ALA Virtual Communities in Libraries Member Initiative Report
September 2016

Purpose: To provide a group within ALA for members interested in fostering the practice of library work, the visibility of libraries and library workers, and the extension of library services within online social networks, virtual worlds, and other communities of intention. To provide a mechanism for sharing experiences and practices in-person or virtually through programming or asynchronous communications. To encourage wider participation by the profession and the association in virtual worlds. To establish a forum across all types of libraries and at all levels of library employment concerned with the development of library services in emerging social networks, virtual worlds, and other communities of intention. This group is open to all members.

The Community Virtual Library is a HUB (main branch) of virtual world libraries. The CVL calendar can be accessed at http://www.infoisland.org/.

Celebrated a decade in Second Life, CVL held a party

THE ALA VCL MIG collaborates with the ACRL Virtual World Interest Group to sponsor monthly meeting in Second Life on library-related topics. Topics this year included teaching in virtual worlds, supporting courses and embedding information literacy, art in virtual worlds, VCARA (Virtual Center for Archives and Records Administration, virtual reality, augmented reality, and the future of the Metaverse beyond Second Life for libraries and education.

EXHIBITS
The ALA VCL groups worked on several exhibits including “Libraries and Librarians in Virtual Worlds” and “Art in Virtual Worlds”. During the Virtual Worlds Best Practices in Education Conference 2016, several CVL librarians served as tour guides for Medieval Quest, a literature based role play simulation built by a professor at the University of Hong Kong.

Member of the ALA VCL MIG helped with monthly book discussions and trivia nights were held on the first and third Wednesday of each month. In September, a poetry contest was held. Ten virtual world photographs were shared for writers to reflect and compose poems in any form. The winning poems were published in a virtual ebook.

Hypergrid Resource Center
Realizing that Second Life is only one of many virtual worlds (although widely recognized as the best place for educators and librarians to start), the
Community Virtual Library is sharing resources about “hypergrid jumping” to other worlds, such as Kitely, Inworldz and Opensim. A Hypergrid Resource Center, built to look like a spaceship to “blast off to other worlds” was built near the main library. Resource kiosks inside the spaceship will provide links and instructions on creating an avatar and entering various other worlds to find libraries or educational simulations.

Future Goals
The Community Virtual Library plans to help librarians, educators and lifelong learners find the best virtual communities for particular needs and interests. For example, history teachers may want to join the Virtual Pioneers Group to find excellent historical simulations. Medical students may want to locate communities such as Virtual Ability and K-12 teachers might benefit from joining Minecraft Communities or ISTE. The idea of “communities as resources” within virtual spaces is innovative and shows
unique needs that can be met by trained information specialists. Plans are underway to provide a database for resources of all types: simulations, landmarks, and virtual communities.

CVL continues to provide library services in Second Life and welcomes volunteers as “friends of the library”.

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