IBM Goes Live with Latest Virtual Business Center

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IBM launched its new virtual IBM Business Center, providing IBM and its clients with a way to conduct business, gather information and form relationships.

IBM announced May 15 that its new virtual IBM business center is now available online, allowing IBM and its clients to interact, conduct business and form business relationships.

The new virtual business center, developed with New Media Consortium (NMC) Virtual Worlds, features six areas including: Reception; Sales Center; Technical Support Library; Innovation Center; Client Briefing Center; and Conference Center, and is staffed by IBM sales representatives from around the globe.

With the new virtual business center, users are able to access and search for information by browsing through 3-D bookshelves, looking through a 3-D book or by asking a librarian while the technical support library provides users with access to technical information including IBM Redbooks and Systems Journals.

"IBM is combining a 3-D virtual experience, its existing 2-D Web site and real IBM people to conduct business," Lee Dierdorff, vice president of Web Strategy and Enablement for the Armonk, N.Y.-based IBM, said in a company statement.

Using IBM's new virtual business center, which is accessible through

Second Life, users are able to buy hardware, software, services as well as ask an IBM sales avatar for help regarding business problems. The IBM sales avatar is able to exchange private information such as contracts, money or credit information with the user, which is done through a link to IBM's Web site or by phone.

IBM also plans to staff this new office during business hours in its respective countries as they are able to speak one or more languages including English, Portuguese, German, Spanish, Dutch, Italian, French and Canadian French.

"This is an extension of our existing teleweb sales channel," Dierdorff said in the same company statement. "If this experiment in enhancing the customer experience is well-received, we'll expand it by adding more staff and languages."

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