Supernova 2005 Second Life Business Simulation

BACKGROUND

At **Supernova 2005**, we are highlighting the potential of massively multi-player online games (MMOGs). We are partnering with the creators of Second Life, a sophisticated 3D virtual world, on a virtual business contest. Wharton students and conference attendees will have the opportunity to develop business plans for virtual businesses within Second Life. We will showcase success stories and announce prize winners at Supernova.

The goal of the contest is to use your entrepreneurship, management, and marketing skills to develop a successful business within Second Life. You can start a business of your own, work with an existing business, or just create a business plan.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

To participate in the business simulation contest, first review the materials in this document. Email Betsy Book, the project coordinator, at secondlife@supernova2005.com, and ask for a free Second Life user name. She will answer any questions you have about getting started in Second Life, or the contest.

REQUIREMENTS

Participation requires the following:

• A computer with sufficient graphics horsepower to run Second Life. The game uses a Windows/Mac desktop client, which connects over the Internet to the Second Life servers. The required hardware is listed here. We are working to make available some computers in the Legal Studies department offices, if you do not have access to a sufficiently powerful machine.

• A Second Life account. We have arranged for all participants to receive free Second Life accounts. You will not need to use any of your own money to participate. When you receive a username and password, you can download the Second Life software at http://secondlife.com/download/.

• Willingness to spend time in the virtual world. Generally, the more time you invest, the more you'll be able to do, but if your activity level varies, that's OK.

SECOND LIFE OVERVIEW

Second Life isn't a "game" in the traditional sense. There is no story-line or objective, other than to develop a character, interact with other participants, explore the world, and create things. The virtual world is literally designed to be a "second life" for its residents. Users can control every aspect of their avatar's appearance, and can build both personal objects and physical locales such as houses, stores, museums, dance clubs, and more. Some people essentially play themselves in the game, while others create fantasy personae. There are numerous specialized communities and groups within Second Life, reflecting every kind of interest.

Second Life has its own currency, and a functional economy. Residents can buy and sell virtual objects, as well as land. Unlike many MMOGs where such activity is frowned upon, Second Life actively encourages economic transactions. You own the intellectual property rights in anything you create, and you can even translate Second Life's "Linden Dollars" into real money.

As you'll discover, Second Life is an incredibly rich environment, with a diverse community. Although many Second Life residents participate purely for social and creative purposes, some have developed thriving virtual businesses generating hundreds or even thousands of dollars in monthly revenue. Others have developed games or other virtual objects which they have licensed to real-world companies. Second Life has shopping malls, sales associates, franchises, fashion shows, advertisements, and other familiar business phenomena. And it is growing all the time through the efforts of its residents.

GETTING STARTED IN SECOND LIFE

When you first log onto Second Life, you will begin with a tutorial that shows how to move around in the virtual world and interact with what you find there. The Second Life website <http://www.secondlife.com> also provides various informational materials, and there are active user forums at <http://forums.secondlife.com/>. The virtual world and the tools available can be overwhelming at first, but there are a variety of resources to help you get comfortable.

Betsy Book, the Supernova project coordinator for the business simulation, will be available to help you familiarize yourself with Second Life, and to answer your questions. To contact her within the game, click the "Find" button, choose the "People" tab, and search for Skyllar Skidoo. Then, click the blue "Instant Message" button to chat. She will be conducting in-world tours at times to be announced.

The best resource for learning about Second Life is its 25,000 current residents. Many of them are more than happy to offer suggestions and tips. Second Life has a chat system built into the game, so you can easily communicate with others you encounter. Every time you log in, by default you will start in a public "welcome area," where there are usually new and experienced residents willing to chat with you, and open space nearby to practice building objects.

Keep in mind that the other participants in Second Life are real people. You're joining the community as a fellow resident, not as an outside observer. You don't need to announce your reasons for joining Second Life to everyone you meet, but you also shouldn't provide false or misleading information. Personal communications and information about other Second Life residents should not be made public without their permission.

Here are some additional Second Life resources you may find helpful:

Official Second Life FAQ:	http://secondlife.com/faq.php
Beginner's Guide to Second Life:	https://secondlife.com/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=BGSL
Getting a Job in Second Life:	https://secondlife.com/tiki/tiki-index.php?page=GJSL
New World Notes blog	http://secondlife.blogs.com/nwn/
Second Life Herald blog	http://www.secondlifeherald.com/

CONTACT INFORMATION

Betsy Book (*Supernova Second Life project coordinator*)   secondlife@supernova2005.com
      In Second Life: "Skyllar Skidoo"

Kevin Werbach (*Supernova organizer*)   kevin@supernovagroup.net

In Second Life: "Eli Gorham"