



CDC Island in Second Life

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SexInfo a new text messaging service for youth.

Home
 Advisory Board
 Campaigns
 Messages
 In the News

A new sexual health cell phone text messaging service for young people in San Francisco.

Text SEXINFO to 917-957-4280 (Metro PCS users) and 61827 (all others).

Launch Date: April 24, 2006

- Timely response to the increasing gap among African-American young people.
- Based on a successful program in London.
- Created to give info and advice to San Francisco youth on birth control, sexual health services, and HIV prevention.
- Designed for health educators and other youth-serving professionals.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 Coordinating Center for Health Information and Service
 National Center for Health Marketing

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e-Health & CDC 2.0 Goal

....CDC is committed to all new media activities using the most effective and efficient means possible to deliver health information, when, where and how people want it.

Interactive media can make health information more powerful through:

- ▶ Personalization
- ▶ Presentation
- ▶ Participation

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CDC 2.0 e-Health Efforts

- Email updates
- Podcasts/RSS
- e-Cards
- Mobile applications
- Social networks
- User-generated content
- Other open-sourced tools
- Blogs/webinars
- Wikis
- e-Games
- Viral videos
- Tagging
- Virtual worlds

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current establishment



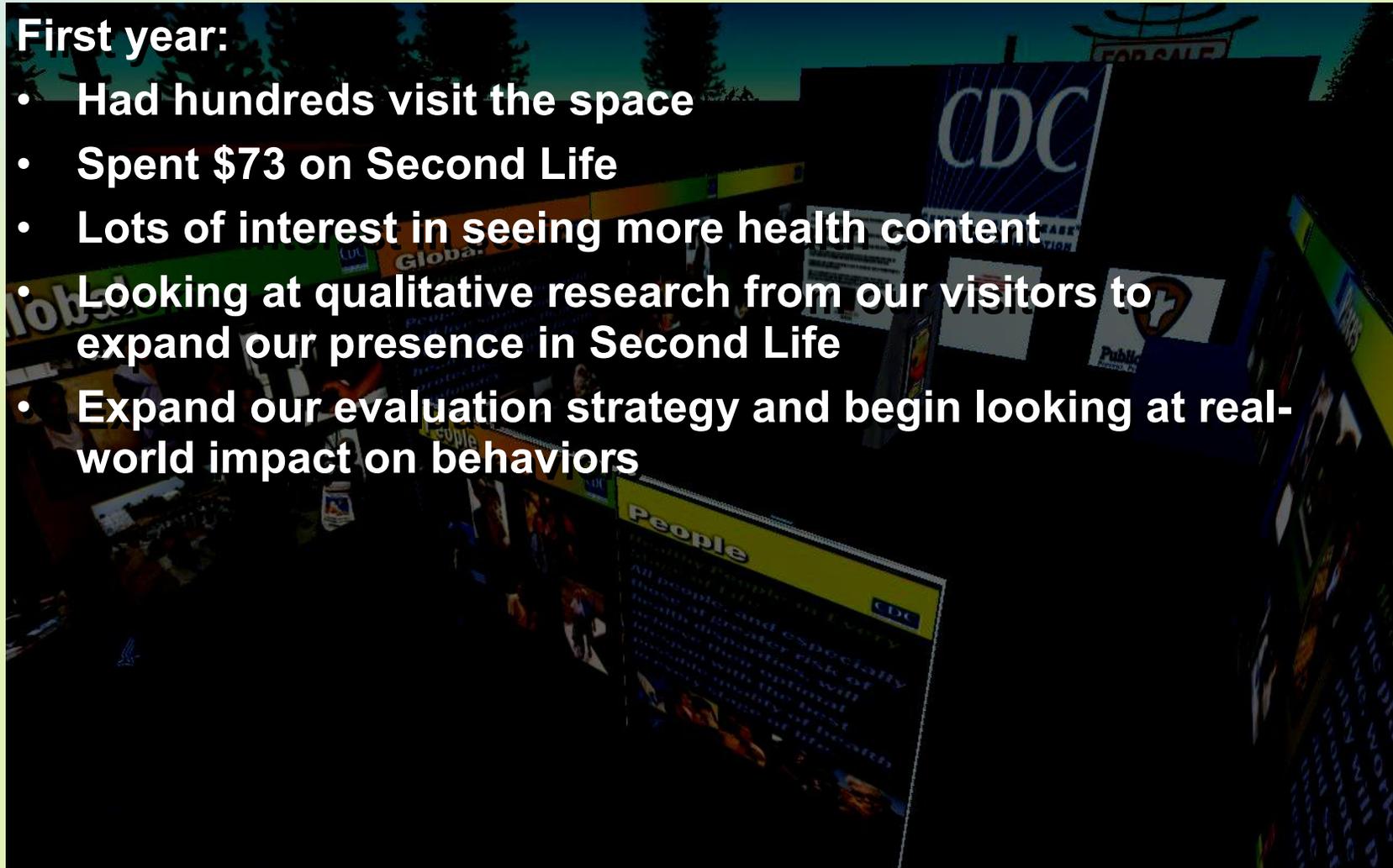
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current establishment

First year:

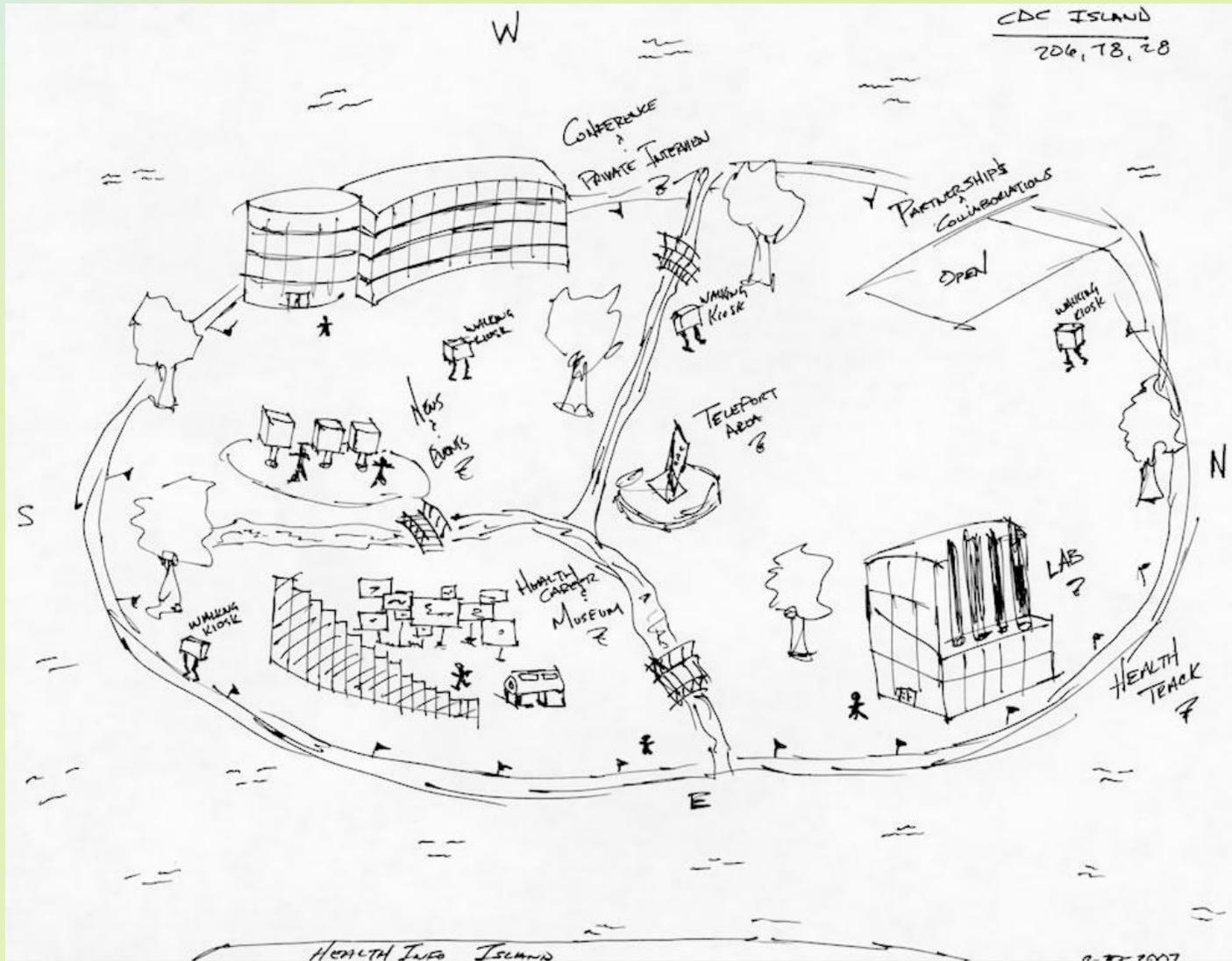
- Had hundreds visit the space
- Spent \$73 on Second Life
- Lots of interest in seeing more health content
- Looking at qualitative research from our visitors to expand our presence in Second Life
- Expand our evaluation strategy and begin looking at real-world impact on behaviors



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conceptual CDC island



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CDC In-World Interviews and Focus Group

Findings and Recommendations



research goals

Goal 1: Identify user

- Needs
- Preferences
- Expectations

of the CDC Second Life Island.

Goal 2: Identify

- Content
- Features
- Functionality

that will make the greatest real world health impact if implemented

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participants

- 25 avatar Interviews, one 5 avatar Focus Group
- General consumers of health info and public health professionals
- Targeted during the day and at night, on weekdays and weekends

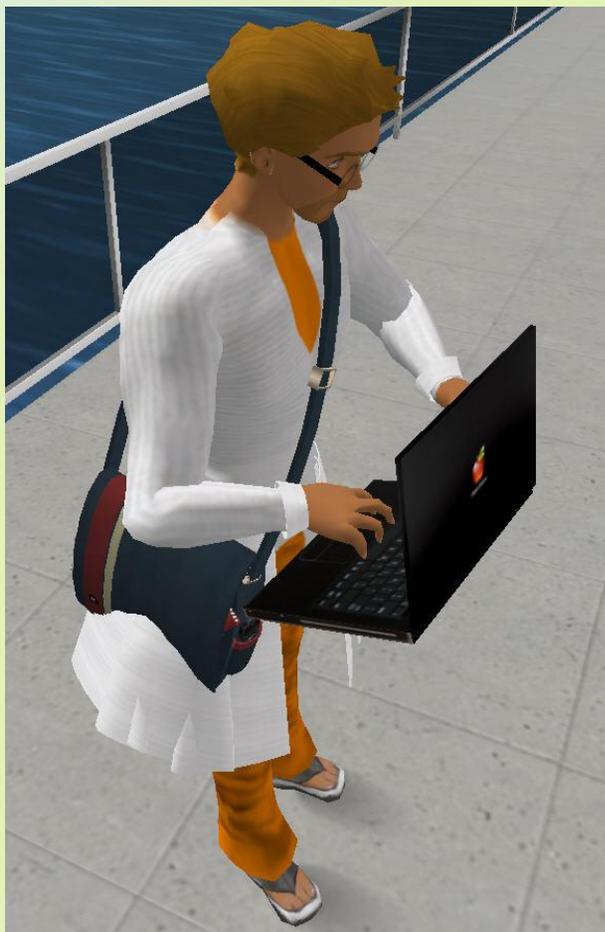


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recruiters and interviewers

- Half female avatar, half male avatar



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example interview



example interview

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The screenshot shows a Second Life window titled "Second Life" with a menu bar (File, Edit, View, World, Tools, Help) and a toolbar. The main view is a 3D environment with palm trees and wooden furniture. A chat window is open, displaying the following text:

Communicate
Diamond Rayna
[Profile] Call [Mute voice chat]
[6:50] Danie Sella: It stands for the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
[6:50] Diamond Rayna: ok, got it
[6:50] Danie Sella: ok.
[6:50] Danie Sella: Have you ever visited a health related place in Second Life? If so, which one(s)?
[6:51] Diamond Rayna: No I haven't
[6:51] Danie Sella: OK.
[6:51] Danie Sella: What kinds of health information would you expect people to find in world?
[6:51] Danie Sella: in SL.
[6:51] Diamond Rayna: You mean in this world?
[6:51] Danie Sella: in Second Life, what types of health info would expect to find here?
[6:52] Diamond Rayna: It's a game... so I don't think someone expects to find heal informations
[6:52] Danie Sella: ok.
[6:52] Danie Sella: Do you think people search for different kinds of health related information in-world when compared to the information they search for in the real world?
[6:53] Danie Sella: There are health related islands in SL, so do you think people search for different information here in SL as compared to what they search for in Real Life?
[6:53] Diamond Rayna: As I told you, I think is not necessary to find Health informations here

At the bottom of the chat window, there is a text input field containing "IM: Diamond Rayna: As I told you, I think is not necessary to find Health informations here" and a "Send" button. The window also shows a "Contacts" list with "Near Me" and "Diamond Rayna".

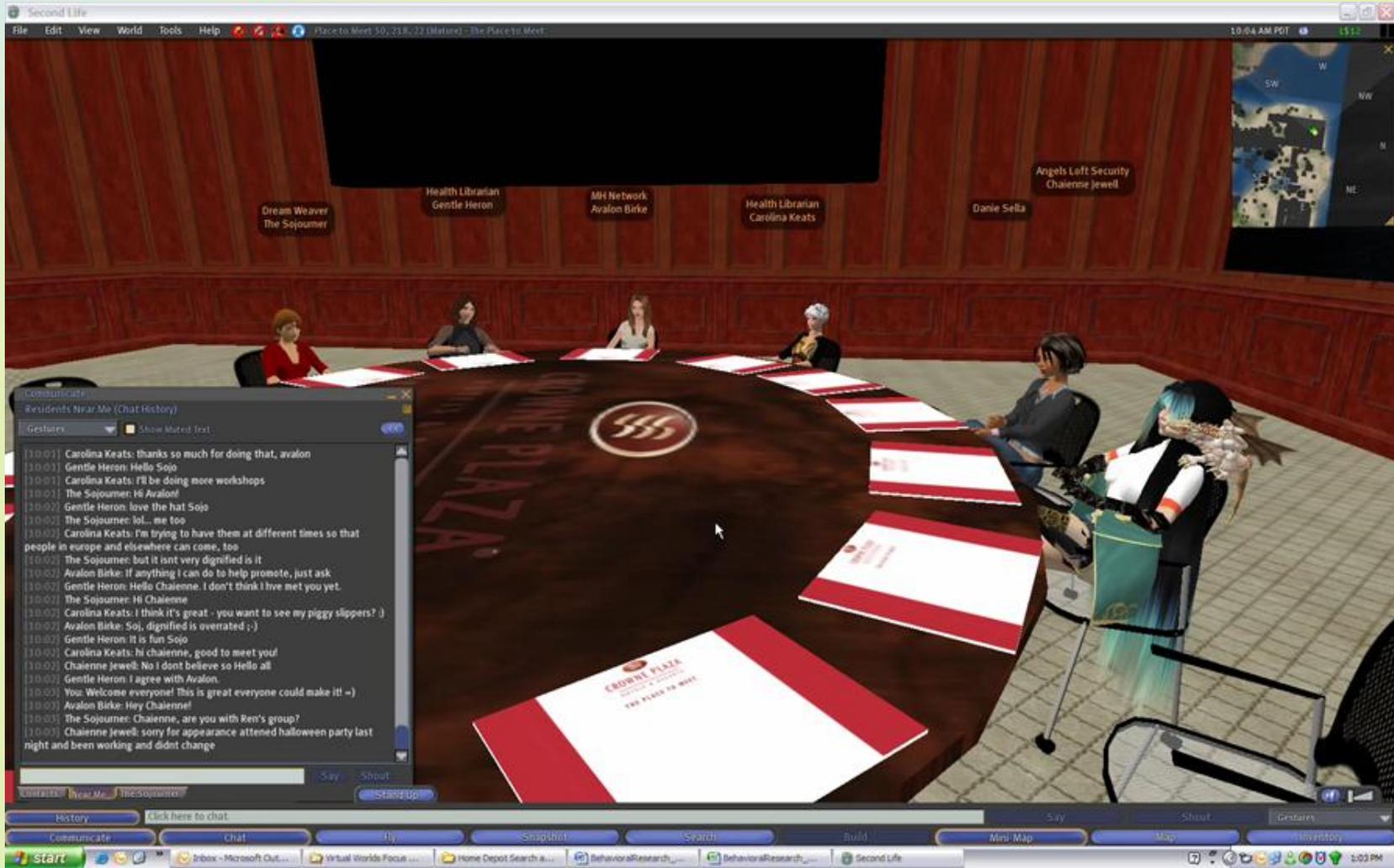
The 3D environment shows two avatars sitting on a wooden deck. One avatar is labeled "Money Tree Island Diamond Rayna" and the other is labeled "Danie Sella". A mini-map in the top right corner shows the location of the avatars on a map of the island.

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button and several open applications: "Inbox - Microsoft Out...", "Crowne Plaza's Secon...", "Second Life", "Virtual Worlds Focus...", "BehavioraResearch...", and "Microsoft Excel - Beh...". The system tray shows the time as 9:54 AM.

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focus group



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methods

- Participants allowed to discontinue participation at any time
- No more than 8 participants were asked the same set of questions
- Participant numbers were assigned throughout analysis in place of avatar names

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questions

- a) General Health Information
- b) Health Related Virtual Search
- c) CDC Island Expectations and Preferences
- d) CDC Island Perceptions

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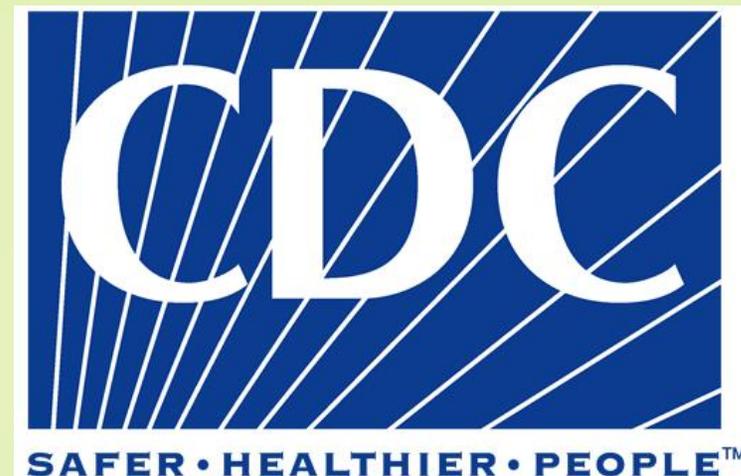


general health findings

awareness

- Majority of participants didn't recognize the CDC acronym
- Most international participants had never heard of the CDC
- Note: Europeans outnumber Americans 3 to 1 in Second Life

“I don't know what the CDC is, but it makes me think of the television show 24.”



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real world source of information

Sources that participants use to find health related info:

- Google
- Web MD
- Department of Health
- General Practitioner

“I use Google, and then I follow the links from there.”



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real world information people are looking for

Interest in general health and fitness, as well as specific diseases ailments that they had been diagnosed with.

- AIDS
- Breast cancer
- Prostate cancer
- Ulcerative colitis
- Spinal injury
- Migraines
- Depression
- Obesity

“For me, I want to learn about Crohn's Disease (I was diagnosed with this about 3 years ago), asthma, migraines and allergies.”

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information people are looking for from the CDC

Interest in general health and fitness, as well as specific diseases ailments that they had been diagnosed with.

- Prevention and treatment options for disease
- Health statistics
- Vaccination information
- Disease outbreaks
- Information about traveling abroad

“Most likely vaccination information, prevention and treatment of STDs, plague outbreak information, and other health statistics.”

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health related virtual search findings

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visiting other health related areas in second life

- Most health professionals had visited other health islands
- Most non health professionals didn't know they existed
- Discovered places by word of mouth and through searching
- Visit health islands for information and support
 - Health Info Island
 - American Cancer Society
 - Dreams
 - Support for Healing

“I visit the American Cancer Society Island to learn more and seek support for my cancer.”



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comfort level seeking sensitive health information

- Several participants mentioned that they would be more comfortable searching for sensitive health related info in-world
- Participants continued to mention the anonymity of Second Life
- Anonymity makes them comfortable

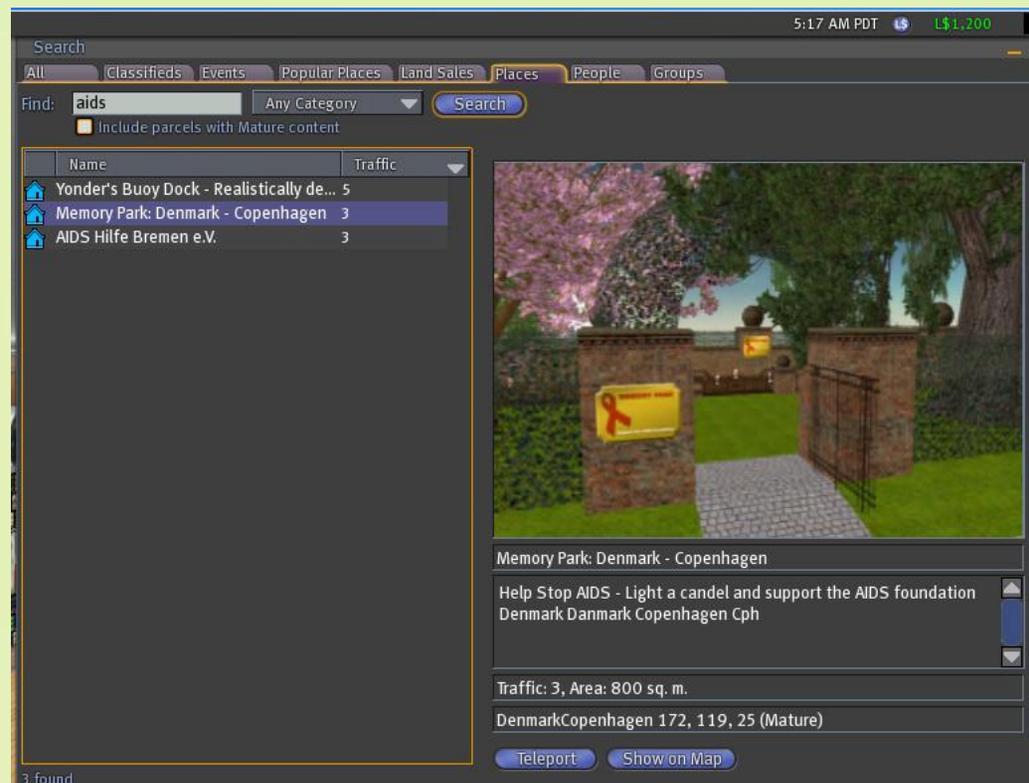
“I would feel more comfortable in the virtual world. I think it increases your feeling of anonymity and if it’s a sensitive health problem such as STDs, it’s even better when virtual.”



how avatars would search in world if they were sick

- Participants would search by the name of the sickness first

“I would search the sickness name first, and then search for different health information centers by name.”



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keywords avatars would use to find CDC island

- Participants did not have any expectations for island location
- They mentioned that islands within Second Life are easy to locate by searching and teleporting
- It would not bother them if the CDC Island was not near other health islands

“It’s an island, who cares where it is?”



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expectations and preferences findings

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CDC island expectations of what avatars would find

- Participants expected info regarding diseases including:
 - SARS
 - AIDS
 - Cancer
 - Bird flu
 - Mental health

“I suppose I’d expect to find some informational exhibits on various disease, including but not limited to bird flu, SARS, and other timely disease, and not to focus solely on the effects and symptoms, but also treatment and disaster planning.”

thoughts on a virtual lab

- Participants were intrigued with the virtual lab concept
- Many mentioned that it would be a fun way to learn about various diseases

“This sounds nice and very promising. If it is done well, then it might real interesting!”



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thoughts on a virtual health career museum

- Participants like to see captivating pictures and videos on islands
- Several participants like the idea of being able to learn about having a career in public health.
- One participant mentioned that it would be nice to be able to chat / talk to actual CDC health officials in an office building

“I always enjoy images and videos, as long as the videos are short. Something where I can get it in less than 5 minutes. I also like the career learning aspect.”



thoughts on virtual news / events

- Participants prefer to participate in events in Second Life
- Many would be excited by health related events
- Some participants mentioned that they would not like the news / events section if it was similar to the information that is on the CDC website

“It would be nice if the CDC island would host events. The events make Second Life get alive and attract people. An empty island is not as attractive as an island with many visitors.”



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thoughts on virtual conference / interview areas

- Participants liked the idea of being able to talk to health professionals on the CDC Island
- Some participants brought up potential issues
- Specifically spying / security

“This idea is somewhat interesting, I've seen groups of people sometimes get together and have serious discussions. Certainly the voice aspect could add to that.”



thoughts on walking kiosks

- Participants liked this idea
- Participants would especially enjoy this feature if it dispensed free items like shirts, bracelets, and pins / ribbons
- Mentioned that it could be annoying and want a way to turn it off

“Nice! This sounds funny, if you make a ‘nice’ creature out of it. A sign with walking legs, very funny.”



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thoughts on a health trail

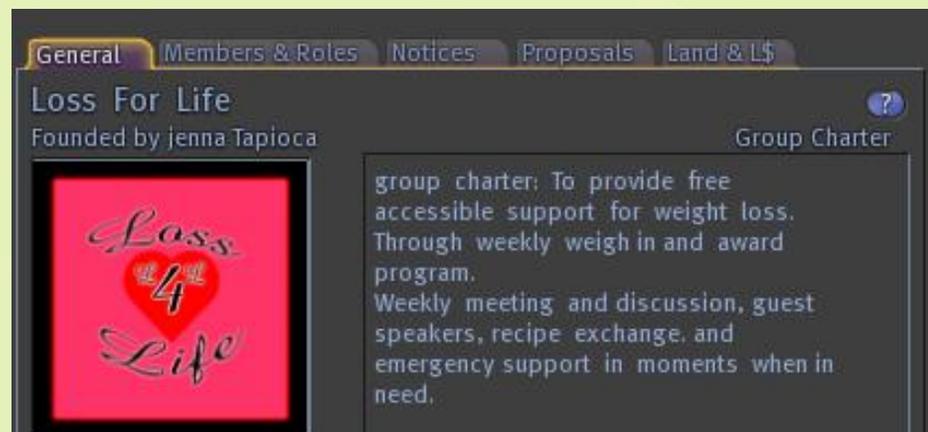
- Participants liked the idea
- Mentioned that the island needs to have translations into different languages
- Participants mentioned nice one-time experience, but would not be something to come back to the island and experience again

“This is good, but maybe a vehicle (like a giant virus maybe) should take you around the trail and have voices available in different languages.”

thoughts on a partnership section

- Participants who are involved with health related groups in Second Life are extremely passionate about providing support and information for those who are in need
- They seek out collaborations where they can partner with other islands and groups
- Examples: Health Library group, Weight Loss Support group

“Well, the groups can need more PR for sure. So it would be nice to have something like this. I run a group which is about HIV and we could need more members for sure.”



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most interesting things to interact with

- Participants found the virtual lab to be most interesting
- Participants want to be able to interact as much as possible in Second Life
- Virtual lab would allow them that opportunity

“I think the Virtual Lab would be the most interesting part, for sure. Maybe if you had a microscope you looked into and saw a small clip of microbes moving around.”

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avatar interest in visiting CDC island once built

- Participants interested in visiting the CDC Island at least once
- Participants mentioned that they wouldn't know why they would need to visit the CDC Island more than once

“Yes, not because I spend a lot of time researching health related issues, because I don't, but because I am curious and like to explore new things. Also it would be the logical place to go if I did have a concern about a disease issue.”

thoughts on others things that could be built

- Participants thought it would be fun if their avatar could ‘catch’ a disease in Second Life
- Also wanted shops, being able to dance, talk to and meet different avatars, and experience new things and places

“If the avatar got the symptoms and actually experienced the illness then they would learn lot more than public service information blurbs.”



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expectations on speaking with CDC avatar

- Participants like self-service type fashion
- However, many wanted talk to an avatar that is a real life health professional -- especially if they had serious health related questions that needed answered

“Well, having such a service would be real great, I think. People can have questions in the middle of the night somewhere on the planet. For example, if you suffer a certain disease and complications come up, you can ask questions to see if you have to see a doctor.”

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favorite things that avatars do in second life

Interacting and engaging with other avatars thought

- Chat
- Dance
- Shopping

“I love to dance and chat with my friends.”



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CDC island perceptions

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things that would make CDC island seem scientific

Participants mentioned that things like...

- Laboratories
- Interactive displays
- Activities related to health and science

“Maybe a laboratory with video or slideshows on new findings.”

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things that would make CDC island seem up-to-date

- Important to staying current with the trends / happenings in Second Life
- Second Life is about connecting with other avatars and experiencing new and fun things in a unique virtual space
- Participants do not want to see things on an island that they could easily see on a website

“Connections via displays, talks, and educational events about current and up-to-date events.”

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things that would make CDC island seem research based

- Access to research publications
- Being able to view links and references to original sources (i.e., a virtual library)
- Contact health professionals who are conducting research on a health related topic
- Place where health professionals and other avatars could interact, perhaps with seminars and poster sessions

“Stations that allow avatars to participate in studies as research subjects.”



things that would make CDC island seem relevant to current issues



- Participants emphasized how successful meaningful events are in Second Life
- Events like “Wear a Ribbon” day and “Locks of Love” day were extremely popular in Second Life

“Jump on issues of concern as topics for public seminars including town hall type meetings.”



things that would make CDC island seem useful in researching health topics



- Virtual library
- Place where they could search for health related information / topics just as they would in a real life library

“Provide a web interface or a way to link to health libraries.”

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things that would make CDC island seem useful for making real life health decisions

- Participants seek other avatars who have similar health issues / ailments and compare treatment options
- Some participants trust others experiences with health issues / ailments much more than a medical professional who just reiterates facts

“Emphasis by staff / volunteers on just that – that some decisions are real life decisions. Some people truly almost LIVE in Second Life. Helping them with referrals and resources is sometimes needed.”



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why new media (conclusion)

- CDC should be (must be) where people are
- increases the dissemination and potential impact of CDC's science
- leverages unique characteristics of emerging channels
- reaches diverse audiences
- facilitates interactive communication

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