

Is Your Avatar in MySpace?

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Institutions, including universities and libraries, are experimenting with the use of social networking facilities such as face book and MySpace and virtual worlds including Second Life as an adjunct to traditional interfaces to web based resources. While face book and MySpace provide a range of options for creating groups and networks, and software such as ning allows the creation of special purpose social networks within or between institutions; virtual worlds offer a more immersive experience and a wide range of options for content creation. Audiovisual media are prominent in both social networks and virtual worlds. The virtual online world "Second Life" provides a platform for "residents" to create in a variety of media, with live musical performance high on the list of popular attractions. Sound effects including background nature sounds, character vocalisations and effects associated with animated objects add to the second life soundscape and strengthen the illusion of immersion in a virtual world. A wide range of streaming media is also available, either user created or sourced from existing internet streaming channels. Library and Archive communities are represented in Second Life by special interest groups which are a diverse, international forum for investigation and discussion of the possibilities and challenges presented by Second Life and other similar platforms. This paper will discuss the author's professional participation in social networks and Second life, the activities of archivists working in Second Life, experiments in the use of Second Life for dissemination of archival resources, and the challenge of collecting and preserving the cultural artefacts of virtual worlds.