

Snowbooks' submission for the

# e-publishing award 2007



We had such a difficult time deciding which of our online initiatives we should focus on, since working online and with computers is the backbone of Snowbooks. This year we have digitised all our content, launched our transactional website, done fabulous marketing initiatives on myspace, facebook and from blogs and websites we've created. We've made great use of pre-sales Paypal buttons to launch books, netting sales of £5000 in a week for one book alone. We've become ONIX compliant and use that data to populate all our marketing materials, catalogues, webpages and AIs. We've launched the Snowcase: using our blog to showcase the first 500 words of unpublished works so that anyone browsing our site - agents, publishers - can stumble upon new talent. So much to choose from!

But in the end, we decided that our most spectacular initiative - the one that has garnered the most interest, coverage, review, and even a sense of awe, is our Second Life store. Let me show you around.

We built our store in December 2006, making it the first publisher's shop in Second Life and the first independent publisher to have a presence there. We were included in a book about Second Life, since our early presence was notable.



In our store, above, each book has three options: buy from Amazon US, buy from Amazon UK or buy from our own website. The SL user clicks on one of the floating balls and a link appears (the blue box, top right) to click through to the relevant site. We get our Amazon Associates fee.



\* Here's our estate. There's a nice big snowflake at the end of the pier so you can see it from the ocean.



\* In the Boardroom. We have a suitably futuristic alter-logo, for an (imaginary) time when Snowbooks is a billion-dollar media firm.



\* Here I am (or my alter-ego, Emma Santos), having a warm cup of cocoa on our balcony. The boardroom is behind.

The core target audience in Second Life is relatively small, but known as early adopters. They are fascinated with the new, and don't consider technology a threat, but a way of getting cool things to happen. We aim to make this group of core users aware of Snowbooks which we achieved through good signposting, referencing and being in the SL Yellow Pages.

- \* Below: Snowbooks from SL Space: marked by a snowflake, centre, for easy locating.



However, this core audience is not our primary target. We predicted that Second Life would generate debate and fascination: sometimes sneering, sometimes contentious but always interesting. And we have had lots of column inches dedicated to our shop in the SL and Real Life media.

Here is a selection:

- \* Snowbooks Opens Store in Second Life: <http://www.slnn.com/index.php/article/about/article17.html>
- \* Report on first book deal in The Times and The Bookseller
- \* Inclusion in a book: Second Life by P Carr
- \* The official Amazon Associates Blog, where we were applauded for most innovative use of the Associates programme: [http://affiliate-blog.amazon.co.uk/2007/01/second\\_life\\_onl.html](http://affiliate-blog.amazon.co.uk/2007/01/second_life_onl.html)
- \* Second Life Insider online magazine
- \* Digital Strategy Consulting blog
- \* Report on launch in The Bookseller
- \* Many mentions on further blogs.

We were also the first publisher to sign up a book in Second Life with the Greene and Heaton literary agency for Sarah Stovell's Mothernight.

It cost £130 to set up our store, including first quarter rent and buying the land and licenses. In exchange we have cemented our position as a cutting edge publisher, and benefitted from many column inches. We have attracted interest from prospective authors, too, for whom our presence in SL marks us out as special publishers.

If you would like to visit our store, go to [www.snowbooks.com/secondlife](http://www.snowbooks.com/secondlife) and follow the directions!



\* Waiting for an event to start at our Auditorium.



\* Hard at work in my office.

We created free bookshelves, populated with our own books, for other SL users to take and put in their own virtual homes