

Discussion topic: Expanding/Enhancing Information Literacy Using In-World Tools

Robin Mochi led the discussion which took place on Infolit iSchool, 29 May 2008 at noon SL time. A chatlog (transcript) of this session is available at <http://sleeds.org/chatlog/?c=295>
Notecard updated 3 June 2008

Summary: Free in-world tools, such as Sloop and the Salamander HUD, can be used to take information literacy to the next level. Librarians often supply links to quality websites, with these tools we can share the best in-world resources. We discussed these inworld tools and vendors were available to take copies (at time of writing these are in teh Centre for Information Literacy Research)

Background Info:

In-world tools can be used to expand and enhance traditional information literacy skills and practices. Virtual worlds can be used to meet information needs on a more immersive level. With SL it is possible to become immersed beyond what the 2D Web can provide. Tools such as the Sloop and Salamander HUD can be used in SL to provide links to relevant in-world resources. With these tools one can make direct teleport links to in-world resources and make them available on the 2D Web for individual's information needs. Librarians can also assist professors who are teaching classes in SL by using unique tags for courses, and instructing students on how to use these resources.

Definition - Immersion - is a measure of the degree to which information surrounds and includes us through sensory means; in a sense, the extent to which our external sensory inputs are occupied with a given task vs. any distraction.
<http://www.realityprime.com/articles/web-3d-part->

For years librarians have provided links to valuable websites. We also teach classes and individuals how to analyze and evaluate websites. More recently librarians have been pointing to, and sometimes incorporating, relevant Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, wikis, YouTube videos, RSS feeds, and various social networks, along with more traditional resources. Virtual worlds are a natural "next step" in this progression.

Example: An individual is seeking information on schizophrenia.

You might start with showing them an encyclopedia article, then perhaps move to scholarly research articles and books. You may also point them to some valuable websites and videos, and perhaps a couple of good blogs. Finally you can provide them with links to in-world resources on schizophrenia.

One such SL build would be UC Davis' Virtual Hallucinations.

The person seeking this information may have read about schizophrenia, listened to a podcast and viewed videos. The next level, going in-world and being immersed, in this case, would allow the person to experience via their avatar what it is like to experience schizophrenia. (You may need to visit this SL build, to fully understand what is being described here.)

The Tools: Sloop, Salamander, and many other in-world tools work via a HUD.

Definition - HUD - A Heads-Up Display (HUD) is an attachment point on an avatar which allows an object to be visible only to the resident whose avatar it is attached to. There are 8

HUD attachment points that can be used. HUDs exist between the UI and the world. HUDs were introduced in SL Version 1.7 and allow residents to create UI-like elements.
http://secondlife.wikia.com/wiki/Heads-Up_Display

(Note: The notecard that comes with a HUD gives full instructions on their use.)

There are many other in-world tools that would work well to expand and enhance information literacy. A couple here, which I have begun investigating, are the Blog HUD and Sloodle (a tool that integrates parts of SL in the Moodle LMS). Most are free, though some do charge a nominal fee. All I have mentioned in this notecard are currently free though the Blog HUD has a premium level available for a price.

My focus today will be on Sloop, and I will attempt to explain how Sloop, Salamander, and the MERLOT (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching) website are inter-connected.

The major difference between Sloop and Salamander:

Sloop is used for in-world open tagging much like the social bookmarking tool, del.icio.us (<http://del.icio.us/>), where Salamander works in a similar way, but is much more restrictive and focused purely on education.

Sloop home page: <http://www.sloog.org/>

There are also some screenshots on the blog <http://librarianbydesign.blogspot.com/>

Sloop has been developed by MosiMosi World in Barcelona. You can find Mosi Mosi as the most popular site on the Sloop home page, and can easily visit them in-world by clicking on the link to teleport. The Sloop vend machine, which disperses the Sloop HUD can be found there.

From the Sloop notecard - "It allows bookmarking places and people using tags. Tags are keywords you use to describe a place or avatar. Later on, you can search your saved data fairly easily, based on those tags."

My (Robin Mochi's) Sloop page: http://www.sloog.org/users/Robin_Mochi

(Click on the tag GFUEDFL to see all places tagged for students in a course I will be assisting with this summer for a professor at my university.) Once familiar and oriented in SL, students or individuals could use the Sloop and/or Salamander HUDs to create their own list of in-world resources.

From the Salamander notecard - "The Salamander HUD was developed by Sloop and Eloise Pasteur for The SaLamander Project, a collaboration between The Center for Advanced Technology in Education at the University of Oregon, MERLOT, and Sloop. Funded by a grant from the NorthWest Academic Computing Consortium."

Link to Salamander Project wiki: <http://www.eduisland.net/salamanderwiki>

Merlot home page: <http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm>

Finally, feel free to IM me anytime with questions regarding these tools.

SL Robin Mochi aka Robin Ashford, 3 June 2008