



Closing Remarks

Dr. Larry Johnson

Symposium on Creativity in Second Life
August 18, 2007

I've been incredibly engaged during this symposium in a way no gathering in recent memory has engaged me. As I have spent the past week in these completely exhausting and absolutely enlightening sessions, I have learned so much about this world and its potential. In fact, I can't remember when I've had so many revelations in such a short time.

My mind is still spinning. I'm not alone — let me share this from one of the emails we are getting:

Hi Larry — little did I know when I took a week's vacation to attend I would be entering a new world that would put me into creative overdrive, make me stop and ponder my life goals, and open my eyes to the possibilities of a whole new direction I would never have dreamed. I was already excited about SL and the possibilities ...I'm taking the red pill tonight no problem.

I think all of us have had a similar reaction.

There are a few thoughts in particular that I want to share, as we come to the end of this unique gathering, the things that I am planning to keep as my takeaways from this time together:

First, as I said in my opening remarks, creativity really does matter. It is infectious and brings out the best in people. What we are doing here is serious work, worthy work, and it has such potential.

It grabs people in ways I've never seen before. Have you ever heard the words "amazing," "incredible," "fantastic," and just plain "wow!" used in so many contexts?

Second, just based on what we have seen this week here in this virtual space, the impact we can have on learning and idea sharing when we can master these tools is deeper and wider than I think most anyone in education today imagines. I have experienced that myself — some of you are just doing incredible work.

There is that adjective again.

We learned a lot about voice this week. Beth Ritter-Guth's cautions in the closing plenary about how using voice can exclude as well as include people were right on target, and we still have much to sort out around the etiquette of using speech, but ... wow! It adds so much, especially in a group setting.

I was amazed by the way we began sorting out that etiquette as a community, with almost no organized effort. We recognized the strengths even as we realized how we must be sensitive to accessibility. After just this one week, I think we have a really good start on it.

Beyond what we've learned about creativity, I will come away from this symposium thinking the potential for communication embedded in this space is huge and we've only begun to tap that potential.

Our next big event in Second Life, the next in our series of Symposia here, will focus on exactly that. How communication is evolving, how the tools in our lives are shaping it, and especially the global nature of it, and how spaces like this are contributing to that. We are developing a white paper on the topic now — the event itself will be in early December.

My last and most important take away is this. It is completely clear to me that you, the people who have attended this symposium are the people who are best positioned to turn that potential into reality.

We must continue these conversations.

We must continue to demonstrate the potential to each other.

We must continue to share what we know and what we learn.

And so, as we close, I want to make it clear that the NMC is committed to doing all we can to sustaining these dialogs, and to supporting your efforts. I promise you'll hear more on all this from us, and we want to ask you to keep us in the loop on all that you are doing.

We plan to keep the NMC Conference Center up indefinitely, and will open it to all the NMC groups in just a few moments. Likewise, the work on NMC Labs will stay up through the end of the month, and will also be open to all the NMC groups. You know ... we are nearly 5000 people now. Amazing.

The NMC plans to continue these forums, and the studio sessions that accompanied them.

On behalf of all those people, all of us at the NMC, and all the participants, I want to thank all our presenters and panelists.

Each of you has done a wonderful showing us the "magic" we are talking about, of engaging us, stretching our perspectives, and giving us a wealth of new ideas. Our thanks to all of you.

Finally, thanks to all of you attending. You have added so much to this experience by being here!

The NMC plans to continue these forums, and the studio sessions that accompanied them. Our next event will be in December, and will focus on how communication is evolving, and how spaces like this are contributing to that. Expect a white paper on the topic from us soon to launch that discussion.

And so, until then, we say thank you for helping us see the future.

The NMC Symposium on Creativity in Second Life is now adjourned!