

Madrid, Thu Jan 18, 2007

The Cocktail Analysis and SecondLifeSpain promote the first research about the Spanish user of Second Life.

Second Life, the virtual world which already congregates more than two million users in the world, has an incredible interest for many brands and companies that are studying the best strategy in order to draw attention to themselves in this parallel reality. The objectives that are driving investment to Second Life are diverse: private individuals who are looking for business opportunities by commercializing some 'products' or services for virtual residents (SL has its own virtual currency, the 'Linden Dollar'); brands that bet for a presence in Second Life or are just using the billboards to insert their own advertising.

However, for many advertising companies which are considering getting into Second Life, the most attractive thing about this metaverse is the chance to establish a direct, close, and experiential relationship with their consumers.

There are several cases that explore this method, for example Toyota (a giant in the auto industry), not long ago, gave away three-dimensional versions of its new vehicles to some Second Life inhabitants. Far away from the exact number of avatars (which means visitors in SL argot) that "inhabit" SL's virtual lands, brands are interested in identifying these users in a qualitative way: who they are, what is their influence over SL inhabitants or even beyond its borders, in the real world. What are the motivations that drove them to begin a 'second life' in a virtual context where is possible to interact with other residents, and what is their daily behaviour in Second Life. Up to date, most of what it has been written is not based on empirical research, which for sure, determines the decision making process as whether to make important marketing investments in Second Life.

The initiative, driven forward by the consultancy firm The Cocktail Analysis along with Spanish biggest community in Second Life (SecondLifeSpain), tries to fill this lack of information. Both firms have promoted the first basis study on Second Life users. The objective of this project, whose first results will be published in a few weeks is, precisely, to answer the questions posed before. "All in all, -say promoters of this research- we pretend to provide the data that will help marketing decision makers optimize their presence or introduction strategies in Second Life. This means, contributing with insights that will help to define targets, messages, supports, media, etc".

The methodology applied in this study combines the usual techniques in market research: both qualitative (in depth interviews) and quantitative (online surveys), with some new experimental techniques, adapted to Second Life's environment, such as "virtual ethnography", which consists in exploring the virtual context in which users manage themselves.

This study, as it is a pilot experience, makes possible the perspective of extending and introducing the field of research into Second Life's community as a whole. Simultaneously to the development of this research, the same sources announce the creation of "Second Life Panel", the first international panel of SL users, especially developed to conduct market research in this virtual world.

<http://www.the-cocktail.com/>
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