

Second Life to let users filter adult content

April 22 2009, By BARBARA ORTUTAY , AP Technology Writer

(AP) -- Second Life is getting a little less steamy for people who want to use the virtual world for a myriad of PG-rated experiences, such as taking classes, prototyping buildings or designing virtual goods.

For those who don't, Second Life is moving adult-oriented content to a new, X-rated "continent" so they can continue to frolic as their heart desires.

Linden Lab, the company behind Second Life, was to announce the changes Wednesday as part of a broader move to let users customize the site's content. The changes will start going into effect in June.

"The way people use Second Life has become incredibly diverse," said Chief Executive Mark Kingdon.

Second Life's users, who must already be 18 or over, will be able to block adult content in their searches, similar to the way [Google](#) allows "SafeSearch" filtering for images or text by blocking [Web pages](#) with explicit sexual content. Unlike Google, though, Second Life will let people specifically search for adult-only items, excluding everything else.

Property owners - the people who operate the virtual spaces within Second Life - will be responsible for properly tagging adult content. Ken Dreifach, Linden's deputy counsel, said the new search tools will provide a substantial incentive for people to "properly designate their land."

Linden is implementing a three-tiered rating system for the site - PG, Mature and Adult. Users will automatically be given access to mature content - think R-rated movies - but will need undergo further verification - beyond self-reporting - to prove they are at least 18 before they can access adult, X-rated content.

Second Life also has a separate teens-only site.

The company said it will be "very careful" not to filter out terms like "breast cancer" that can accidentally get lumped into adult content. Kingdon said the company didn't have statistics on how many of people use the site for adult activities, but added that it's in the minority.

[Second Life](#), launched in 2003, has been overshadowed in recent years by social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. In March, it had more than 1 million unique log-ins, up from 544,000 in the same month a year earlier.

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