows is her advice.

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Intro to Advanced Business in *Second Life*; my name is Aimee Weber and I will be your professor today. To attend this class, you should already have an impressive mastery of at least one prerequisite skill in SL, such as scripting, building, texturing, terraforming, or project management. I know many of you are quite the hotshots in one or more of these areas, but today we will address the time-honored question of, "How can my skillz pay the billz?"

Going professional in *Second Life* may seem like the start of a dream job. You get to tinker with the bleeding edge of 3D Internet technology while at home, in your pajamas, and possibly drunk. But before you quit your day job, you're going to have to make some changes in your perspective on SL and how you present yourself to the virtual world.

Now I know from talking to many of you that these changes don't sit well with the fiercely libertarian nature of the *Second Life* demographic. You guys don't want to dance for the man, and that's fine. But try to stick with me here and maybe we can strike up enough compromise between being a freewheeling beatnik and a corporate tool to get the bills paid.

When a client is considering you for a project, they're taking a great risk in terms of money, time, and even reputation. It's therefore upon you to make them feel as comfortable and safe as possible choosing you for the job. Nothing accomplishes this like a proven history of achievement with a sea of happy customers in your wake. While your status as *SL-Foo Grand Master Ninja* will aid you greatly, you should focus on demonstrating a few other professional traits:

Finish your projects—This stream of consciousness we call a virtual world is littered with half-finished experiments and muses. While many are technically brilliant, they will likely give the impression that you're not a "follow-through" kinda person. Go ahead and take the extra steps to finish a project, document it, package it, and maybe even market it. This tells employers that you're willing and able to stick with them from start to finish on a project.

Meet your deadlines—You would be shocked at how much a deadline can change your perspective on work in *Second Life*. *SL* can be fun when you have all the time in the world to tinker and experiment, but now people are adjusting their schedules around your promised delivery date. You'll need to learn to prioritize and if necessary, learn to let go of low-priority features. I know some of you want things to be just perfect, but a project that arrives a month late is far from perfect. You can still take breaks to play *World of Warcraft*, watch *Doctor Who*, or look for Butterflies Gone Wild websites, but now you must budget that time!

Get experience, no matter what—You ask the Zen Master how you can get a job without experience, and how you can get experience without a job? The Zen Master says, "work for free." While *Midnight City* was (and still is) a nonprofit project for me, it has been invaluable in proving that I'm capable of managing a large-scale project. Charitable organizations like Relay for Life can also provide high-profile opportunities to spotlight your work and to get gleaming recommendations. Just remember, even though you're working for free, don't act as if you are working for free. The objective here is to get a reputable organization to vouch for your talent and professionalism, so make sure that's what they see!

Market yourself—Doing all the right things won't help you if nobody knows you're doing all the right things. Increase your visibility. Prospective employers are not looking for modesty; they need to know what you've done in the past and what you can do for them in the future.

Build a portfolio—Prospective clients are prepared to pay you money to do work for them, so don't start your relationship by making them work to learn about you. You should have a nicely organized portfolio that includes descriptions, photos, testimonials, and client contacts from your past projects. If your work has appeared in the press, be sure to include links.



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Get a website—I won't say that this is essential, but it's a tremendous help in creating the perception that you are a stable entity in the industry. Having the website could also increase your Google visibility associated with *Second Life* and may land you the occasional contract deal right off the street. If you can't afford a website, consider entering yourself and your accomplishments on the SL History Wiki (http://history.secondserver.net/index.php/Main_Page).

Network—I know many residents are self-proclaimed recluses and the idea of networking feels unnatural, insincere, or downright painful to them. The truth is, the more people you can stay in contact with on a regular basis, the more opportunities will likely come your way. This is a fact of life. If attending the occasional virtual mixer feels like torture, consider hiring somebody a bit more boisterous who can act as your agent while you continue your monastic pursuits.

Operate as a business—Now this part I hate with a capital B. But if I can do it, you can do it...and by that I mean if I *have* to do it, you damn well had better do it! Seriously though, real-world organizations have a standard process by which they get things done. You will always be in a stronger position if you can integrate yourself into their process rather than being a confusing exception in their corporate flow control. That means yummy paperwork:

Write proposals—These can vary widely depending on the task at hand, but most will include a statement describing your client's problem, your solution to the problem, a breakdown of cost, your needs/requirements, and some amount of self-promotion describing why you are the best person for the job.

Submit invoices—Don't be caught off guard when a client requests an invoice! Microsoft Word and Excel provide templates for invoices, so take the time to familiarize yourself with them.

Make presentations—You may be asked to give a telephone or live presentation, and that means public speaking! Once again, if you're shy, consider teaming up with somebody who can do a good job wheeling and dealing in front of a crowd.

THE SECOND LIFE DEVELOPER DIRECTORY

When real-world corporations approach Linden Lab about projects, they are normally directed to the *Second Life* Developer Directory (<http://secondlife.com/developers/directory.php>). This directory lists *Second Life* residents with a proven track record of professional success in *SL*.

But how does one get on this list? Linden Lab's senior vice president, Robin Harper, had this to say:

"I think the best way to get on the list is to send in your name and skill set, and a great portfolio—pics, happy clients, etc. It also really helps to be able to show that you are able to work on a 'professional' level. That is, you are ready to manage things like deadlines, invoicing, milestones, and progress reports."

When asked to elaborate on professionalism, Robin went on to say, "You might find that you need to do RL presentations, so public-speaking skills and salesmanship are also critical. I think setting expectations is part of being professional. People need to know what they're getting into, and you need to be realistic about what you can promise. In the long run that makes everyone a lot happier!"

SO...YOU SURE YOU WANNA DO THIS?

Nobody knows what will become of this budding platform or if grooming a career in *Second Life* is a fruitful endeavor. If the phrase "get rich quick" finds its way into your thoughts about *Second Life*, I recommend you run away very fast. *Second Life* professionals work very long, hard hours and many have been doing this for years with only moderate payoffs. I'm not trying to discourage anybody. Instead, new residents looking for instant gratification in the world of *Second Life* business should try to maintain more-reasonable goals.

However, if you have talent, patience, passion, and just a touch of obsessive compulsive disorder, there may be some great opportunities waiting for you in *Second Life*. I leave you with this quote from Robin:

"Second Life is getting a lot of visibility lately, as you know. If someone is serious about building a developer business, this is a great time to get involved."

Class dismissed!



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A person with dark hair, wearing a dark jacket, is shown from the chest up, looking towards the camera. The background is a bright, hazy landscape with green hills and a white sky.

CHAPTER 11

REAL RESIDENTS

Second Life lets you craft your persona to be anything or anyone you want. This chapter offers a look at some of possibilities through profiles of real residents who have achieved a measure of notoriety.

In-world notoriety is influenced by many factors and is achieved in any number of ways. Some residents create unique, recognizable avatars whose engagement with the community makes it a world worth living in. Some foster civic-minded and educational activities. Others may have a measurable impact on the real world's perception of *Second Life*, and in doing so, change the shape and direction of its evolution. Others exercise their creativity in building and scripting, and still others create successful companies and well-run regions.

This chapter profiles a handful of interesting residents in a world almost 1 million strong; there are, of course, many, many more.

NOTE

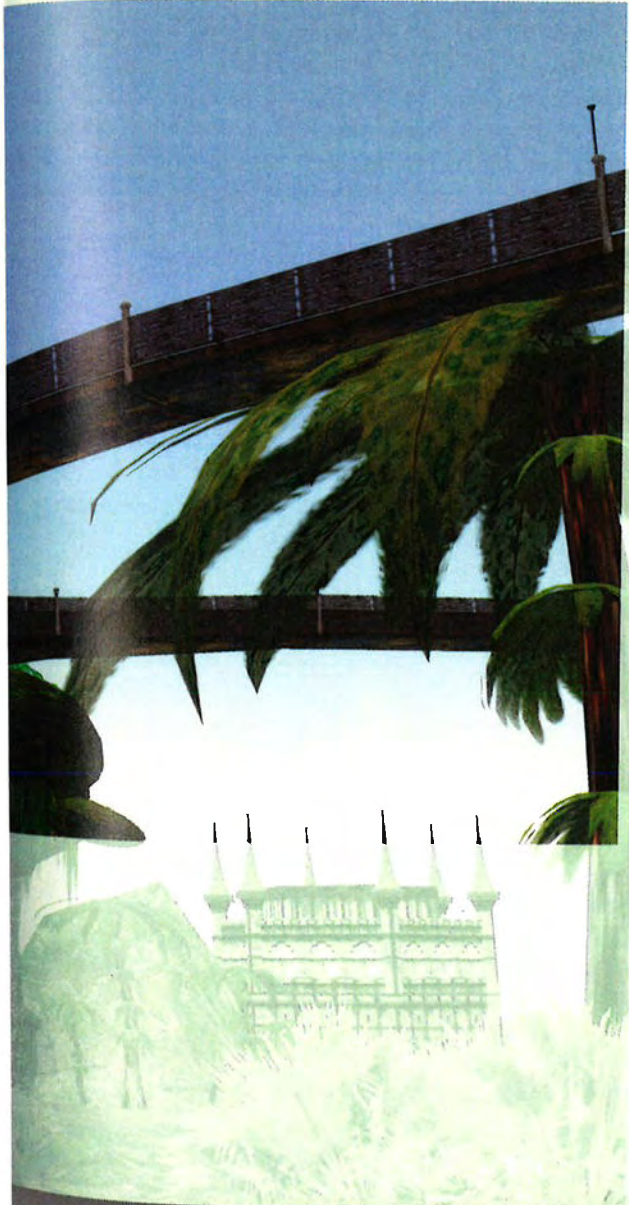


ADDITIONAL INFO:

AVOIDING REPETITION

Some residents are so influential and well-known that they were mentioned in many of the resident-provided sidebars. To avoid redundancy, we removed duplicate entries.





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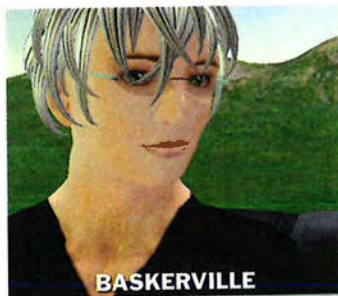
THE ARTIST DANCOTOTE ANTONELLI



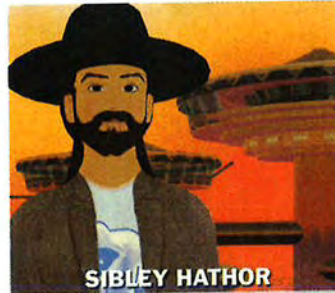
Over the years, more than a few residents have experimented with *Second Life* as an artistic medium, through sculptures and interactive installations: AngryBeth Shortbread, Arahau Claveau, Nylon Pinkey, Stella Costello, and The Port collective spring immediately to mind. In mid to late 2006, there's seemingly been a mini Renaissance of artists entering the field, many of them established professionals from other media. Among them is Dancoyote Antonelli, a real-life artist who created *SL's* Museum of Hyperformalism. Dancoyote's artwork pushes the boundaries of *Second Life*, exploring both interactive artwork and live performance, most especially with a widely praised performance that combines flying dance animations, music, and particle effects (think Cirque du Soleil but more psychedelic). Many believe Antonelli has created a breakthrough that establishes *Second Life* as a new form for artists; in any case, his works are sure to inspire even more aesthetic milestones in the metaverse.



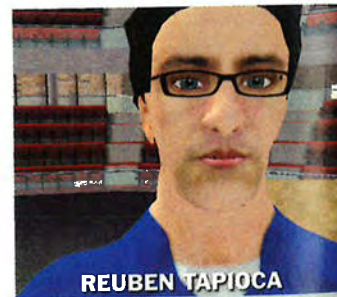
THE METAVERSE BIG THREE: BASKERVILLE, SIBLEY HATHOR, AND REUBEN TAPIOCA



BASKERVILLE



SIBLEY HATHOR



REUBEN TAPIOCA

It began with an island, the first that Linden Lab had put on the open market for resident auction. After the subsequent bidding war had ended, Fizik, the owner of a UK branding agency called Rivers Run Red, had opened up shop on the isle he now called Avalon. That was early 2004, and it was the first corridor of real-world business and marketing into *SL*. Though Fizik met with stiff early resistance from residents who feared this would lead to an explosion of corporate influence and

pervasive real-world advertising, the world has (so far) proven resilient to the arrival of large companies—most of whom have set up shop on islands that residents can opt to visit or ignore. Some of the first appeared on Fizik's Avalon, including 20th Century Fox with a virtual-world screening of footage from *X-Men III*. In late 2005 and early 2006, two large competitors to Fizik emerged: The Electric Sheep Company of Sibley Hathor began creating *SL*-based experiences for companies like Major League Baseball and Lego, and Millions of Us, the company founded by former Linden Lab staffer Reuben Tapioca, started building *Second Life* projects for clients like Warner Records and Toyota. Taken together, these residents and their companies represent the "big three" in terms of bringing real-world money and power into *Second Life*.

CHAPTER 11



THE BUSINESSWOMAN: ANSHE CHUNG



No list of the rich and famous is complete without mentioning Ms. Chung, owner of Dreamland, an entire continent, and thousands of dollars worth of oceanfront property across the world. In *SL*-related media, US\$150,000 is the dollar figure you'll read most—it's the amount Linden Lab estimates Anshe makes per year from her in-world real-estate business, with her *SL*/RL partner Guni Greenstein through their company, Anshe Chung Studios. Ms. Chung has arguably become *Second Life*'s most prominent avatar in the outside world, appearing on a May 2006 cover of *Business Week* beside the appropriate

title, "Virtual World, Real Money." The story launched the explosion of interest in outside corporations and organizations in this quirky online world, and as such, the face of Anshe launched millions of real-world dollars into *Second Life*.

CHAPTER 11



THE ENGINEER: FRANCIS CHUNG

Ms. Chung made a gun and a hug and changed the world. Created back in mid 2004, the Sebuho handgun was and still is among the most fully formed weapons in *SL*, with muzzle flashes and spent casings that trail wisps of gunsmoke when they exit the chamber. The hug was just as complex, enabling avatars to embrace each other. (A simple enough task, you'd think, until you consider that each avatar has to be perfectly positioned even before two custom animations can be launched.) For such a social world, inventing a hug was profoundly powerful, eventually unleashing an entire industry of custom animations that brought residents together, from kisses to the



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most acrobatic sex imaginable. Continuing her inventiveness into 2006, Francis's Dominus Shadow, a finely detailed muscle car, became the must-have vehicle of *Second Life*. Most impressive of all, in a summer-'06 fundraiser for the American Cancer Society, it auctioned for the L\$ equivalent of nearly US\$2,000. With such skills, it's no surprise that Millions of Us (see "The Metaverse Big Three" earlier in this chapter) hired Francis to create the *SL* version of the Toyota Scion.

CHAPTER 11



THE EDUCATOR: BRACE CORAL



When new residents come to the world, confused and disoriented, it's often Brace who helps. She is the founder of New Citizens Incorporated (formed in November 2004), a group for veteran residents who want to assist newbies. It began on a tiny plot of land that gradually expanded into a kind of college of *Second Life*, offering round-the-clock classes in everything from using the interface to building. Tens of thousands of residents who would have otherwise quit in frustration owe a great debt to Brace and her 350+ volunteers.

CHAPTER 11



FURRY KING: ARITO COTTON

Furries—fans of anthropomorphic cartoon animals like you'd see in an early Disney cartoon—are easily the most recognized subculture in *Second Life*. Arito joined the



world in the summer of 2003 (he was among the very first furries to do so), and soon after that, fashioned an attachable suit with paws, a tail, and other mammalian trappings, creating what's believed to be the very first furry avatar in *Second Life*. From there Arito brought in furry friends Liam Roark, Michi Lumin, and Eltee Statosky, who went on to found Luskwood, *SL*'s first furry community, in late 2003. (Still an active and dynamic community, Luskwood has nearly 500 members.) The foxlike Arito is also the main creator of Taco, a cell-shaded island that's a tribute to furry humor and cartoons, and one of the most distinct locations in *Second Life*.

CHAPTER 11



THE FILMMAKER: ROBBIE DINGO



Dingo is a relative newcomer to *SL*, but his first two *Second Life*-based machinimas catapulted him into a position among the very best artists working in the medium—initially with “A Better Life,” the moving story of a man confined to a wheelchair who finds himself transported into *SL*, then with “Stage,” which depicts the circle of life and the passing of generations with the use of impressive visual effects. Also noteworthy is his step-by-step video depiction of creating the guitar for Suzanne Vega’s appearance in *Second Life*. With these movies and more, Robbie

Dingo has demonstrated just how far *SL* machinima has come—and how much more ground it can break. Check out some of his creations on this book’s companion CD.

SIDEBAR



FROM LINDEN LAB:

SECOND LIFE MOVIE MAKING MAESTROS

“Skydive” by Cage McCoy and Reitsuki Kojima

Second Life experience from beginning to end.



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