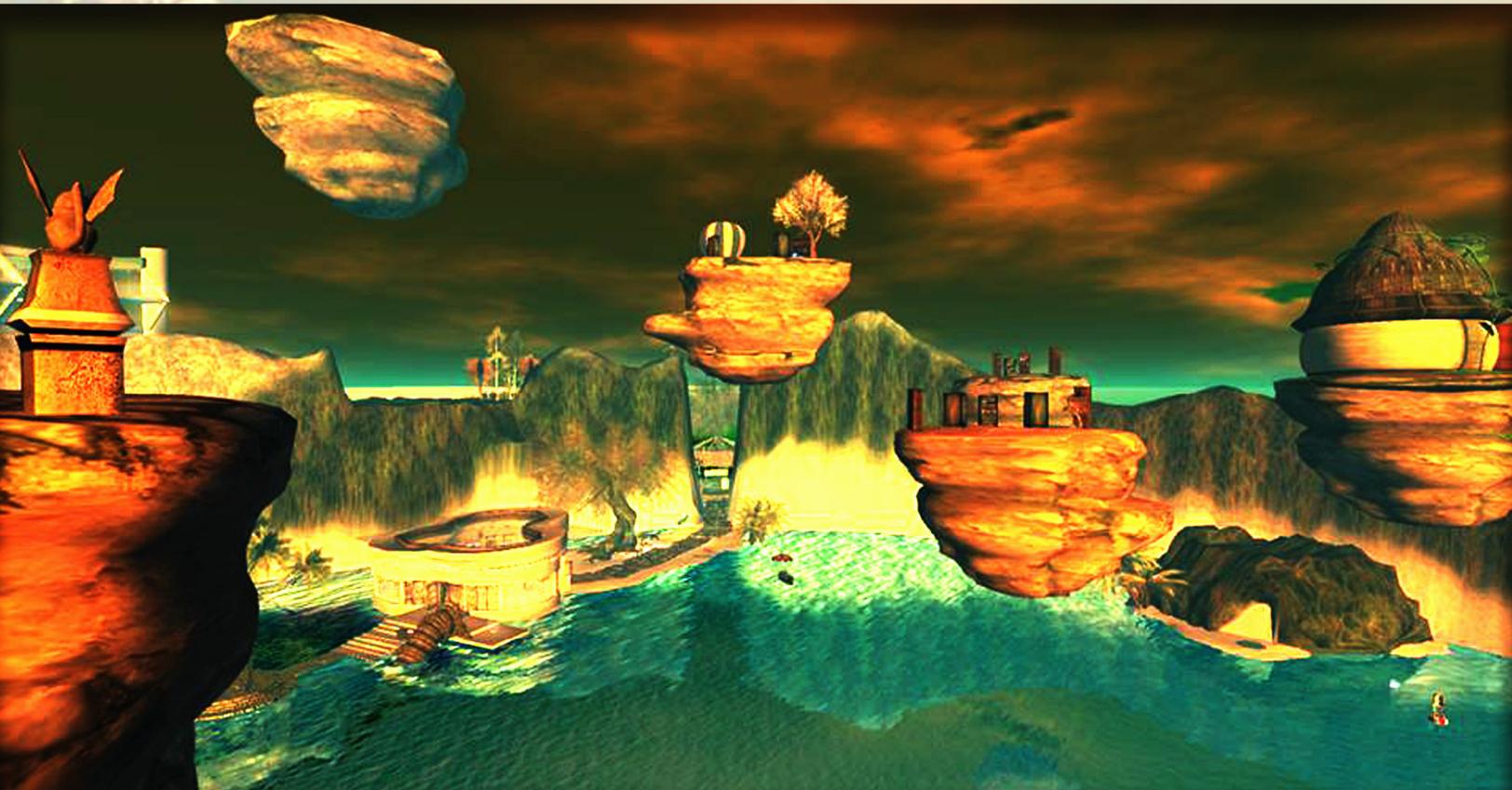


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## Assembled 2015

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From: Alexandria - A Virtual Repository of Knowledge



# Volume 8, Number 1

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## Editor in Chief Corner: Possible Futures

Prof. Yesha Sivan

Tel Aviv-Yaffo Academic College, Israel

Our journal, JWVR, is celebrating this year its 8<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. This issue (our customary beginning of the year assembled issue) includes again the top of the crop of papers in our field.

We would like to thank our Issue Editors Dr. Stephanie Blackmon from the University of Oklahoma (OK, USA), and Dr. Patricia Anderson from Carolina University (NC, USA) who took upon themselves to bring to our readers this Assembled 2015 issue with the following papers:

1. **Alexandria - A Virtual Repository of Knowledge** by J. M. Graham and E. Comaroski. This paper presents a Linden-based virtual library that uses synchronization techniques based on the OpenSim Scripting Language, and server-side file-synchronization software, in order to allow the stashing and dissemination of educational and recreational material within Virtual Worlds.
2. **From Voxel Vistas: Place-Making in Minecraft** by T. Quiring. The concept of place informs much of human meaning-making in both space and time. This paper seeks to bridge gaps between the literature on place and research on video games and virtual worlds, by finding points of intersection. The author analyzes the immensely successful independently-developed video game Minecraft through his own experience and an analysis of gameplay videos uploaded to YouTube.
3. **Lessons from Recruiting Second Life Users with Chronic Medical Conditions: Applications for Health Communications** by J. Swicegood and S. Haque. As part of a larger project, the authors present lessons learned from an online survey of SL users self-identified as having diabetes, chronic pain, HIV + status or cancer, lessons that can be used to develop and disseminate health communications in Second Life.
4. **Professors and Virtual World Professionalism: A Qualitative Study** by S. J Blackmon. The author presents this study: a hermeneutic phenomenology, conducted in an effort to understand professors' lived experiences with professionalism in virtual worlds, specifically in Second Life. The findings indicate that avatar attire is an important aspect of professionalism for many professors.

5. **The Influences of User Experience, Aesthetics and Psychology in the Design Process of 3D Avatars (Theoretical model)** by T. Photiadis, N. Souleles. This paper introduces a theoretical model that combines aesthetics, user-experience and psychology: three theoretical factors which – it is argued - significantly contribute to the operation of designing 3D avatars.
6. **Gaming Experience and Spatial Learning in a Virtual Morris Water Maze** by S. de Castell, J. Jenson and H. Larios. In this article, the authors, who developed a VMWM within SL (2015), report on an analysis of navigation strategies as measured by participants' path lengths and patterns, and describe these strategies in the context of performance gleaned from the search latencies.

This year we will also publish the book *3D3C Platforms: Applications and Tools for Three Dimensional Platforms for Community, Creation and Commerce* published by Springer, as a summary of the state of the art of the field.

In 2008, when Jeremiah Spence founded JVWR, the excitement of flexible user-generated world was very high. It seemed that the world of Second Life took years of hardware, software, and social-ware experience into a new level that will “change” the world. This was yet another wave of promise of virtual reality. In 2008, users, business analysts and academics alike used to be at awe because Second Life had millions of users, commerce was done virtually, there were grievors in virtual worlds, and people could create 3D objects by themselves.

In 2015, today, 7 years later, Facebook has more than 1.35 billion monthly active users<sup>1</sup>, commerce is done with a fingerprint via Apple pay, cyber criminals are attacking real companies, and people are printing their own outfits and objects.

Much has changed. The virtual is becoming the real and the real is becoming the virtual. In fact, it seems that the term “virtual worlds” as a key term for an academic domain, does not make sense anymore. It is time for us, as an academic journal, to take an “academic sabbatical” to define the future of our journal in light of the possible futures of both worlds (real and virtual). Of course, this will be an active Sabbatical where we try to grapple with several questions:

1. **Topic** – we need to move away from the term “Virtual Worlds” - it makes less sense. What will be the term we use?
2. **Format** – currently about 3 issues a year. What are the alternatives?
3. **Community** – the relations between the journal, the site and the community (Facebook, LinkedIn etc.)
4. **Business model of the journal** – how to pay for the production and editing (connect with a publisher, publish full papers in Amazon etc.)

In the tradition of Community, Creation, and Commerce we will seek feedback and inputs from the community in few ways: formal and informal; open and directed; on the topic itself (the “what”) and about the format (“how” we distribute the knowledge).

We look forward to jointly define the future (our next seven years) of this publication, and in doing so -- assist in the design of both real and virtual worlds.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.statista.com/statistics/264810/number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/>