



Transcript

[ARCHIVE](#) [ABOUT](#) [EMAIL](#)



[Mark Colvin](#) presents PM Monday to Friday from 5:10pm on Radio National and 6:10pm on ABC Local Radio. Join Mark for the latest current affairs,

wrapping the major stories of each day.



Not sure what this is? [Find out more](#)

< [AM](#)

< [The World Today](#)

< [Correspondents Report](#)

More Current Affairs:

This is a transcript from PM. The program is broadcast around Australia at 5:10pm on Radio National and 6:10pm on ABC Local Radio.

You can also listen to the story in [REAL AUDIO](#) and [WINDOWS MEDIA](#) and [MP3](#) formats.

[PRINT FRIENDLY EMAIL STORY](#)

Internet attracting virtual worlds

PM - Friday, 13 October , 2006 18:44:00

Reporter: Lindy Kerin

MARK COLVIN: More and more people are escaping workaday reality by starting a new life in virtual reality.

In 3D virtual worlds on the internet, you can create your own body and personality, meet virtual friends and carry out everyday activities.

One online society, called Second Life, now has more than 870,000 residents logging in around the world.

But social commentators are warning that some addicts of the virtual world run the risk of being trapped in a fantasy of cyber perfection.

Lindy Kerin prepared this report.

(Sound of Second Life advertisement)

EXCERPT FROM ADVERTISEMENT: Life beyond reality.

LINDY KERIN: Imagine a world where you can create a virtual self, choose what you look like, and do your dream job. Where you can set up virtual businesses, have virtual sex, and do everything from riding a motorbike to dancing in a nightclub.

(Sound of Second Life advertisement)

Since it was created by a San Francisco-based computer group, the virtual online world, Second Life, has grown enormously.

(Sound of Second Life advertisement)

EXCERPT FROM ADVERTISEMENT: Tempt fate without inhibition.

LINDY KERIN: Among more than 870,000 registered users is Sydney PHD student Christy Dena, whose virtual self is a character called Lythe Witte.

CHRISTY DENA: She's a 3D figure, that you can actually, you can buy hair, you can buy nail polish.

I initially modelled her on myself to make it as realistic as possible, but then recently I've just started creating and buying things that I would like to wear, you know, and then start actually doing it in real life as well.

LINDY KERIN: Second Life residents can buy and sell land. Christy Dena says there are also community standards and of course, virtual crime.

CHRISTY DENA: There are griefers and things like that happen in every single virtual world, where you basically get people coming on, who are trying to "grief" the place or cause harm.

There are scripting attacks and people who, for instance, create bombs that explode underneath you, and so your avatar is thrown, you know across a couple of mountains, or something like that.

LINDY KERIN: Second Life is being seen as a vehicle to promote businesses. Already some companies are holding meetings and staging events in the virtual world.

(Sound of Second Life advertisement)

SECOND LIFE NARRATOR: I want you to imagine sharing a 3D version of a new product with the public and receiving immediate feedback during the development process.

LINDY KERIN: Yusuf Pisan from the Information Technology faculty at the University of Technology, Sydney, says the growing interest in virtual worlds is simply an extension of how we currently use computers.

YUSUF PISAN: People were amazed that people would spend time on surfing the Internet and looking at pictures, looking at other articles, and even taking classes over the web.

And now we have kind of assimilated it and we feel it's part of our daily routines, and we don't worry about it.

And I think the virtual worlds are going to, in some sense, extend our daily activities. You're going to have a presence in a virtual world, or possibly multiple virtual worlds, and as much as you have a daytime job, and you have a presence in your company or organisation.

LINDY KERIN: Social researcher Hugh Mackay says virtual worlds

such as Second Life can be fun, but warns they can also be dangerous.

HUGH MACKAY: People could feel that in their second life, in cyber space, they're doing things better or differently, in some way more desirably than they're doing in their real life.

So there is a potential trap, I don't want to overstate this, but the trap is that the fantasy becomes preferable to the reality and of course as with all video games, television, any media activity, we do have to keep reminding ourselves that the time we spend with this material is time that we're not spending with each other.

LINDY KERIN: But for Christy Dena, Second Life has literally opened up a new world and new relationships.

CHRISTY DENA: Second Life will continue. The media interest in it obviously will go up and down, according to what's of interest and what changes, and whether another world comes along.

(Sound of Second Life advertisement)

EXCERPT FROM ADVERTISEMENT: Second Life. Get one

MARK COLVIN: That report by Lindy Kerin.

[PRINT FRIENDLY EMAIL STORY](#)

