Keynote Address

Breaking Down the Walls: The Future of Second Life

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Abstract

Is it possible for 3D Virtual Worlds to be as ubiquitous and relevant as the 2D Internet? Will a broad consumer audience find as much social connection and value in a 3D world as it does in the 2D experiences of Twitter and Facebook? Will conducting business in virtual meeting rooms or attending virtual conferences be as natural and valuable as in real life? Will consuming virtual goods be as commonplace as commerce on Amazon or Ebay? Will standards emerge that enable scalable and interoperable experiences between Virtual Worlds?

At Linden Lab, we certainly think that all this, and more, will happen. In this talk, I’ll describe what we’re doing to make the vision a reality. From our humble startup beginnings a decade ago, through a hype-fueled expansion, Second Life continues to grow. We’re now undergoing a substantial transformation, renovating our platform and experience as we grow beyond our early adopter roots. I’ll take you behind the scenes and describe what we’re up to, the technology that we’re banking on, and hopefully inspire you with some of the incredible experiences our residents have created.

Bio

Howard Look joined Linden Lab in December 2008 as the Senior Vice President of Customer Applications. In this role, Howard oversees the team responsible for the Second Life Viewer, the client gateway to the Second Life Virtual World.

Prior to joining Linden Lab, Howard served as Vice President of Software at Pixar Animation Studios, where he led the team that developed and maintained its proprietary filmmaking system. Prior to Pixar, Howard was on the founding team of TiVo Inc., where he played an instrumental role in defining TiVo’s functionality and UI while serving as Vice President of Application Software and User Experience. Previously, Howard was Director of Applied Engineering at Silicon Graphics, where he led the team that created the “O2 Out of Box Experience,” the world’s first Virtual Reality Modeling Language-based (VRML) 3D workstation setup environment. He also served as an engineer on the Inventor team, which later became the foundation for VRML.

Howard serves on the Board of Directors of Beechwood School, a private, non-profit independent school serving students from East Palo Alto and eastern Menlo Park, California.

Howard received his Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University. He lives in Palo Alto, California with his wife and three children.