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spring 2008 nmc survey: educators in second life

The Spring NMC surveys are targeted at individuals and focus on a specific topic in New Media. The Spring 2008 NMC survey was intended to gather information on the activities, attitudes, and interests of educators active in Second Life. A survey was sent to by email to individuals on NMC's list of contacts, the Second Life Educators Listserv (SLED) and to people listed in the NMC Campus Online Directory. In addition, we sent a notice in Second Life to members of the NMC Guests and NMC Members groups .

The results below are from the 358 completed surveys collected between May 5 and June 8, 2008 (64% identified themselves as affiliated with NMC member organization). Responses to open ended questions are listed in Appendix A.

A. Experience in Second Life

1. How long have you been using Second Life?

1-3 years	200	56%
6 months- a year	85	24%
1-6 months	51	14%
longer	11	3%
Less than a month	8	2%
Total	355	100%

2. When you enter Second Life, where do you typically start (what is your "home" location)?

My own land	120	34%
The last place I was at	113	32%
Land my organization owns	95	27%
NMC Campus	24	7%
A specific destination (e.g. provided via a SLURL in email or from a web site)	24	7%
I do not remember	6	2%

3. What kinds of general activities have you done in Second Life? (check as many as apply)

Random wandering	307	86%
Listening to presentations and talks	299	84%
Meeting new people	294	82%
Participating in meetings	284	80%
Building things	230	64%
Shopping	212	59%
Attending music/art performances	186	52%
Owning and working on my own property	180	50%
Dancing	173	48%
Teaching/Learning	55	15%
Selling things I created	45	13%
Preparing/Exploring Educational Materials	20	6%
Other activities (7 subcategories)	61	17%

4. For the avatar account you use the most, your Second Life profile:

includes only basic information	140	40%
completely filled out and updated	122	35%
includes only information about your Second Life identity (no First Life information)	76	22%
not edited / did not know there was one	13	4%
Total	351	100%

5. In terms of your avatar's overall appearance (check all that apply):

I rarely or never change it	165	46%
I have designed my avatar to resemble myself	159	45%
I regularly change my appearance (I have multiple outfits/representations)	137	38%
I have designed my avatar to be rather different from myself	93	26%
I am/sometimes appear as an animal	36	10%
I am/sometimes appear as something not human (e.g. robot, cartoon, object)	34	10%
I am/sometimes appear as the opposite gender	28	8%

6. How many friends/contacts does your avatar have (estimated)?

11-30	114	32%
1-10	105	29%
31-50	56	16%
51-100	43	12%
more than 100	29	8%
0	9	3%
Total	356	100%

7. In what ways do you interact with your friends/contacts?

I send instant messages when I see they are logged in	291	82%
I offer them teleports to join me in different locations	251	70%
I share objects from my inventory with them	225	63%
I do not use or pay attention to this feature	39	11%
Chat/Voice/Talk	19	5%
Others (5 sub categories)	60	17%

8. How do you feel about companies marketing their products and services in Second Life?

<i>Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.</i>	1 It would diminish my overall experience	2	3 Neutral	4	5 It would be of value
I feel...	33 9%	53 15%	142 40%	71 20%	55 16%

**9. How strongly do you associate the following characteristics with Second Life?
Please answer using a 1-5 scale where (1) is "No association" and (5) is "High association."**

<i>Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.</i>	1 No association	2	3	4	5 High association
Interactive	9 3%	14 4%	36 10%	112 31%	186 52%
Engaging	11 3%	17 5%	38 11%	110 31%	180 51%
Global	13 4%	17 5%	49 14%	103 29%	173 49%
Social	11 3%	21 6%	46 13%	119 34%	158 45%
Easy to use	36 10%	99 28%	136 38%	68 19%	18 5%
Realistic	30 8%	86 24%	142 40%	85 24%	12 3%

**10. Please rate your experience with Second Life on the following attributes.
Choose one rating for each using a 1-5 scale where (1) is "poor" and (5) is "excellent."**

<i>Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.</i>	1 poor	2	3	4	5 excellent
Ease of creating account	6 2%	30 8%	65 18%	144 41%	110 31%
Meeting other people	7 2%	28 8%	73 21%	156 44%	91 26%
Learning how to communicate	8 2%	57 16%	116 33%	133 37%	42 12%
Creating / modifying my avatar	13 4%	49 14%	140 39%	115 32%	39 11%
Learning how to navigate	15 4%	86 24%	124 35%	99 28%	32 9%
Using rich media (audio, video)	46 13%	95 27%	132 38%	57 16%	21 6%
Creating objects and scripting	66 19%	99 28%	113 32%	55 16%	19 5%

11. Please describe how your professional network expanded or what professional gains, if any, have you made by being in Second Life. (305 responses)

- Expanded professional network, increased collaborations: (150) 49%
- Educational benefits / Research resource: (41) 13%
- None /not yet/very little: (33) 11%
- Professional Opportunities/ New career: (33) 33%
- Becoming Local Expert/ Written or Spoken about SL/Reputation: (24) 8%
- Collaboration With Local/Regional Colleagues, Community Building: (12) 4%
- Other: (12) 4%

12. The items you have purchased in Second Life include (check all that apply):

Clothes/skins/objects for my avatar's appearance	269	84%
Furniture	192	60%
Landscape items (plants, trees, etc)	175	55%
Media devices (audio, video, web interaction tools)	161	50%
Buildings	154	48%
Decorations	128	40%
Gift items	126	39%
Vehicles (cars, bikes, boats, planes, etc)	97	30%
General goods and services	56	18%
None/Freebies Only	32	10%
Gadgets/Tools/Programs/Scripted items	19	6%
Educational	13	4%

13. Describe your most positive experience in Second Life.

Open Ended Summary: (308 Responses)

- Rich interactions, meeting new people, expanding networks, generosity of community (156) 51%
- Education Events, Teaching / Learning in SL (74) 24%
- Attending Performances, Art, Music, Social Events (20) 6%
- Exploring new places (18) 6%
- Creating / Building (17) 6%
- Other (23) 7%

14. Describe your worst experience in Second Life.

Open Ended Summary: (313 responses)

- Griefing / Abuse / Violence: (77) 25%
- Technical Issues / Using SL: (75) 24%
- Uncomfortable interactions / Conflicts / Deception /Abandonment: (32) 10%
- Unsolicited sexual interactions/inappropriate behavior: (28) 9%
- None: (22) 7%
- Mobility problems / being lost /trapped: (17) 5%
- Confusion (17) 5%
- Embarrassment (11) 4%
- Other (34) 11%

15. What topics would you like to know more about in Second Life?

Learning how to write or use scripts	240	70%
Learning how to create machinima (video)	214	62%
Learning more interesting places to explore	190	55%
Learning how to build things	179	52%
Learning how to interact better (gestures, animations)	135	39%
Learning how to improve my avatar	85	25%
Learning how to take photos	43	12%
Educational examples/ How others are using it	30	9%
Others (7 subcategories)	53	15%

16. What online resources do you use to learn about Second Life?

Second Life Educators listserv	247	73%
Second Life site forums and knowledge base	220	65%
NMC Campus Observer	153	45%
SimTeach wiki	119	35%
Blogs, wikis, web resources, web newspapers, web searches	81	23%
New World Notes	50	15%
Reuters in Second Life	45	13%
Others (6 sub categories)	57	16%

17. What is your prediction for the future of Virtual Worlds such as Second Life?

It is the future of the web	168	47%
It will achieve some great applications but will not go mainstream	81	23%
Great Potential/ A Taste of the future	56	16%
It offers great potential now, but will not be around in 5 years.	29	8%
Not sure	18	5%
It is mostly hype and will implode any day now.	4	1%
Total	356	100%

B. Education and Second Life

18. What potential do you see for Second Life in education?

Please rate from 1= no potential to 5 = high potential.

<i>Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.</i>	1 no potential	2	3	4	5 high potential
Artistic Expression	2 1%	13 4%	20 6%	90 25%	229 65%
Role-playing	4 1%	8 2%	21 6%	99 28%	225 63%
Simulation activities / scenario based training	4 1%	6 2%	27 8%	111 31%	208 58%
Group work / collaboration / meetings	8 2%	15 4%	39 11%	117 33%	174 49%
Distance Learning programs	13 4%	22 6%	55 16%	109 31%	155 44%
Conducting training	7 2%	21 6%	47 13%	131 37%	149 42%
Professional development	11 3%	26 7%	64 18%	106 30%	149 42%
Team building	6 2%	19 5%	61 17%	135 38%	136 38%
Teaching full courses	14 4%	52 15%	74 21%	106 30%	110 31%
Basic content concepts	15 4%	46 13%	82 23%	121 34%	87 25%

19. Are you currently involved with an education-related activity in Second Life?

Yes	239	71%
No	98	29%
Total	337	100%

If you answered "yes," please describe what you are doing. (248 responses)

- Teaching Courses: (134) 54%
- Building Educational Spaces/Tools: (24) 10%
- Faculty support/Professional Development: (46) 19%
- Research: (7) 3%
- Other: (37) 14%

20. Current ownership of land...

<i>Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.</i>	Currently	Plans in 6-12 mos	N/A
The organization I am affiliated with owns a sim (island)	188 58%	42 13%	94 29%
The organization I am affiliated rents land (a subparcel)	75 28%	6 2%	191 70%
I rent land	74 27%	6 2%	195 71%
I own a sim (island)	44 16%	17 6%	206 77%

21. What kinds of educational activities have you done in Second Life?

<i>Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.</i>	I have done	Plans in 6-12 mos	N/A
Taught in Second Life (real life education or SL skills)	179 54%	57 17%	98 29%
Took a class held in Second Life	148 47%	35 11%	134 42%
Supervised real life educational class projects and/or class activities	146 45%	62 19%	117 36%
Held one or more class meetings in Second Life with students from your school	143 44%	59 18%	126 38%
Taught a class in that focused on learning SL skills	121 38%	49 15%	149 47%
Conducted research in SL	111 35%	59 19%	148 47%
Held virtual office hours	92 29%	69 22%	152 49%
Host student services and support activities	71 23%	68 22%	171 55%
Mentored student research projects in SL	71 23%	46 15%	190 62%
Taught a real life class entirely in Second Life	37 12%	59 19%	210 69%

22. Are you planning any new educational activities or projects in Second Life?

Yes	230	73%
No	83	27%
Total	313	100%

If you answered "yes," please describe (240 responses)

- Courses (46) 19%
- Activities/ Class Assignments/role playing (40) 17%
- Spaces for Learning (31) 13%
- Trainings/Workshops (18) 8%
- Models/simulations (16) 7%
- Events/Presentations/Meetings (16) 7%
- Not Sure/None (15) 6%
- Research (13) 5%
- Course Admin/support (10) 4%
- Uncategorized (35) 15%

23. What other virtual worlds are you currently using/exploring for educational use?

Other	88	52%
Croquet	52	31%
Wonderland	37	22%
There.com	35	21%
World of Warcraft	30	18%

24. What is your experience with the NMC Campus in Second Life?

I have been there several times	197	55%
I have been to an event or an activity there	86	24%
I have heard about it but I have never been there	50	14%
None, never heard of it	17	5%
I never leave NMC Campus!	7	2%
Total	357	100%

25. Pick one new feature that would be most important to you as an educator or student:

Client that runs on older computers	80	23%
Special grid for educators	61	18%
Easier tools to show presentations	59	17%
Easier access to web content (HTML on a prim)	35	10%
Integration with other 3D modeling tools	35	10%
Connectivity to other virtual world	21	6%
Open source	18	5%
Improved capabilities (speed, stability, media, accessibility)	17	5%
Other (three categories)	22	6%
Total	346	100%

26. In my teaching and learning activities, I use the voice chat features...

Sometimes, e.g. for working in groups or just to talk with others	126	36%
Rarely, e.g. only when required by an activity or event	90	26%
Often, e.g. I prefer to communicate in voice more than text chat	76	22%
Never	57	16%
Total	349	100%

27. What locations have you visited in Second Life that you would most recommend to other educators? Why? Please include the name of the region and a brief description.

188 Responses — See Appendix

C. About Yourself

29. I am affiliated with an NMC Member Organization (see member list).

Yes	227	64%
No	127	36%
Total	354	100%

30. My role/title in an educational institution is or is most close to:

Faculty	135	38%
Technical Support Staff	38	11%
Director / Dean	34	10%
Faculty/Staff Support	45	13%
Department Head / Administration	25	7%
Librarian or Library Staff	22	6%
Instructional Designer/Developer	13	4%
Researcher or Research Assistant	12	3%
Student	11	3%
Administrative Support Staff	10	2%
Other	7	2%
Vice President / Provost	3	1%
Total	356	100%

31. As a youth I played games like...

Pac Man	209	59%
Pong	160	45%
None of the above	123	35%
Doom	63	18%
Grand Theft Auto	27	8%

32. Other than Second Life, have you participated in other virtual environments?

No	191	55%
Yes	158	45%
Total	349	100%

See Appendix A for comments

33. Have you ever participated any Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games?

No	267	76%
Yes	84	24%
Total	351	100%

See Appendix A for comments

34. Do you own / play any console game systems?

No	223	64%
Yes	126	36%
Total	349	100%

See Appendix A for comments

35. On average, how many hours per week do you spend on each of the following activities:

<i>Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.</i>	0 never	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	more than 12
SecondLife	9 3%	95 27%	85 24%	41 12%	39 11%	87 24%
Facebook	136 39%	177 50%	22 6%	7 2%	3 1%	6 2%
World of WarCraft	304 91%	18 5%	3 1%	3 1%	3 1%	3 1%
YouTube	38 11%	254 72%	41 12%	13 4%	5 1%	1 0%
MySpace	247 72%	91 27%	3 1%	0 0%	2 1%	0 0%

36. How many computers do you personally own?

2	112	32%
3	97	28%
1	53	15%
4	42	12%
more than 5	35	10%
5	13	4%
Total	352	100%

37. I own/use the following types of technology devices:

Wireless home network	303	88%
MP3 player	273	80%
Internet capable mobile smart phone/PDA (e.g. iPhone, Blackberry, Treo, etc.)	166	48%
Digital Video Recorder (e.g. TiVo)	131	38%
GPS navigation device	100	29%
Portable video player	93	27%

38. What is the operating system on the computer you use the most for Second Life?

Windows XP	167	47%
Mac OSX	134	38%
Windows Vista	50	14%
Other (Linux, ubuntu, Windows 2000)	6	2%
Total	357	100%

39. When using Second Life, what is your internet connection speed?

Direct line high-speed home cable/DSL	154	43%
Direct line high-speed LAN (Local Area Network)	125	35%
Wireless connection	75	21%
Satellite broadband	2	1%
Dial-up	0	0%
Total	356	100%

40. How many different accounts do you have in Second Life?

1	165	46%
2	98	28%
More	49	14%
3	44	12%
Total	356	100%

41. Has using Second Life shuffled how you spend your free time? What activities, if any, has your time in Second Life replaced?

Watching television	177	51%
None – I use it mostly at work	119	34%
Reading	73	21%
Exercise	36	10%
Other activities (6 subcategories)	35	10%
Internet Browsing/Computer Games	10	4%

42. Gender

Female	209	59%
Male	143	41%
Total	352	100%

43. Age range

46-55	121	34%
36-45	92	26%
> 55	82	23%
26-35	52	15%
18-25	7	2%
Total	354	100%