

Department for  
**Innovation,  
Universities &  
Skills**

THE LEARNING  
**REVOLUTION**

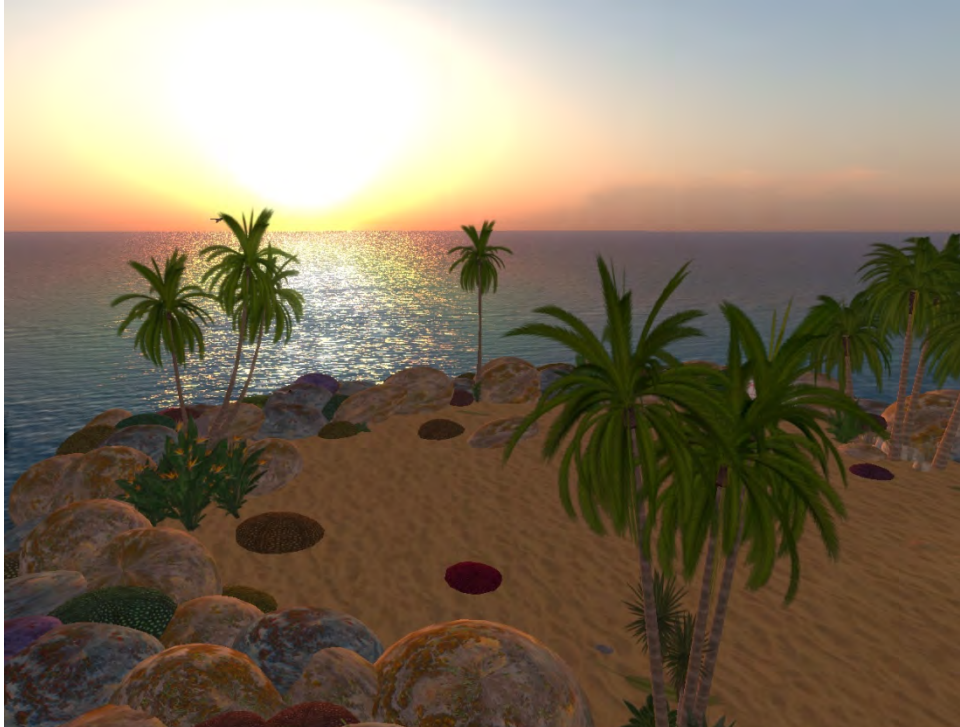
eygus



The Open University

# Getting Online in Second Life

A guide for visitors in  
Adult Learners' Week





## Contents

Page

Second Life for Adult Learners Week	3
Requirements for installing Second Life	4
Download and install Second Life	5
Log in and orientation	6
Keeping track of friends	7
Joining a group	7
Setting a landmark	8
Keeping safe in Second Life	9
Acceptable use policy for Open Life	10
Notes	10



## Second Life for Adult Learners Week

Second Life is a game with no purpose, no gold to accumulate, goblins to bop on the head or puzzles to unravel, just an online environment with user-generated content where people are free to do as they wish. 'Residents' of his virtual world engage in activities as diverse and numerous as in the physical world. The average Second life user is in his or her mid thirties and slightly more likely to be female than male. Alison's story, in the highlighted box, is typical.

The Open University has had a presence in Second Life since 2006 when it bought its first 'island'. It currently owns 6 islands, 3 of which are open to visitors. Open Life Island is the main space for formal and informal teaching and learning sessions, where areas can be booked for exclusive group use. Open Life Ocean, an island sized space under water, divides Open Life Island from Open Life Village. Open Life Village is the social island where staff and students rent houses and gather to chat in the Open Arms pub or dance on the village green.

During Informal Adult Learners Week, from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, DIUS and the Open University are offering live inworld support for people wanting to try Second Life for the first time. At 10am, 2pm and 7pm each day there will be a help station at the Events Space on Open Life Island, and on some dates and times (see table below) there will be an additional guided tour of the OU Islands for those with a little more confidence. If you follow the instructions in this document you can download the Second Life client, set up your account and log in to arrive direct at this location, where you will find some basic orientation activities and, most importantly, an experienced Second Life user who still remembers what it's like to be new. All learners in this event will be invited to leave an email address inworld and will receive a PDF certificate to confirm that they have participated.

We have also set up a discussion event for the evening of Friday May the 15<sup>th</sup> where Anna Peachey, who manages the Open University presence in Second Life, and John Kirriemuir, author of the Virtual World Watch guides, will be joining us to talk and answer questions about learning in virtual worlds. Why not come along to an induction session, spend some time exploring and then come back on Friday night to share your initial thoughts about learning in this environment?

### Alison's Story

Alison has been in Second Life for about a year. She uses the environment to socialize with friends that she knows in the physical world as well as the new friends she has met 'inworld'. She particularly values using Second Life to meet up with her friend Jo who emigrated to Australia last year – in Second Life they can enjoy sharing experiences that wouldn't be possible through email, long distance calls or online chat rooms.

Alison has gained a variety of skills through engaging with the environment and can create her own accessories inworld, despite having no techie interests in her pre-existing skills or hobbies. Alison has attended a variety of free classes in Second Life and particularly enjoyed learning some basic Spanish, as she felt more confident interacting through her avatar than she might have done in a physical classroom.


Alison drops into Second Life once or twice a week, sometimes at a pre-arranged time, like when she meets Jo or for a Spanish class, often just because she's in the mood for some company and a chat. She has found most people in the environment to be very friendly. On the one occasion she met someone rude, she simply teleported to another location.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
10am	Open Support (for new users)	Open University Islands Tour	Open Support (for new users)	Open Support (for new users)	Open University Islands Tour
2pm	Open Support (for new users)	Open Support (for new users)	Open University Islands Tour	Open Support (for new users)	Open Support (for new users)
7pm	Open Support (for new users)	Open Support (for new users)	Open Support (for new users)	Open University Islands Tour	Discussion with Anna Peachey and John Kirriemuir



## Requirements for installing Second Life

Before you can enter the virtual world of Second Life, you need to create an account and download and install the Second Life software. Creating an account will take a matter of minutes but be warned that downloading the software can take up to about 10 minutes.

On a Windows machine, Second Life will take up 35MB of space. You can check how much space there is available on your computer by clicking on Start and going to My Computer, or looking for the My Computer icon on your desktop. Click on  Local Disk (C:) and in the left margin of the open window you will see something like this image, which tells me that I have 36.7GB of space to use on my machine - plenty enough to install Second Life. If you have less than 1GB of space (where 1 GB = 1000 MB) then it isn't advisable to install Second Life, as it would make your system run very slowly.



Here are the minimum PC system requirements for Second Life, taken from the Second Life Website ( <http://secondlife.com/corporate/sysreqs.php> ) current as of 06/01/09.

Windows	Minimum Requirements	Recommended
Internet Connection*:	Cable or DSL	Cable or DSL
Operating System:	2000, XP, or Vista	XP or Vista
Computer Processor:	800 MHz Pentium III or Athlon, or better	1.5 GHz (XP), 2-GHz (Vista) 32-bit (x86) or better
Computer Memory:	512 MB or more	1 GB or more
Screen Resolution:	1024x768 pixels	1024x768 pixels or higher
Graphics Card for XP/2000**:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVIDIA GeForce 2, GeForce 4 MX or better</li> <li>• OR ATI Radeon 8500, 9250 or better</li> <li>• OR Intel 945 chipset</li> </ul>	NVIDIA Graphics cards 6000 Series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6600, 6700, 6800</li> </ul> 7000 Series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7600, 7800, 7900</li> </ul> 8000 Series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8500, 8600, 8800</li> </ul> GeForce Go Series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7600, 7800, 7900</li> </ul> ATI Graphics Cards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• X800, X900, X1600, X1700, X1800, X1900</li> <li>• x2600, x2900</li> <li>• x3650, x3850</li> </ul>
Graphics Card for Vista (requires latest drivers)**:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NVIDIA GeForce 6600 or better</li> <li>• OR ATI Radeon 9500 or better</li> <li>• OR Intel 945 chipset</li> </ul>	NVIDIA Graphics cards 7000 Series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7600, 7800, 7900</li> </ul> 8000 Series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8500, 8600, 8800</li> </ul> GeForce Go Series: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7600, 7800, 7900</li> </ul> ATI Graphics Cards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• X1600, X1700, X1800, X1900</li> <li>• x2600, x2900</li> <li>• x3650, x3850</li> </ul>

Once the software is installed you will need to get online and complete the first basic steps in using the environment. You could do this at another time if it's not convenient to complete everything at once. Depending on your level of skill with a computer and the Internet you should probably allow up to an hour to get through this process.



## Download and install Second Life

Start by closing everything else that you might have running on your machine, for example your email client, word processing documents etc.

Open a browser (e.g. Internet Explorer) and go to <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Open%20Life/173/122/29>

Look for, and click on, a button like this:



Signing up via this route will take you directly to the DIUS Adult Learners Week Event Plaza on the Open University Island when you arrive in Second Life.

The first page you see will ask you to choose the way that you want to look in Second Life. You will have the opportunity to change details later so it might be best to pick a simple avatar (the image that represents you online) that you can develop as you wish.

The next step is to choose a Second Life name. You can pick any first name that you like but your second name is limited to one of the choice available when you click on **Get Available Last Names**. You will also enter your real date of birth and your email address. Second Life has a strict policy on privacy so you can be as confident as it is possible to be on the web that your address will not be used inappropriately.

Remember good practice when choosing a password and aim for a combination of letters and numbers.

If you have printed these instructions in hard copy you might find it useful to make a note of your Second Life details here:

**First Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Second Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Password:** \_\_\_\_\_

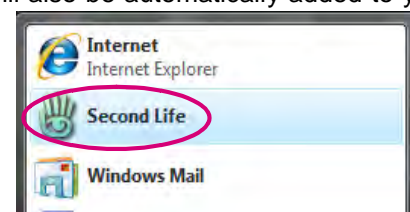
You will need to type the randomly generated text into the box to prove you are not a robot, and then read the Terms of Service Agreement and click the radio button to say you have done so.

When you are ready, click on **Create Account**.

Now your account is created and you will need to check your mailbox for the confirmation email. Depending on your email client this may get junked, so if it doesn't appear in the inbox try looking in your junk folder.

The email you receive will include a link that says **CLICK HERE TO ACTIVATE YOUR ACCOUNT**. When you follow that link you will see the third and final page of the signup process, which enables you to download the Second Life client software onto your computer. Follow the onscreen instructions to save, unpack and launch the client. Second Life will take quite a while to download so you have time to make a cup of tea.

You can choose to enter Second Life straight away, and Second Life will also be automatically added to your programme listings so that you can find it in the Start menu, like this:





## Log in and orientation

When activated, the Second Life window will open to fill up your screen. At the bottom of the window you are asked for your First Name, Last Name and password. You need to use your Second Life name here, the one you chose when you set up the account. Complete the three text boxes then click on **Connect**.



The first time you log in to Second Life you will be asked to comply with a user agreement. Read the statement and if you are happy to accept then change the radio button accordingly.

You will find yourself on the Open University island, Open Life. On the top left of your screen is a simple tutorial. Click on Begin and you will be able to click through a number of screens covering the basics of Second Life movement and activity.





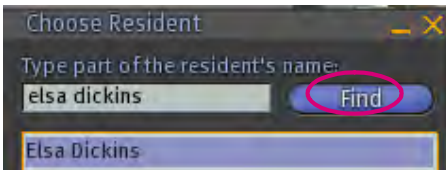
## Keeping track of friends

The Friends system on Second Life allows you to keep track of people you know, be alerted when they are online and offer or receive teleports to their location.

Click on the **Communicate** button in the bottom toolbar and make sure the contacts tab is at the front in the window that appears. Look for the friends tab, then click on **Add**.



Type the name of your intended friend in the text box and click on **Find**.



The name should come up as highlighted above – click on **Select**. You now have the opportunity to **Offer** friendship.

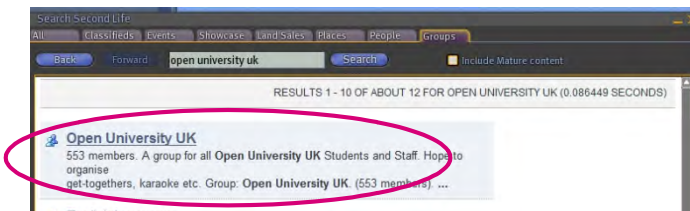


## Joining a group

Groups in Second Life are usually a bit more formal than just a collection of friends, as they can be used for things like sending out notices and setting permissions for certain areas or tasks. There is an Open University UK group in Second Life and a UK Educators group as well as countless other groups for any number of special interests (you should be aware that some have very adult content, so be prepared for this if browsing).

Here's how to join the Open University UK group. For all other groups, just try using some keywords to search.

Click on the search button at the bottom of the screen and make sure the Groups tab is at the front. Type *open university uk* into the text box. In the resulting list, you should find Open University UK at the top, so click on that link.



Click on the **View Full Profile** button and you will see more details of the group.

In the new window there is a button to **Join** the group.



You will see a warning to confirm that you understand that it will cost you zero Linden dollars to join the group – a bargain! When you have confirmed this, close the group search window.

Your group name now appears above your avatar name. If you don't want to wear this label, select none in the groups box and click on activate.

You are still a member of the listed group, but your label should have gone.

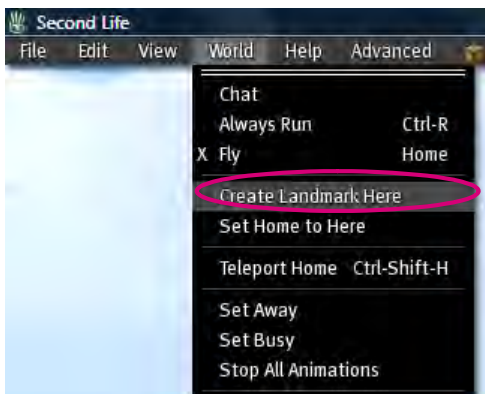


## Setting a Landmark

Second Life allows you to create landmarks so that you can return to places you have previously visited. There can be some issues with local settings, as landowners can automatically provide you with a landmark and choose whether or not visitors can teleport directly to their location, but generally it is possible to create a landmark anywhere that you visit.

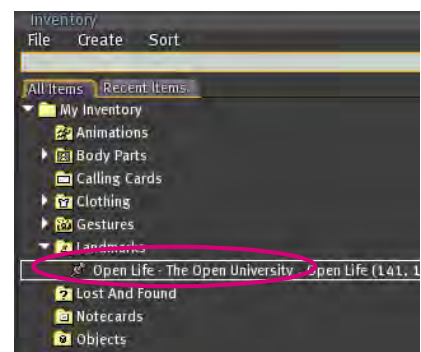
We would recommend creating a landmark for Open Life so that you can always find your way back to this point.

From the **World** menu, click on **Create Landmark Here**.



The landmark window will open, with the option to Teleport Now. Click on the cross in the top right of that small window to close it.

Click on your **Inventory** button and you will see that your Open Life landmark has been automatically filed under Landmarks:



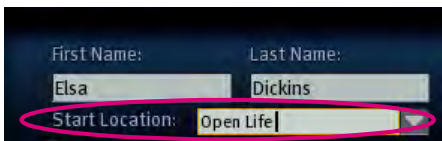
Next time you are inworld and wish to visit Open Life, you just need to double click on the link in your inventory.



## Keeping safe in Second Life

Second Life (SL) is a 3-dimensional virtual world inhabited by over 6 million avatars. It is an adult society – under-18s have a separate teen grid. There is as wide a variety of activities in Second Life as there is on the Internet generally, and similarly you can exercise personal discretion over what you choose to visit. However Second Life has the added dimension of enabling direct interaction between users with a sense of physical presence, and occasionally one might be confronted by a situation which is less than comfortable, so it helps to know what options you have available for dealing with trouble.

The most important thing to remember in Second Life is that you can always escape from a situation or place where you are unhappy. Once you have set a landmark for Open Life, or another safe space, you can teleport away from trouble. If for any reason you are unable to teleport, for example excessive lag or problems with the Second Life grid, close Second Life down and then type Open Life into the region location to login again in a known safe place.



A common problem encountered in SL is pushing. This can happen accidentally in crowded situations with high lag when it is less easy to control an avatar. In this case if you want to stay in the area you can do nothing but exercise patience.

If the pushing is clearly intentional either teleport away or, if you wish to stay, sit down as you cannot be pushed when you are sitting. If the offence continues, take a note of the avatar's name, your location and the time and use the Second Life Help menu to file an abuse complaint. Linden Lab takes such complaints seriously and does act on them.

Another occasional Second Life problem is unwanted advances (of any description). Deal with these in the first instance as you would in real life by ignoring, walking away, etc. Very rarely such advances can become persistent and, if this seems to be happening, note the avatar name and circumstances – places, times, how contact is made – and file an abuse report with Linden Labs.

In general, overt sexual activity/role play is found in clubs and other locations where the purpose of the location is clear. Rarely, one encounters it in more general locations – usually new avatars who have heard stories of sexual licence in SL. Avatars do not have sexual parts unless their owner has bought and attached such parts. Some male avatars do choose to show off their parts, but the display is generally laughable rather than dangerous. If such an avatar does make unpleasant advances, do not hesitate to make an abuse report, and do move out of the situation.

There is minimal use of weapons in SL, but there are some combat zones with clear role play rules. You may find avatars with weapons outside of these zones, again the rule is to move out of the situation, and file an abuse report if you feel it is necessary.

Finally you should enter Second Life with awareness that the environment can enable friendships to develop much more quickly and closely than in the real world, as many of the real world conventions are missing. People often develop very real and meaningful friendships, but occasionally they find themselves in too deep too quickly and this can impact on real world relationships. The simple rule is stick to your own protocols for developing friendships in any other medium.



## Acceptable Use Policy for Open Life

The following is an outline of the acceptable use policy for Open Life. A full and complete version can be obtained from 'The nOubie Centre' on Open Life island:

Please note that Open Life is a PG sim for education purposes. You are welcome to visit the island, but in doing so you are agreeing to abide by the following simple rules:

Respect the privacy of any groups using the island

Do not communicate in any anti-social manner, including but not exclusive to discussion and/or material including illegal, offensive, commercial or promotional content

No grieving (a term used to describe deliberately annoying behaviour of a type specific to virtual world contexts)

No nudity

No weapons

The Open Life team reserve the right to restrict or deny access to anyone who they consider to be in breach of the acceptable use policy. If you wish to make a complaint about another user of the island, please send a notecard to Elsa Dickins including all possible identifying material and as much evidence of the problem as you can, for example a chatlog and/or screenshot.



## Notes

Remember that to get a closer look at anything you can hold down alt and then click and scroll in and out with your mouse. This is particularly useful for changing your camera angle without having to move your avatar.

Click on the mini-map to see a plan view of the area you are in at any time. Your own avatar is represented as a yellow circle; any green dots are other people.

Further reading is available at [www.secondlife.com](http://www.secondlife.com).

There are a number of books on Second Life for beginners – arguably the most accessible is Second Life for Dummies.

Please note that while we have tried to be as specific as possible with instructions, Linden can change their interface at any time. If you come across any significant changes that require updating in this guide, please let me know at [a.peachey@open.ac.uk](mailto:a.peachey@open.ac.uk). Thanks!

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