

Second Life (for starters)

Hopefully this project will help parents to educate, inspire, entertain and engage the attention of their children who are at home from school during the current Coronavirus pandemic.

The project uses Second Life, an endlessly amazing, amusing, challenging and inspiring online world accessible - free - through the regular internet using regular, reasonably up-to-date laptop and desktop computers.

What I'm suggesting is that parents can sit at the computer screen with their children and explore what Second Life has to offer, which is not only fascination for what can be created in a virtual world by people just like oneself; but also as a valuable learning experience: how to build objects and whole scenes on virtual landscapes; learning how to use mathematics in a practical, fun way to create beautiful and useful things; learn how to use coding to make objects move; how to make audio files, video files and more - truly the kind of stuff they learn in the school curriculum but learning here in a novel, engaging and exciting way.

Second Life can put children and parents alike into a steep learning curve, rather like taking off in a moon rocket; but just like taking off in a moon rocket, it can be a new and thrilling experience, the beginning of a life with unknown horizons!

It may even lead to an enjoyable, successful and profitable career for those who are entranced by this amazing, yet accessible, technology of virtual, 3D creativity and usefulness.



Starting off at ground level, though, here I'm setting out the process whereby you can access Second Life and learn how to use it. You can explore a vast 3D world created by people who started in just the same way as you can start now.

Even parents will find Second Life challenging at first, it's unfamiliar technology; however, together, and with some perseverance whilst also being surprised and impressed with what Second Life contains, parents and children can make real progress very quickly.

The photo above is of a place I created in Second Life, together with an American buddy whom I met in Second Life soon after joining it in 2009. That alone would inspire you to join SL - it's a great example of how you can never tell how your life can change, even at the ripe old age of 64!

As a 64-year old, (now 74), I started a new career as a board member of The Love Foundation, a U.S.-based not-for-profit organisation, after I had used Second Life creatively for the benefit of that foundation, whereupon I was invited to join the board, where I continue today doing worthwhile, fulfilling and enjoyable work.

To begin learning about Second Life, you have the benefit of many tutorials and other videos about SL on YouTube, and I suggest you start there, by clicking on the following link to Second Life's own channel, and watching some of the videos; but do not be put off if you become overwhelmed, thinking it looks too unfamiliar, too difficult; take it easy, one step at a time. If you go into Second Life you will never stop learning, and you'll want to learn more as you go along, please take my word for it.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5dsLkNZX9pVgmEHpJX9QCA>

The following, written material will give you more information and enable you to download the Second Life Viewer, the software that you'll need to run Second Life.

<https://community.secondlife.com/knowledgebase/english/second-life-quickstart-r373/>

N.B. Here is some vocabulary in Second Life (SL) jargon to know before you come across them in this overview; the learning starts here:

1. Primitive, or prim. A primitive, or prim for short, is a simple object, such as a cube or rectangular box, or a cylinder or a sphere, etc., from which things in SL are made; or a joined-up object made up, for example, of two or more prims which may have coloured textures on them, such as brickwork. A simple wall could be called a prim; a chair, made from a number of prims, could be called a prim. It's an object in Second Life, usually a simple object; by contrast, a house in SL is called a house, a castle a castle.
2. Rez: This means 'to make appear'. If you intend to make a box appear, you rez the box, using the method you'll learn. De-rez a box means remove the box; ditto 'rezzing' or 'de-rezzing'.
3. HUD, or heads-up display. You may find that you are offered a HUD which goes together with an object which has a variety of uses. The HUD appears usually as a small overlay feature on your screen and enables you to click to choose what different uses you want to make of something. For example, a sofa might come with a HUD which enables you to choose various sitting positions - sitting up, lying down, etc. Or, you might obtain a "magic belt", for example, which when you click on it makes a HUD pop-up on your screen which might offer you a variety of martial arts moves to use against another avatar (person).
4. Sim: short for Simulation, which usually refers to an area, whether small or large, in which a 3D simulation has been created; or could be created. The word 'sim' refers more to a place than a 3D creation.

And some words of caution:

Second Life is mostly for adults 18yrs and older. 13yrs to 17yrs teens can become members in their own right but are restricted in where they can go in SL, and they cannot purchase land, objects, etc. Under-13yrs cannot become members, and cannot be allowed access to Second Life other than sitting beside an adult member, e.g. parent. Do NOT allow either under-13s or 13 - 17yrs children to use your membership, do NOT give them your sign-in password, and do NOT take them into areas of SL zoned 'Adult'.

If 13yrs to 17yrs old kids go into SL independently, they should know not to trust everyone they meet there, same as any of the social media.

For this project, it is envisaged that parents will take the role of teacher, and use SL for teaching purposes; albeit, a different style of teaching, but teaching nevertheless.

Oh, and to avoid major frustration, wait for your click of your mouse to work - don't keep clicking!

Got all that?

When you've got the SL Viewer installed, and when you first go online into Second Life, there are some places I can recommend you to visit.

Ordinarily, when you're in SL, you use the in-built links to visit the places you choose. However, as you're first starting, I suggest you use these links (below) direct from your usual browser. You will see an invitation to 'Teleport' to the destination of your choice; just click on that (or those) links to go to these places I suggest:

In-world basic orientation

1. If you followed the link I gave you above, you'll have had your first experience of Second Life at the Learning Island. But I suggest you also go to this, rather nicer, I feel, orientation island called Virtual Ability, where you can see how much you've already learnt, and learn some more new things too:

secondlife://virtual%20ability/169/93/22

Copy and paste that link into your browser's address bar (top of screen); you don't need https:// or www.



Clicking to open that link in your browser will produce a pop-up with a link to 'Open Second Life Viewer?'. Click the button 'Open Second Life Viewer'. If you're not already logged into SL, it will take you to a Log In page where you'll enter your Username (Avatar name) and password.

That will take you straight to Virtual Ability island. Wait a few moments for the prims to fully rez.

2. When you land at this next place, turn yourself around and head towards the Butterfly Conservatory sim.

secondlife://tansania/128/112/3001

There isn't a lot going on there, but it's a good example of something quite beautiful made by another, artistically inclined member of Second Life.



The key thing to remember now is that your kids, or even yourself, could learn to make something this beautiful. Everything you see in SL was made by an ordinary member who learnt how to make it. Some of the creations are artistically extraordinary, with the special SL virtue of being 3D and, in some cases, moving objects, moving in ways you can engage with. Learning how to use this technology has great educational value and can also inspire a lifetime hobby or career, progressing artistically from Second Life even to animated movies on the big screen; or scientifically developing similar technologies. And more.

3. Riding Trails of Templeton Cove.

Here you and your kids can ride horses. At first you'll find it's tricky, and I offer this as an example of what you'll need to learn in order to navigate through SL and enjoy the fun most.

secondlife://Tyme/198/105/23

When you land there, turn yourself around and see the stables. You can look around the place and, when you're ready, click on the saddle of the horse waiting outside. It will cause a HUD to pop up at top-right of your screen. Click on one of the buttons and it will rez a horse for you to



ride. Right-click on the saddle and then click 'Ride'. Use the movement keys (arrows) on your keyboard to start the horse moving.

Do your best to stay on the trails. Stick to the trails as much as possible. Invite your kids to do the riding, and see how they get on. However frustrating it becomes, stick with it. This is part of the learning process and, like anything else, it requires perseverance until it becomes a skill.

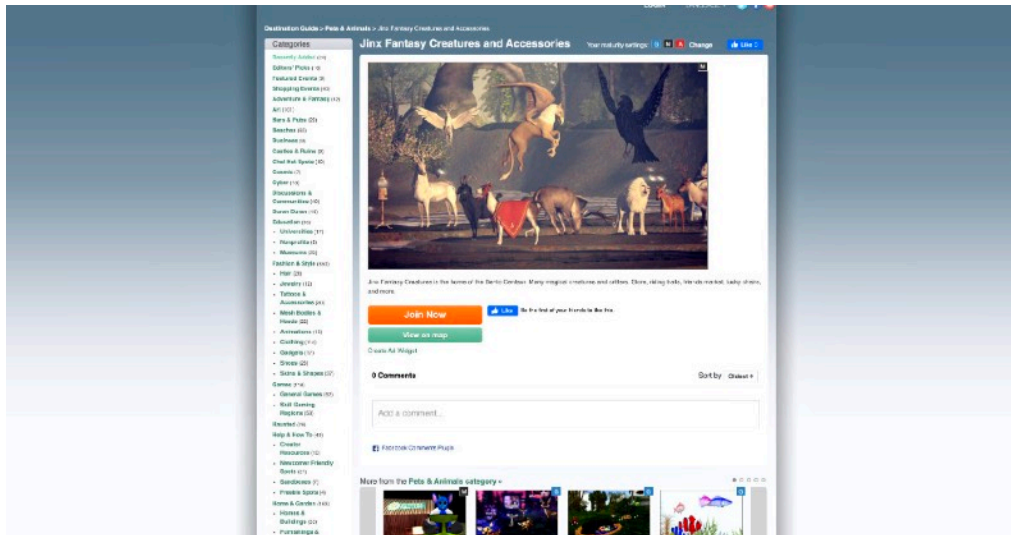
And if all else fails, get the kids to show you how!

4. Here's another example of something exquisitely beautiful, another creation of a member of Second Life. Something you could learn to create.

It's called Finian's Dream, a mystical and beautiful land, based on old Celtic Ireland. Come discover the secrets of the forest as you explore the misty woods, stop by the tavern, see the countryside, and visit a castle. Irish folk-singing plays softly in the background.

secondlife://celtic%20mist/83/74/28





5. After all that, or before if you prefer, you could go to the SL Destinations Guide and choose from the great variety of places listed.

<https://secondlife.com/destinations>

I recommend you look at 'Editor's Picks' which is at the top of the listings. Some of the sites might not be of great interest to your kids but I'm sure you'll be impressed with the standard of



creativity in Second Life.

6. There are many 'freebies' on offer, clothes, objects of all sorts, skins (bodies), hair, all sorts. Your kids would surely like some of them, and it can be lots of fun seeing what's on offer - free.

If you do a search (using the magnifying glass symbol on the left of the screen) you'll find lots of places to visit for freebies.

I strongly recommend you to do that search when the kids have gone to bed, and select a freebie store you'd be happy to take the kids to. Here's one that's fairly safe, I feel, in terms of what's on offer:

secondlife://deva%20loka/49/48/53

There's a huge variety in Second Life, including games and sports to play, so take a good look around; in addition to the Destinations Guide, use the 'Search' to look for other things of interest to you; join the special interest groups; and see what you can find that'll keep the kids entertained, educated, inspired and engaged during this great opportunity to learn something new.

Give it a go!

Philip Snow (Philip McGillivray in SL)
3rd April 2020

Who am I in RL (real life)?

I suppose you need to know who I am, but I'm sure you do need to know that I'm not connected to Second Life other than being a non-paying member; I'm not offering this project in collaboration with anyone, I'm not going to make any money out of, I don't need publicity or thanks. I'm merely someone who likes helping people, and I'm seeing an opportunity to use my knowledge and experience of Second Life to help parents and children whilst they're stuck at home at this time of the COVID-19 pandemic and needing to use the time profitably and enjoyably. I'll be happy if it helps someone.

Otherwise I can tell you that I'm 74 years old, never married, living in the North Midlands of England near to where I was born and brought up, though I spent 28 years away, including 17 years in Scotland, the rest in different places in England.

I went to Scotland in 1966 to train in hotel management and had a good career in it until the 1980s when I veered away to a spiritual path, looking for answers. I joined a community practising TM-Sidhis, a meditation technique capable of improving the quality of life for everyone in the U.K. It works.

I left that place after my father died, to return home to look after mother where I stayed for 12 years until she died. During that time, in the 90s I got on to the internet, and ran a 2000+ members classic car club from the kitchen table.

In the early 2000s I took an interest in books about the 5000+ years old Mayan Calendar, including hosting the well-known author of some of them when he was launching his latest book in England in 2004. The Mayan Calendar was due to complete itself in 2012, hence the idea that became popularly accepted that the world would end in 2012 - which it did, in a sense, and we're now moving into a new world in which we're becoming more aware of the spiritual dimensions of our lives - slowly at first, though this Coronavirus could well catapult us into that new world as we realise how dependent on and interdependent with we are with other people and therefore need to care for each other more. Who would have thought?

In 2004, on an auspicious day related to the Mayan Calendar, I founded a one-person not-for-profit organisation called New Living, with the tagline "Creating a more loving world to help us through to a Golden Age". I made a website <https://www.newliving.org> and wrote about what I was learning. In 2015 I made a 48-videos course called 'Learn To Love More' which is published - free to view - on the online learning system Udemy. <https://www.udemy.com/learn-to-love-more> .

In 2005 I volunteered at a local, 500+ members Pensioners' Convention campaigning for older people's best interests, where I became Treasurer and then Chairperson, each for 2 years until 2009.

Then I wanted to spend more time helping people anticipate the changes I believed were upcoming as the Mayan Calendar ended, so I left the Pensioners' Convention and it was then that I joined Second Life where I intended to build, in the 3d virtual world, a teaching centre where I could talk with people from all over the world. I did that, and that was how I learned enough about building in Second Life that I was able to see that Second Life could be a great place to hold a global event, 'Global Love Day' which The Love Foundation, a Florida, U.S.-based not-for-profit foundation holds on May 1st annually.

It worked so well that I was offered a seat on The Love Foundation's board of management, which I accepted, and I have been helping them since then, and continuing today. The Love Foundation's website is <https://www.thelovefoundation.com>

And that's more or less the length and breadth of who I am! Well, there are my YouTube channels, and Facebook pages, but....more than enough, already.
