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## 2008 Survey of Educators in *Second Life*® Summary of Findings

In May of 2008, the NMC conducted its second annual survey of educators in Second Life, provided as a yearly snapshot of the demographics and activities of educators who are active in Second Life. A link to the survey was sent to by email to individuals within the NMC's Second Life communities and to the Second Life Educators Listserv (SLED). This year, 358 individuals responded to the survey, a 170% increase from the number who answered our 2007 survey.

Some highlights we have identified include:

- **Educators are moving from exploration to use of Second Life for teaching and learning.** More respondents report being involved in an educational-related activity in Second Life (increasing from 54% in 2007 to 71% in 2008). More than half report that the organization they are affiliated with owns a sim (up from 36% in 2007) and 74 individuals report in 2008 they own their own sim. This year 29% of survey participants report holding virtual office hours in SL; 37 of them (12%) have taught a class entirely in SL (up from 14 or 8% in 2007).
- **Educators are expanding their Second Life social networks.** This year recorded an increase in the numbers of people educators maintain as contacts. In 2007, 53% reported 10 or fewer contacts while in 2008, this percentage dropped to 32%. The most common range for the size of their contact list in 2008 was 11-30 and the number reporting more than 100 contacts doubled from 2007 (4% to 8%).
- **This year's educators are much more experienced in Second Life.** The percentage who have been in Second Life for 1-3 years increased from 30% in 2007 to 56% this year. However, the demographics of this group are about the same; in terms of game experience most self-classify as "Pac-Man" generation. More than two-thirds are between 36 and 55 years old, and more than 75% do not play console games or MMORPGs. Also similar to last year, about half of the respondents find time for Second Life by watching less television.
- **Educators want to learn how to create in Second Life.** The top topics educators want to learn about as reported in 2008 include:
  - Learning how to write or use scripts (70%)
  - Learning how to create machinima (video) (62%)
  - Learning more interesting places to explore (55%)
  - Learning how to build things (52%)
- **Collaboration and professional networking in Second Life are important gains for educators.** The most common reported professional gain for their time in Second Life was again this year in expanding their professional network / increased collaboration.
- **Educators remain split on avatars that resemble their real life appearance.** In 2008, there was little change in the responses regarding choices of avatar representation. Just under half of the survey respondents choose avatars to resemble themselves; 10% appear as animals, 10% are non-human, and 8% are opposite gender.
- **More educators are adopting "multiple personalities."** Those reporting using more than one avatar increased from 33% to 54% and the percentage reporting owning more than three avatars more than doubled (6% to 14%).

- **More commonly, educators enter Second Life at a pre-determined location.** When entering Second Life, more respondents this year report having a defined entry point. In 2008 percentage reporting their start location being "last place I was" dropped from 54% to 32% in 2007. They are more often going to land they own (up from 21% to 34%) or land their organization owns (from 12% to 27%). This may reflect an increase in land ownership or just that people have more awareness of the feature that allows them to decide their entry point.
- **The primary activities educators are doing in Second Life remain the same.** The top five activities that educators report as doing in Second Life have not changed from 2007:
  - Random wandering (86%)
  - Listening to presentations and talks (84%)
  - Meeting new people (82%)
  - Participating in meetings (80%)
  - Building things (64%)

The top items things educators purchase in Second Life were also similar to what was reported in 2007:

- Clothes/skins/objects for my avatar's appearance (84%)
  - Furniture (60%)
  - Landscape items (plants, trees, etc) (55%)
  - Media devices (audio, video, web interaction tools) (50%)
  - Buildings (48%)
- **Educators cite similar positive Second Life experiences in 2008.** The 5 most positive experiences were again similar to the responses in 2007:
    - Rich interactions, meeting people, expanding networks, generosity (51%)
    - Education events, teaching / learning in SL (24%)
    - Attending performances, art, music, social events (6%)
    - Exploring new places (6%)
    - Creating / Building (6%)

The reported negative user experiences in 2008 included

- Griefing / Abuse / Perceived Violence (25%)
  - Technical Issues / Using SL (24%)
  - Uncomfortable interactions / Conflicts / Deception /Abandonment (10%)
  - Unsolicited sexual interactions/inappropriate behavior (9%)
- **Second Life Educator listserv SLED remains the most important resource for educators.** The most popular online resource again for educators is the Second Life Educator listserv SLED, listed by 73% of the survey participants.