

Creating Your Account and Beginning Your Journey

Virtual environments provide access, communication, and interaction to learners from all over the world. The opportunities for using virtual reality are limitless, and they provide individuals with a unique chance to connect both physically and educationally to one another, the faculty, the university, and a worldwide market. Chapter 2 includes information on creating an account and all the components associated with taking your first steps “in world.” This includes choosing your avatar’s name, which is quite important because you cannot change it once selected. Although it might seem like a simple process, choosing a name in Second Life™ is the first major step in your entry into this virtual world. There are also certain naming techniques that should be addressed prior to selection.

Choosing your avatar is an important step. It begins with the Linden Lab default avatars, but you will find that you will change your avatar to match your personality or looks. This can be as simple as creating a “look alike” or as complex as choosing an avatar that represents your alter ego. While in world you always have the chance to change your avatar’s appearance and to take on other personas for an hour, a day, or however long you choose. It can be exciting, and there is an entire psychological process around choosing your avatar’s appearance. Read more about personas in the following anecdote.

Creating Your Account

Before you start exploring SL™, you must first create an account and a generic avatar. Linden Lab provides you with several avatars from which to select, and you can pick your sex. The avatar you select will change dramatically from the



While working on an SL project recently, I was visited by Snoopy and Woodstock. Imagine the possibilities when you can take on different personas for plays and other roles.



Figure 2.1 Get Started

original. It will evolve into a dynamic persona as you make it your own. Your avatar can take the shape of an animal, an object, a character in a play, or a professional once you begin your customization.

The first step is to go to the following website by entering the link in a browser such as Internet Explorer™ or FireFox™: <http://secondlife.com/>.













Click on **Get Started** (as shown in **Figure 2.1**), and remember, membership is free.

Here you will be taken to a page where you can select from male and female avatars. Currently, there are 12 in all. This will be your first decision: Will you be what you are in real life? Here is your chance to decide how your journey will begin.

Click on the avatar of your choice as shown in **Figure 2.2**, and you will see the entire avatar to the right of the selection.

1 Create an Account
2 Confirm Email Address
3 Download and Install

Choose a starting look

Click on an image to select a starting look for your avatar. [More ...](#)

Choose a Community Show me optional community start locations. [More ...](#)

Create a First Name




Figure 2.2 Create an Account

Now you can choose to enter into a community through the website's optional community start locations by clicking in the box beside "Show me optional community start locations." Linden Lab promotes selected communities. As a new SL resident, they help you get started, meet friends with a common language and interest, and attend a variety of events. These communities offer you a friendly environment for your first SL experience. By selecting Choose a

Community you will arrive in the selected community's welcome area.

For new SL residents, communities are a good place to start because these spaces focus on specific types of interests like geographic locations or educational uses. Selecting a community does not keep you bound to that space. Once you enter the SL environment, you are free to visit other locations wherever you see fit.

Figure 2.3 shows you some of the communities that are available for selection.



Figure 2.3 Communities

Culture of Naming

Create your first avatar name and type it in the box provided. Think carefully about the name you will choose. This name will be with you for the life of your avatar and will be how everyone in SL recognizes you. It will become your “second” name in life, as you will quickly see. Individuals who work in SL find that they sometimes do not even remember your real-life (RL) name once they get used to your SL name.

Create your last name from the list in the dropdown menu as shown in Figure 2.4. You can even do a search through Google to see the meaning of the name—you will be surprised how many are male or female oriented. For example, the name Halulu means “to roar, thunder,” and the last name is Zsun. You can change your name here, but once you submit it, you cannot make any changes to your avatar name.

Finish creating your avatar by performing the following steps:

1. Type your email address.
2. Confirm your email address. You should enter a valid email address because this is how Linden Lab will verify your account.
3. Select the arrow for the dropdown menu and pick your country.
4. Select the month you were born, the date, and the year (you should be honest here). Linden Lab uses your age to verify whether you belong on the Teen Grid or the Adult Grid.
5. Type in your real-life last name and first name in the next two fields. This should also be correct because Linden Lab may need to contact you later for actions within SL.
6. Select male or female.
7. Select a password and then confirm that password by typing it again.

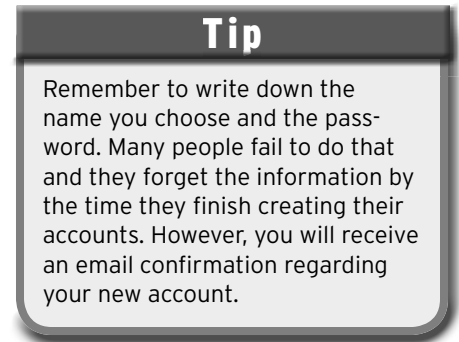


Figure 2.4 Avatar Name

8. Select the dropdown box and pick a security question so that if you ever forget your password, it can be retrieved.
9. The next section says, “Verify you are not a Robot!” Here you have to type the characters you see (Figure 2.5). Do not worry. Sometimes they are a bit difficult to read, but if you mess up, you get another chance, and the selection will change. That is why there is the line reading, “Problem? Try a different one.” You can also choose “You can also try an audio captcha instead.” Here text will be read to you, and you will type that text into the box.

Tip

If you cannot remember your security question answer, you can call the password retrieval line at (866) 476-9763.

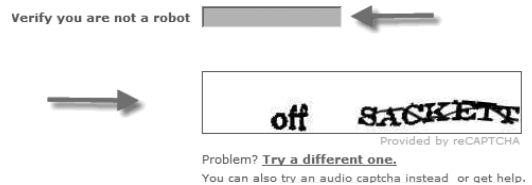


Figure 2.5 Robot

10. After reviewing the terms of service, check the box to agree and you will be taken to the next screen.
11. This screen, as seen in Figure 2.6, will tell you to check your email so that you can verify that you are the one creating the account. You should open your email account and see whether you have an email from Linden Lab. If you do not find one in your inbox, check your junk mail folder or spam folder.

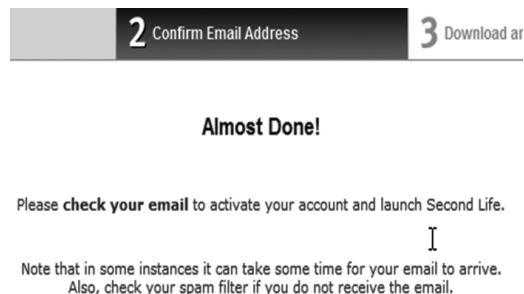


Figure 2.6 Almost Done

12. Once you click the link in your email, you are taken to the congratulations screen (Figure 2.7) to finish your verification.

Congratulations, Halulu Zsun!
Your Second Life account has been activated.

Figure 2.7 Congratulations



Figure 2.8 Download and Install

13. You can then download the software, which takes only a few minutes using a high-speed Internet connection (Figure 2.8).
14. Follow the download instructions, and you are now ready to launch the program and enter SL.
15. You must now launch the software that has been downloaded. Go to **Start > Programs > Second Life**, and the client will open when you click on it (Figure 2.9).

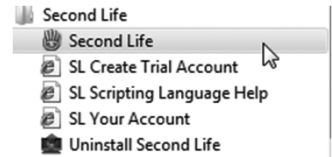


Figure 2.9 Second Life

You can also double-click on this icon on your desktop, as shown in Figure 2.10.



Figure 2.10 Second Life Icon

Tip

If you ever need to review the TOS, you may find it on the Second Life website at <http://secondlife.com/corporate/tos.php>.

Once the program loads, you must type in your avatar name and password in the boxes provided and agree to the terms of service (TOS), as shown in Figure 2.11.

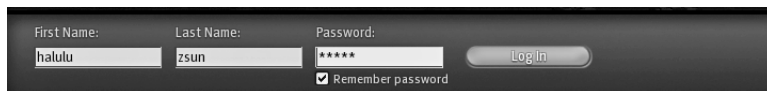


Figure 2.11 Login Screen

Create Your Own Avatar

Follow the preceding steps to create a name, choose an avatar, and download the SL software. You are now well on your way to exploring SL and all it has to offer.

The TOS (Figure 2.12) is distributed by Linden Lab, and you may want to refer to this if you rent or own land.



Figure 2.12 Terms of Service

Once you begin to use SL, if it has been awhile since you installed the software, you will have to update your client. If you see an image similar to that shown in Figure 2.13, you will need to download the latest version.

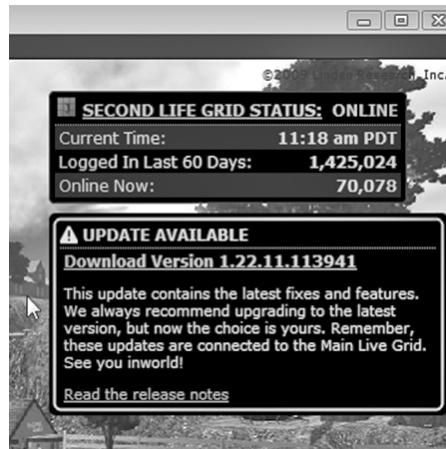


Figure 2.13 Update

Default Avatars

The avatar you choose in this initial setup is a default avatar. You will be able to change its appearance when you log “in world,” but this lets you start with the basics. Some of the ways to customize your avatar are as simple as changing your hair. Other ways to customize your avatar are by changing your “skin,” which is the total appearance of the color of your avatar, the shape of your body,

and the color of your eyes. In SL, you can find many free skins, or you may purchase one that can be customized to a photo of you. Some of the skins available for purchase are fairly expensive, so finding a free one that you like is always a good option.

Figure 2.14 shows a first-time avatar with the default appearance. She will look like a different person after some customization, which you can do by changing the appearance of your avatar. You can take time to do that now, but it will be discussed in depth in Chapter 3.

Arriving at Help Island or Your First Community Location

Depending on your previous location selection, your avatar will arrive on a landing pad at either Help Island or the community station that you chose earlier. Watch as your avatar rezzes, or appears, in world.

Once you arrive on the landing pad, you should try to “walk” off as quickly as possible. If you stay there, other avatars will arrive on top of you. They will soon be “swimming” above your head because they will not be able to land. Please make room for the new traffic. If you look in the upper part of your screen, you will see the name of the land where you arrived. For example, in **Figure 2.15** Hululu arrived on NMC Campus West.

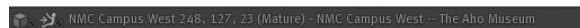


Figure 2.15 Info Bar

Once you are on the landing pad, you should use your arrow keys to walk off the pad and move around. The next part of this chapter will cover moving your avatar.

Some of the things you will find on the island on which you arrive are listed next, along with the key screens to help you with your movement.

Click on Begin (**Figure 2.16**) to learn how to do initial movement in SL.

Avatars may start to chat with you the moment you land. If you do not wish to speak with anyone, just use the following information to move to another location.

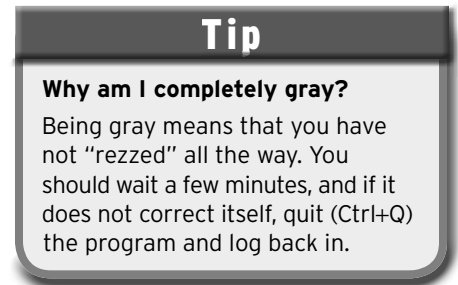


Figure 2.14 Initial Avatar



Figure 2.16 Begin Tutorial

Tip

Communication: Should you chat with anyone in Help Island? Sure, if you are comfortable doing so, and the person wants to chat with you. Also, there are avatars That act as mentors there to help you and to answer your questions.

If you would like to chat, you can do so by selecting the chat bar in the toolbar at the bottom of the SL screen, as shown in **Figure 2.17**.



Figure 2.17 Communicate

You will learn more about chatting and all the related features in Chapter 4. Help avatars usually walk around a new space to see whether you need assistance. Usually the title above the avatar's head will indicate that he or she is an assistant or is available to answer questions. You may want to chat with him or her to get tips or assistance.

Basic Movement (Walking, Flying, and Teleporting)

As you move around (**Figure 2.18**), you will get used to the keyboard and will adapt quickly.

You can also use the Alt key and your left mouse button to change your avatar's view (**Figure 2.19**).

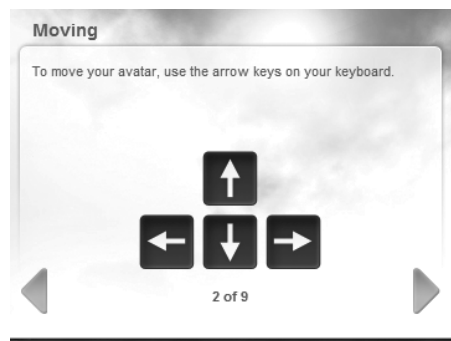


Figure 2.18 Arrow Keys

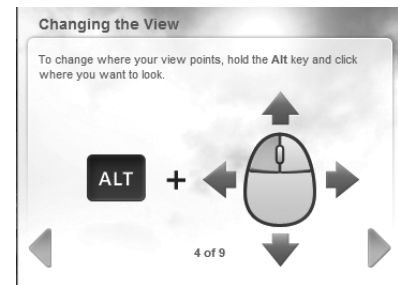


Figure 2.19 Movement

Tip

Pressing the Up arrow key twice will make your avatar run. Pressing it twice again will make your avatar walk. You can also run by pressing Ctrl+R.

While in SL you can walk, fly, dance, and use other gestures to animate your avatar. Here are the first basic movements:

Use your arrow keys to move around in SL.

Practice moving around for a few steps. You will find that you can actually keep your fingers on the keys and move them simultaneously.

Now, let us try flying. By using the keys shown in **Table 2.2**, you can make your avatar fly through SL.

Table 2.1 SL Movement



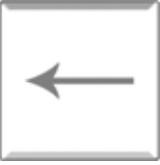
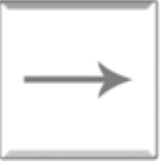


<p>Up</p> 	<p>The Up arrow key makes your avatar walk forward.</p>
<p>Down</p> 	<p>The Down arrow key makes your avatar walk backward.</p>
<p>Left</p> 	<p>The Left arrow key makes your avatar walk left.</p>
<p>Right</p> 	<p>The Right arrow key makes your avatar walk right.</p>

Table 2.2 Flying

<p>Page Up</p> 	<p>The Page Up key makes your avatar fly up (or press and hold the “e” key).</p>
<p>Page Down</p> 	<p>The Page Down key makes your avatar fly down (or press and hold the “c” key).</p>

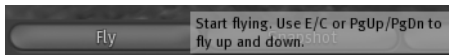


Figure 2.20 Fly

You will sometimes find that landing is not as graceful as you would like. There are times when you actually fall. That's OK though; your avatar will pick itself up and dust itself off. For a nice, soft landing, press the Page Down key the entire time that you are descending. You can also fly by clicking on the Fly button on the bottom toolbar of your screen, as shown in **Figure 2.20**. Chapter 4 will have more information and tips about flying.



Figure 2.21 Changing Rooms

Interesting Things to Do

While in your new orientation area, whether it be Help Island or a Community Island, there is a lot to do and see. Some areas will have changing rooms (**Figure 2.21**) (these may look different depending on the region). The changing rooms exist so that you can pick up some freebie items and perhaps try them on before you leave. Clicking on the door and walking inside will provide a private place to change your clothes.

Pick Up Some Freebies!

There are plenty of freebies on Help Island, that is, items other avatars leave for you to take without charging for them. When you see something interesting that you would like to pick up, just right-click to open the pie menu and click Buy (**Figure 2.22**).

Tip

L\$O transactions are actually deducted from your avatar's balance, but because they do not cost anything, no change is shown in your balance. These transfers are tracked so that you may have a record of them in your transaction log. To access your transaction log go to **World > Account History**. This will open an Internet browser where you will need to log in with the avatar name and password.

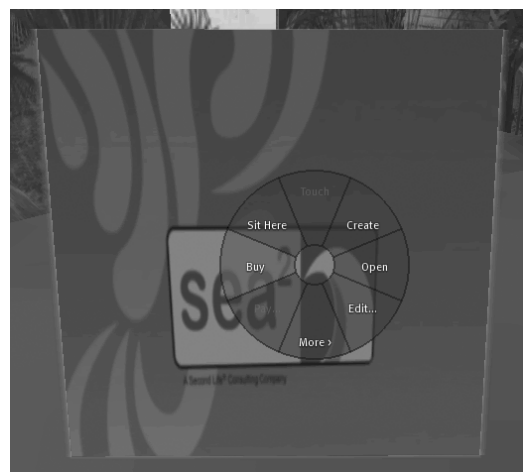


Figure 2.22 Buying

In **Figure 2.23**, this item can be purchased for 0 L\$. L\$ and Linden\$™ are the abbreviated versions of Linden™ dollars, the SL currency. If the necklace did actually cost any L\$, there would be a numerical amount in place of the “0.” After you made your purchase, the cost of the item would be deducted from your avatar’s balance.

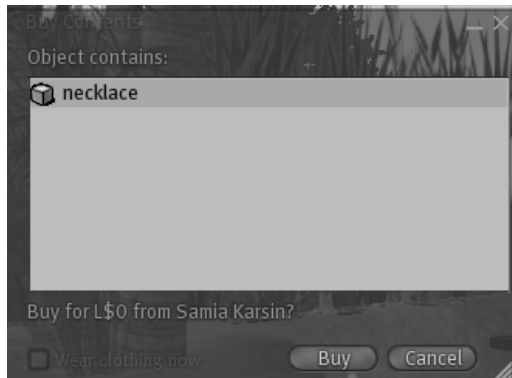


Figure 2.23 Buy a copy of a necklace

Figure 2.23 shows you what you will be purchasing. For this particular item you will receive a necklace. With some items you also receive what is known as a Landmark. You will learn more about Landmarks in Chapter 4.

Figure 2.24 shows that you are being charged 0 Linden\$ for this transaction. You will learn more about Linden\$ in Chapter 3: how to spend them, how to manage them, and how to give them to other avatars.

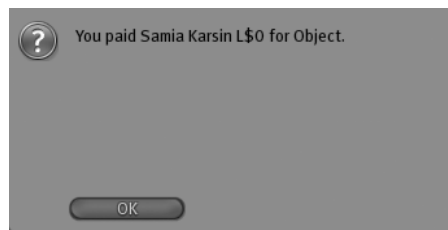


Figure 2.24 Paid

When making purchases or visiting sims, which is the name of islands in SL focused on helping new users, you should be careful of strangers that may try to pass you an object, notecard, or invitation. At this point, you should not accept anything from any avatars you do not know because you could become an unsuspecting victim of a *griever*. A griever is an individual who tries to negatively affect



Find an object, clothing, or tool that costs L\$0 and purchase it.

your experience of the virtual world. These users may use an object with a script in it to negatively affect your avatar or your account. Feel free to chat with people and learn who they are before you accept anything. You can read more about griefers and how to handle them in Chapter 3.

Explore Your New World

Step into the world of virtual reality with your newly created avatar and begin to experience the tools that make this world interactive. This chapter will cover everything you need to know about getting through Help Island, your community, or other in-world location in SL and about moving into the rest of the virtual community.

There are a lot of places to visit in Help Island with tips and techniques for navigating through SL. As you walk around you will also see a store of freebies and exit signs that allow you to “teleport” out of Help Island. Teleporting (Figure 2.25) is how you move around in SL to get from one island or location to another. Click on the image, and you will see a blue box in the upper-



Figure 2.25 Teleport Signs

right corner of your screen. Keep this landmark by clicking on the “keep” button. A screen will open that has the word “Teleport” in the bottom-right corner.

If you did not go to a community, to leave Help Island, you must look for an “exit” sign (Figure 2.26) that will give you a landmark to the mainland. Click on the button, and you will be teleported to your next location in SL. These are chosen at random because if everyone were sent to the same place, the region would become overcrowded.

In-World Communities

If you selected a community when you created your avatar, you will already be able to “search” for other islands. Here are some suggested searches (Figures 2.27 and 2.28) to enter so you can begin to explore your new world:

- **Vassar Island**—home of the Sistine Chapel.
- **Freebie**—a list of freebie sites to which you can teleport.

If you see a teleport that you would like to visit, left-click on its name, and you will see a screen simliar to that in Figure 2.28. You may then left-click the Teleport button to visit the space.

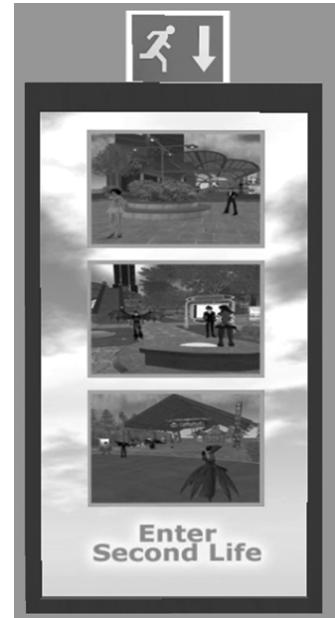


Figure 2.26 Teleport Station



Figure 2.27 Freebies

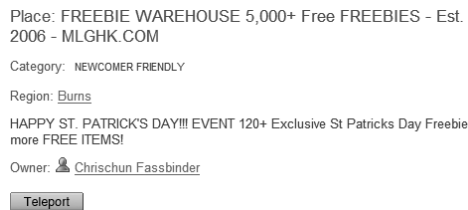


Figure 2.28 Freebie Teleports

Sloan-C is an educational island that contains material you may want to have if you plan on teaching in SL (Figure 2.29).

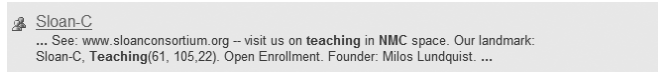


Figure 2.29 Sloan-C



Figure 2.30 The Teaching 8 Region

Teleporting

We briefly mentioned teleporting earlier; it is the ability to instantly move from region to region or space to space within SL. This is a feature in SL that is like *Star Trek's* “Beam me up, Scotty” to the *Enterprise*. You can teleport to different locations around SL. If you bring up the search box and type a place in the box, SL will do a search (Figure 2.30), and if it is a parcel of land that you can visit, there will be a Teleport button.

Teleporting to Teaching 8 will bring you close to the SEA² land, where the authors of this book own land. If you would like to go directly to our teaching tools, you should use this SLURL: <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Teaching%208/227/102/23>.



Figure 2.31 SEA² Land

Map

Another way of locating places in SL is with the Map feature. Click on the Map button in the bottom toolbar, and the map will open for you with a menu on the right-hand side (Figure 2.32).



Figure 2.32 Map

Type “Teaching 8” in the search bar on the map menu, and you will see the region show up in the Search Results area. Clicking Teleport here will take you to the landing pad of Teaching 8 (Figure 2.33).

Other features on the map (Figure 2.34) are the icons that represent information you will see on the map from time to time. These are in the right-hand corner of the map: Person (a green dot on the map represents an avatar on the map), Infohub, Telehub, Land for Sale, etc. The symbols beside the word indicate what the symbols represent on the map.



Figure 2.33 Map Search

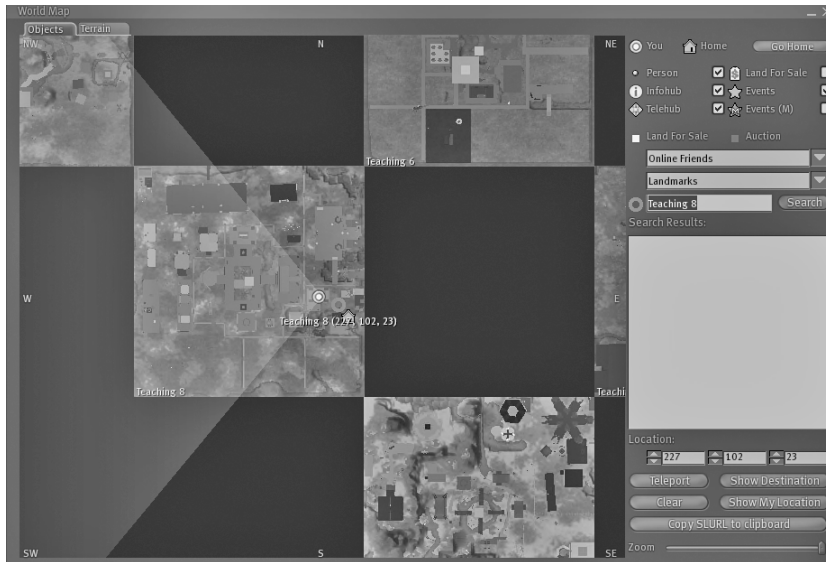


Figure 2.34 Map Light

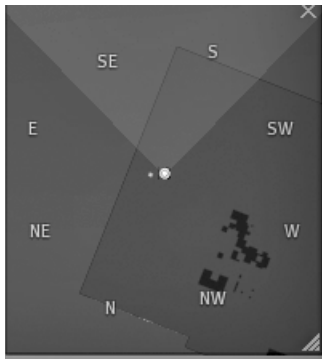


Figure 2.35 Mini-Map

Mini-Map

The mini-map will appear on the upper right-hand side of the SL screen. You can use it to get a good view of the island, to see whether there are other avatars on the island, and to see their general location (Figure 2.35).

Click on the Mini-Map icon (Figure 2.36) at the bottom of the screen in the toolbar, and you will see the map appear on the right side of the screen. You can also move it around by left-clicking on your mouse and by holding it while you move it around.

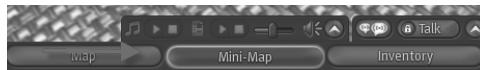


Figure 2.36 Mini-Map Search

The World Is Your Oyster—Exploring Second Life

Once you teleport off Help Island, you can explore any land you find intriguing. One way of finding a desired location is by using the Search Toolbar (Figure 2.37). By clicking on the search button on the bottom toolbar, or even by accessing it in the upper right-hand corner of your menu bar, you will be able to type in keywords to define the parameters of your search. The search button can be used to take you to different regions in SL as discussed before, and to search for other avatars, events, groups, etc.

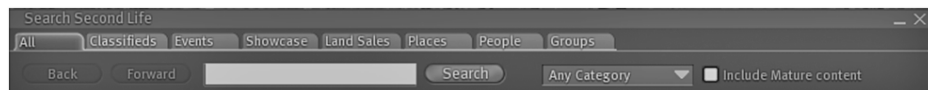


Figure 2.37 SL Search

Searching for other avatars will become fun for you as well as beneficial. You will meet many avatars along your journey who will become not only your friends but also mentors as you learn the dynamic world of SL. Searching for friends, groups, and other locations is covered in more depth in Chapter 4 (Figure 2.38).

As you explore SL you will find a vast array of information, friends, social communities, and most of all a shared interest in learning. There is a wealth of information in this world, and we think you should take advantage of every resource.

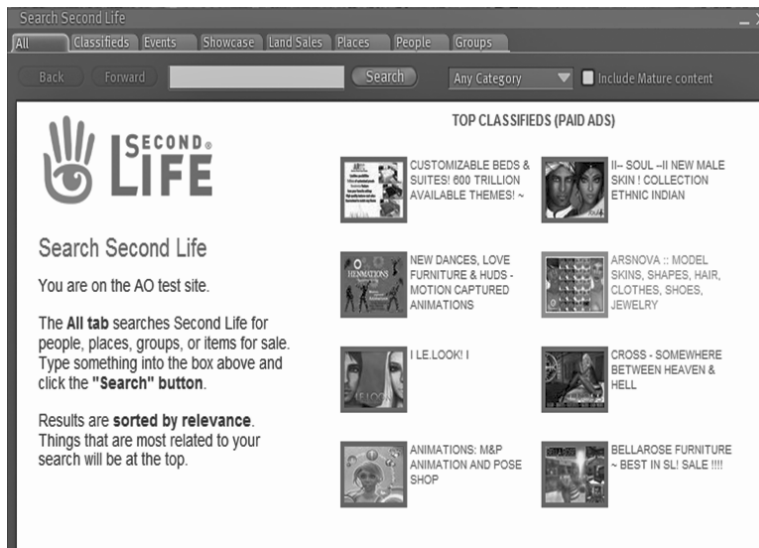


Figure 2.38 Search Results

Avatar Groups and Friends

Avatars can belong to different groups and can be “friends” with other avatars. The advantages of adding others as friends is that you can see when they are online and that you can teleport them to your location quite easily. You can also give them some of your “inventory” or Linden\$, as well as allow them to have full access to any objects you place down or build in world.

To add a person as your friend, you have to right-click on your avatar and view the pie menu (Figure 2.39). This menu will show you different choices for your avatar such as creating new Friends and joining new Groups. In the next image you will see that Samia Karsin belongs to SEA², which is the group we created for this book (Figure 2.40). You will also belong to SEA² if you would like to obtain some of our SL tools and educational material. Unless you are the one who created the group, you must be invited by other owners of the group or request to be invited. As you visit different places in SL, members of groups will ask you to join through an automatic invitation on their land or by personal selection.

There is also a Friends tab (Figure 2.41) for adding your friends. Clicking on that tab brings up a list of your friends. You can right-click on other avatars and ask them to be your friend, a request they must accept to complete the transaction.



Figure 2.39 Group of Friends



Figure 2.40 Contacts

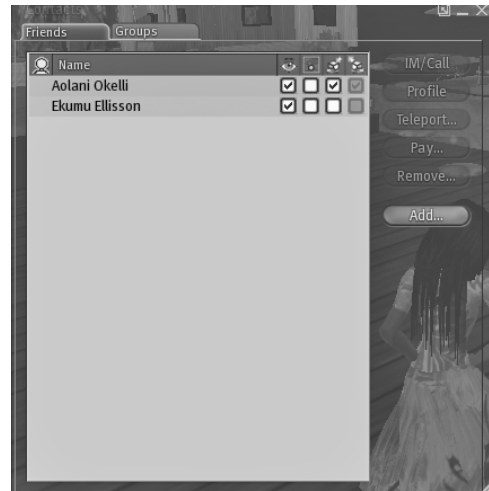


Figure 2.41 Friends

Using the Communicate feature, you have to search for them and add them as a friends. If they are not in world at the time, they will see the request when they log in. You can see that Samia has two friends at the time of this writing. There is so much more to learn about adding friends. Check out Chapter 4 for more information.

As educators, we are all aware that technology hardware and software can change faster than print in a book. Therefore the authors of this book would like to offer access to continuously updated tutorials for joining SL at SEA² located at <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Teaching%208/246/114/23>.

Wrap-Up

Keywords/Definitions:

Avatar—the virtual entity that represents a user in a virtual world

Synonyms: agent

Chat—the method of communication that avatars use to converse; can be either text or voice

Client—the SL program that is installed on the end user's account upon account verification; it is the portal through which a resident will login into the SL virtual world

Communities—special-interest sims that new users can choose to begin their journey in SL

Default avatar—one of the twelve generic avatars that a user may choose from during account creation

Freebies—objects such as clothing, furniture, or cars that any user may pick up for a minimal price ranging from L\$0 to L\$10

Fly—the action that an avatar performs when a user presses the Page Up/Page Down or the E/C keys on the keyboard

In world—the term used to describe the act of being logged into SL

Pie menu—the circular wheel menu that is accessed when an avatar right-clicks on an object, land, or another avatar

Resident—the generic name for a Second Life user

Rezz—to create or materialize in world

SL name (Second Life name)—the handle that is unique to a user's avatar; it is composed of a chosen first name combined with a last name picked from a generated list

Teleport—the act of instantly moving from one area of SL to another area of SL; can occur across sims or on the same region

Terms of Service (TOS)—A list of rules that every SL user must abide by

Walk—the action that an avatar performs when the directional keys or the ASWD keys are pressed on the user's keyboard

URLs to Helpful Information and Tutorials

SEA²—<http://sites.google.com/site/sea2sl>

NMC Second Life—<http://www.nmc.org/keyword/second-life>

SLOAN-C Why Teach in Second Life—<http://www.sloan-c.org/node/1571>

