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# Second Life

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**S**econd Life is a virtual world in three dimensions that you can enter through the Internet. Users can travel around, talk or communicate with others, buy land and houses, build cars, parks or any other object you can think of. You can go shopping, attend colleges and universities or go to concerts and other events. You can do almost anything you can do in the real world. Second Life was created in 2003 by a San Francisco company called Linden Lab.

## 1 The world of Second Life

When you sign up for a free account you become a resident. It gives you the right to create an avatar and travel around in Second Life. In order to view this virtual world you must download a special viewer and install it on your computer.

The Second Life world is made up of different regions. The mainland is the biggest region. It is owned by Linden Lab itself. There are also other areas, owned by private people or other companies.

A membership fee of ten dollars a month lets you to buy your own land. By becoming a paying member you also get some virtual money that you can spend. You also get help if you have problems or run into trouble.

New residents who enter Second Life for the first time start on Orientation Island. Users learn the rules of the online world, how to navigate from one place to another and how to communicate with others. They are also given a tour of interesting places to visit.

If you have your own land in Second Life you can use it in any way you want. You can build houses

or other objects on it, let it to others or even design your own landscape.

## 2 Avatars

Every resident in Second Life has their own avatar. They can choose ready made ones or design avatars of their own.

You can choose hair and skin colour, body parts or clothing from an inventory. An avatar does not have to be human. It can also be an animal, plant or even a robot, like in Star Wars.

An avatar can be changed at any time and many people really have fun constantly changing their appearance.

## 3 Travel and communication in Second Life

Avatars can move around in Second Life in three ways. The easiest way is walking. Clicking a button lets you fly over landscapes like Superman and gives you a birds eye view of the online world.

The fastest method of travelling over long distances is teleporting. You open up a map and click on the place you want to go to. However, you cant go everywhere you want. Some places are off limits, and sometimes you must ask owners for permission to travel across their land.

Communication in Second Life is easy. Residents can talk to each other with microphones attached to their computers Or they may write messages in specially designed chat boxes.

## 4 Creating Objects

Everything that you see in Second Life was created by one of its members. New residents can practice making objects in the so-called sandbox. You can design your own buildings, houses, cars or other objects by using building blocks that come in all shapes. Complicated or even animated objects can be made by using a special programming language in Second Life.

## 5 Population

According to Linden Lab there are about 10 million user accounts in Second Life. This number, however, does not show the real number of people who take part because a user may have more than one account. Most of them do not log on to the virtual world regularly and only 10 registered users come back after their first visit.

Residents of Second Life come from all areas of society. Doctors, students and big company bosses take part, as well as factory workers or housewives. About 60

When you live in Second Life you must keep some rules in mind:

- It is forbidden to discriminate against other races , cultures or religions.
- Violence, using bad language or running around naked is not allowed in areas that are marked as safe.
- You are not allowed to reveal personal information about someone else.

Young people are not allowed into Second Life. Youngsters between 13 and 17 must log on to their own virtual world called Teen Second Life. It is a separate 3D world which works in much the same way as Second Life for adults. Additional helpers show youngsters around and help them navigate.

## 6 Economy

Second Life has its own money called the Linden dollar. Residents can go to a bank and convert real money into Linden dollars. One US dollar buys you about 267 dollars in the virtual world. Members

who pay a monthly fee get about 300 Linden dollars a week to spend.

Not everything in Second Life can be bought with Linden dollars. Sometimes you will have to pay with real money, for example, if you buy a larger area of land.

## 7 Second Life and the real world

More and more people and even companies around the world are finding out that they can improve their popularity by taking part in Second Life. Some companies organize staff meetings, others organize public events for virtual users.

Real life colleges and universities have started to use Second Life to hold classes. Politicians are using Second Life for their campaigns and to become popular. Even TV stations have their own presence in Second Life.

Although some Internet experts say that Second Life gives people freedom and lets them do things that they cant do in real life they do point out some dangers.

- Second Life is not that easy to learn. A new member may spend a lot of time in front of their computer.
- The virtual world might make you forget your real friends.
- Some experts say that players sometimes get confused between Second Life and the real world.