


Second Life Quickstart

by  Rand Linden on 09-14-2011 10:10 AM

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Before you start



Important: You must install a standalone program, the *Second Life Viewer*, to enjoy the rich 3D content in Second Life. The installation process is quick and easy, but your computer must meet the [System Requirements](#). Second Life will not run on systems that fail to meet these requirements.

Registering for and installing Second Life

Follow this quick four-step process to [register for and install Second Life](#).

1. Choose an avatar

This is how YOU will appear in Second Life. You can choose from a wide selection of avatars, including people, animals, robots, and even vehicles.

If you change your mind later, don't worry—you can select a different avatar any time you want! Once you learn Second Life, you can also customize your avatar to your heart's delight, or pick from a vast selection on [Second Life Marketplace](#).



2. Create a username

Your username is the account name that you use to log in to Second Life. It has to be unique, so you may not get to choose a simple or common name.

Later, you can also choose a *display name* that everyone sees in addition to your username.

For more information, see [Usernames](#) and [Display names](#).



Warning: Choose your username carefully! Once chosen, you can't change it. Although you can designate a "display name," your username will still be visible, and others may use it to refer to you.

3. Select an account type

Choose a free basic account, or sign up for a premium account for as little as \$6 per month.

With a premium account, you get your own private [Linden Home](#) (if you're at least 18 years old), virtual currency rewards, exclusive virtual goods, and many other benefits. For more information on premium accounts, see [Premium membership](#) in the Second Life Knowledge Base.

If you choose a basic account now, you can always upgrade to premium membership later.



4. Download Second Life

To enjoy the rich 3D content in Second Life, you must [download and install the *Second Life Viewer*](#), an application that runs on Windows, Mac OS, and Linux. Most web browsers will download the installer automatically; if that does not happen, just click **Download & Install Second Life**.

You may need to run the installer program explicitly.

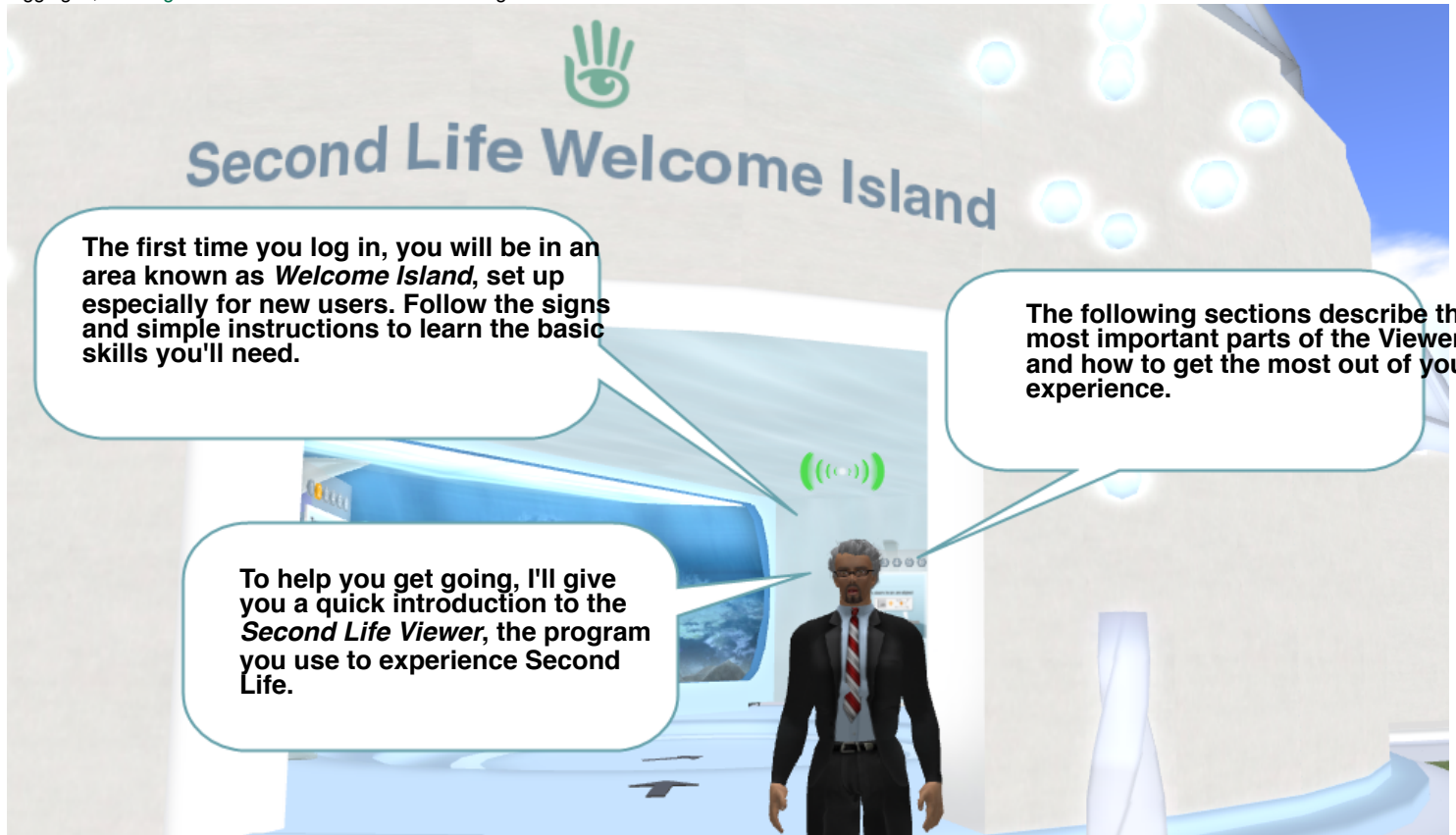


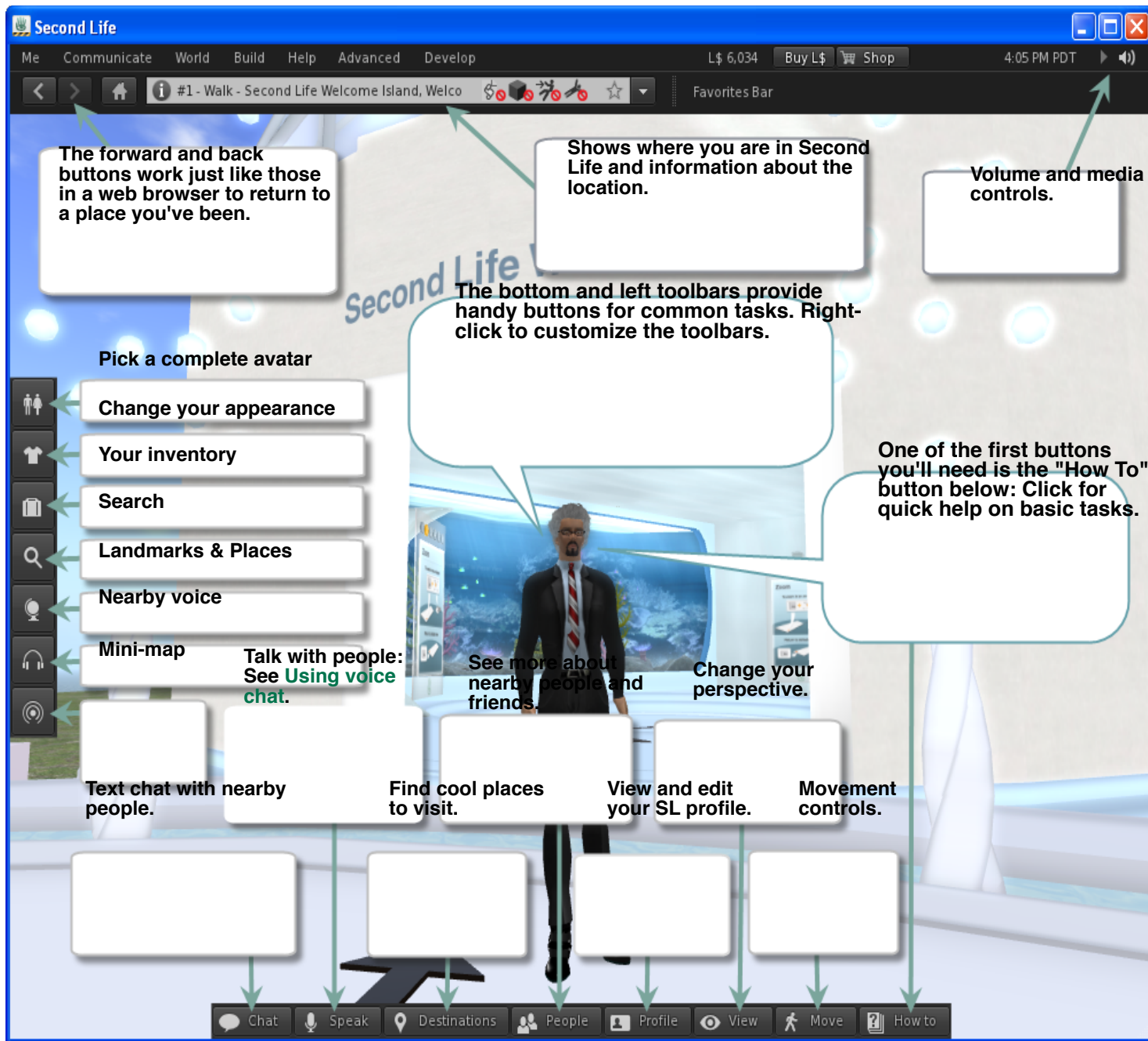
Your first steps inworld

Now that you've registered for Second Life and installed the Second Life Viewer, you're ready to start your adventure in the virtual world—or "inworld," as we call it.

Logging in

Start the Second Life Viewer and then log in to Second Life by entering the username and password you selected when you registered. If you have problems logging in, see [Login failure](#) in the Second Life Knowledge Base.





Basic skills

Some of the first things you'll want to learn how to do include:

- [Walking](#)
- [Flying](#)
- [Changing your view](#)
- [Text chatting](#)
- [Changing your avatar](#)
- [Interacting with objects](#)
- [Finding out more about nearby people](#)
- [Controlling inworld media](#)

Walking



There are three ways to make your avatar walk:

- **Click to walk.** Simply click on the ground at the point to which you want to go. If your mouse pointer turns into a hand instead of an arrow, you won't move but will instead interact with an object. See [Interacting with objects](#).
- **Use the arrow keys.** The up-arrow ↑ and down-arrow ↓ keys walk you forward and backward, respectively. The left-arrow ← and right-arrow → keys turn you left and right, respectively.
- **Use the W, S, A, and D keys.** The **W** and **S** keys make you walk forward and backward. The **A** and **D** keys turn you left and right, respectively. Make sure you click inworld first so that the chat field doesn't have focus. Otherwise, you'll be typing chat text instead of walking.

Running

To run forward, simply double-click the **W** or up-arrow ↑ key. To run backward, double-click **S** or the down-arrow ↓ key.

Flying

Flying in Second Life is really fun, and it lets you move around much faster than you can by walking or running.

To fly, press and hold the **Page Up** key or the **E** key. Press and hold the **Page Down** key or the **C** key to land.

Use the same keys to move through the air as you do to walk.



Note: Some regions don't allow flying. In these areas, you'll see this icon in the location bar and you won't be able to fly.

Keyboard shortcuts

See [Keyboard shortcuts](#) for a quick reference guide.



Changing your view



By default, your view is from directly behind and slightly above your avatar. However, it's often useful to see things from a different viewpoint!

There are several ways to change your view:

- To rotate your view, click and drag anywhere on the world. NOTE: If your mouse pointer turns into a hand *before* you click, then you'll interact with the object instead of rotating your view.
- To zoom in, press and hold the **Alt** key, then click and drag your mouse; or use your mouse wheel.
- To orbit, press and hold the **Alt** and **Control** keys, then click and drag your mouse.
- Click the **View** button and use the controls, shown at left.

To return to the default view, press the **Esc** key.

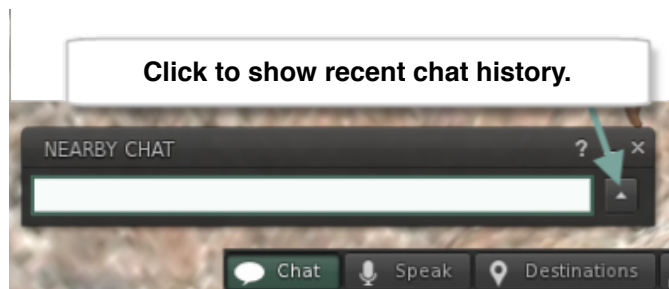
Text chatting

Click the Chat button (by default in the bottom toolbar) to text chat with people nearby. Everyone within twenty meters of you will be able to see what you type.


To shout, press **Control-Enter** instead of **Enter** after typing your chat text. Everyone within 100 meters will be able to see what you type.

Click the triangle icon in the chat field to show recent chat history.

Mouse over names in chat history and then click on the  icon for more options.



Changing your avatar

Click **Avatar**  to change your avatar to one of the free provided avatars. You'll be able to choose from a wide variety of people, robots, animals, and even vehicles. For information on customizing your avatar, see [Editing your appearance](#).

Interacting with objects

To interact with any object you encounter, right-click it and select from the menu of actions and tools, as shown for example at right.

Some objects (such as furniture) automatically provide a "sit" icon when you mouse over them. Simply click on the object to sit on it. To stand up again, just click



the **Stand** button that appears near the bottom of the window.

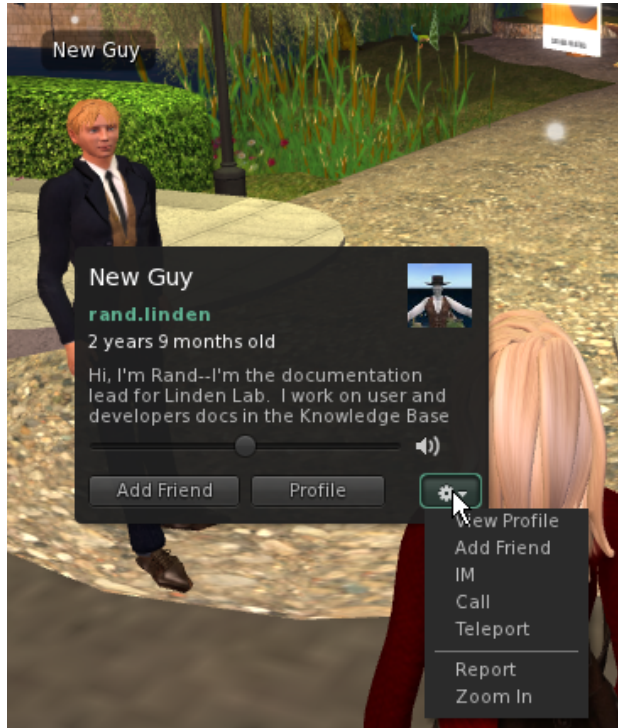
If your mouse cursor turns into a hand when over an object, you may be able to interact with the object by clicking on it. In some cases, clicking performs an action (such as turning on a light switch); sometimes, the object displays a special menu that lets you select from a variety of actions.



When you hover your mouse cursor over an object, you may also see an information box, for example as illustrated at left. Click on the **i** icon for additional options.


Finding out more about nearby people

To find out about those nearby, mouse over their avatars and click the **i** icon that appears.



You'll get an information box with:

- Their avatar name and how long they've been in Second Life.
- Profile "biography" information (if they've added it).
- Voice chat volume control for that person only.
- **Add Friend** button, to send a friendship request. See [Making friends](#).
- **Profile** button, to see the person's profile. See [Using Profiles](#).

Click the  for additional options, as illustrated at left.

Controlling inworld media

Many areas in Second Life have music playing for ambience, or video displayed on an inworld surface. Use the controls in the upper right of the Viewer window to control the volume of the audio or, if you like, to turn it off entirely.

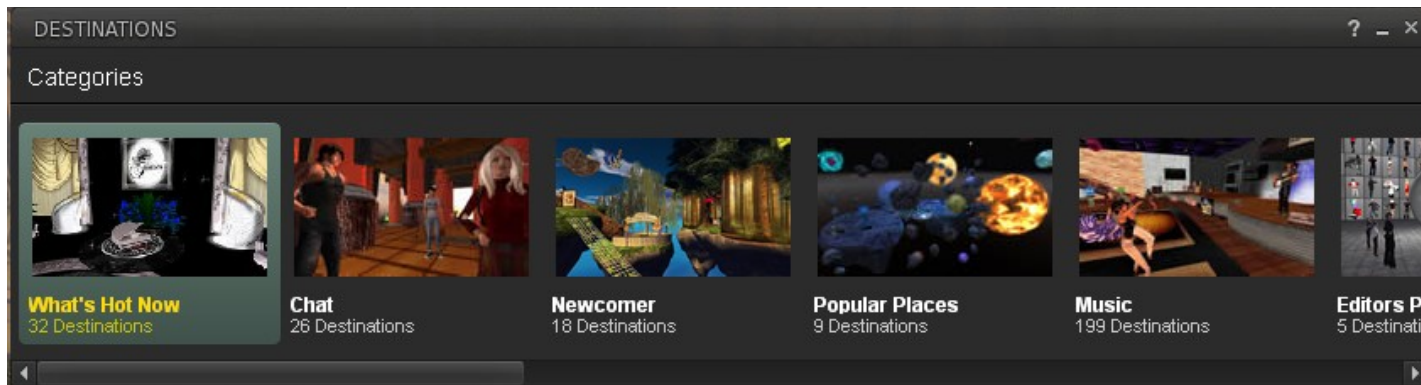
Mouse over any inworld surface displaying video or other media to show special media controls.



Click to start or stop media

Volume control

Finding cool stuff to see and do



Click **Destinations** to see the Second Life Destination Guide. Click on a category, then click on a destination in that category to teleport there immediately. Go to <http://secondlife.com/destinations/> to see more categories and destinations.

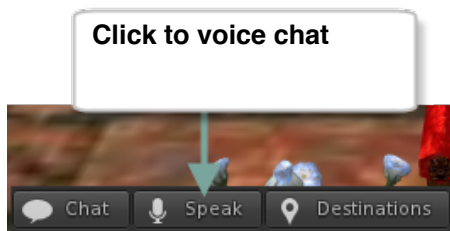
Doing more

Once you become familiar with walking, flying, and the other basic functions, you may want to try:

- [Using voice chat](#)
- [Making friends](#)
- [Seeing nearby people and friends](#)
- [Using profiles](#)

Using voice chat

Tired of typing? Use voice chat to talk to nearby people. You'll need to set up a headset or speakers and a microphone. Using a headset avoids annoying echoes of your own voice.



Generally, it's best to connect your audio devices before you start Second Life. After you have connected your headset (or speakers and microphone), you may need to configure your sound devices. To do this, choose **Me > Preferences > Sound & Media**. You'll be able to select your input and output devices and change your volume setting.

Once you have configured your sound devices, simply click **Speak** to speak to those nearby. Click it again to turn off your microphone.

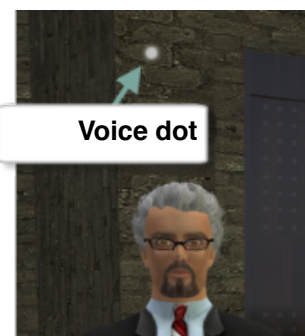
If you're having trouble getting voice chat to work, see [Voice chat FAQ](#).




Note: Some regions disable voice chat. In these areas, the **Speak** button will be dimmed, and you won't be able to use voice chat.

Voice dots

You can tell if voice is enabled and working properly because you'll see a small white dot floating above your name tag, as shown below. If other people have voice enabled, they will have voice dots as well.



Making friends

To make someone your friend, mouse over their avatar, click the  and choose **Add Friend**. This person will receive a friendship request: if they accept it, then they will be on your friends list, and you will be on theirs.

How to accept or decline a friendship offer

When someone else offers you friendship, a dialog box appears in the lower-right corner of your screen.

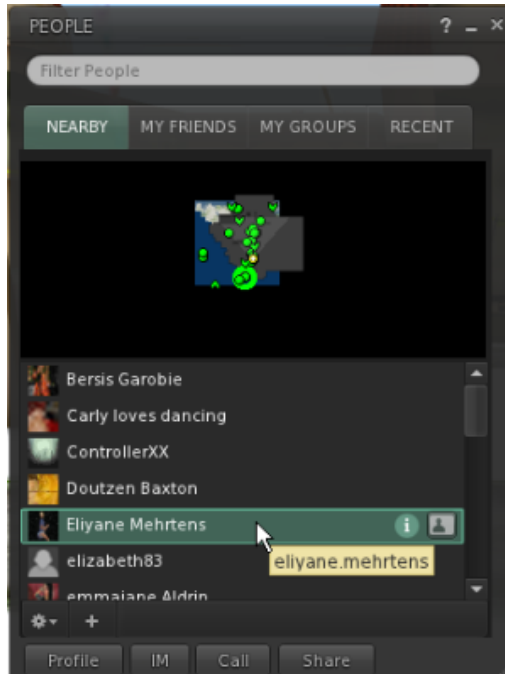
If you click **Accept**, your new friend receives onscreen notification that you have accepted the friendship offer.

Click **Decline** to cancel the offer. The other person receives onscreen notification that you declined the friendship offer.



Tip: Strike up a conversation or have some interaction before asking someone to be your friend—it's good manners!

Seeing nearby people and friends






Click the **People** button to open the People window, which has four tabs:

- **NEARBY** shows everyone within 100m of you.
- **MY FRIENDS** shows your *friends list*, with those currently online shown first.
- **MY GROUPS** shows information on your Second Life groups, which are like clubs. See [Groups overview](#) for more information.
- **RECENT** shows everyone with whom you recently communicated via instant message or group chat.

In all of these tabs, a person's name appears dimmed if they are not currently online.

Mouse over a person's name for additional options:

- Click  to see more information about the person; then click  for a menu with additional actions.
- Click  to view the person's profile. See [Using Profiles](#) for more information.

The mini-map in the **NEARBY** tab shows a bird's eye view of the area you're in; the yellow dot shows your location, and the green dots represent other people.


Zoom in and out with your mouse wheel or right-click on the map for more options.

Using profiles

Click **Profile** to edit your profile. Use your profile to express your personality and interests. You can also share things with your friends and see things they share with you, similar to social networking sites. You can link your Second Life profile with your accounts on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and other popular social networks.

To view someone else's profile, mouse over their avatar, click , then click **Profile**. You'll be able to see the things they have allowed based on their privacy settings.

To configure your privacy settings:

- Click **Profile**
- Click  to view your profile home page.
- Click **Privacy**.

Moving on

Once you've mastered the basic skills covered in this article, you're ready to move on to learn the full richness of the Second Life experience. Have a look at the [Second Life User's Guide](#).

Most importantly, have fun!

