

Opinions / Editorials

Virtual World

By Scott Seibert, Op-Ed Columnist

With the first decade of the 21st century coming to an end, the next ninety years will be filled with technological advances beyond anyone's wildest imaginations. Even in the last ten years, technological advances have changed the way we work, play, and interact with one another. Innovations such as the cell phone and the Internet continue to be improved, resulting in a world more interconnected than ever before. However, as much as our social interactions are increasing in quantity, they seem to be decreasing in quality. Communicating through email and IM may be easy, but they just can't beat a real face-to-face conversation. It has gotten to the point where people seem to be talking online more than in real life. The latest step in this downward spiral is the popularity of online role playing games, which immerse players in an alternate universe, where they can live a completely different life without having to leave their house. There is nothing wrong with these games in and of themselves, but there are a growing number of people who spend more time living their virtual lives than living their real ones.

I read an article describing an incident centered around the popular online game, Second Life. How big has this game gotten? Six countries, including Sweden and the Philippines, have created virtual embassies. The incident I was referring to involved a couple, Amy Taylor and David Pollard, who divorced after Pollard had an affair with another woman. What's so bizarre about that? First, some background information. Taylor and Pollard "met" online in 2003, and married both in real life and in Second Life in 2005. However, Taylor's virtual persona began to grow suspicious of her virtual husband's virtual activity. So, virtual Taylor hired a virtual private investigator to uncover the virtual truth. The investigator found that virtual Pollard had been having a virtual affair with a virtual woman, which broke real-life Taylor's heart, causing her to apply for virtual and real divorces. This account seems downright hilarious at first, and in a way it is, but it illustrates what could be a major problem for future generations: the inability to separate reality from fantasy. Is this an isolated incident or a sign of things to come? Am I simply overreacting to a trivial human interest story? Only time will tell.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

What exactly is the policy with computer use in the library? I find that I almost always have to wait to use one. In my experience, approximately half of the computers are being used for either facebook or gaming. This is especially frustrating when I need to use a computer just for a moment (to email a professor or print a paper). Shouldn't computer use be restricted to academic work? If it is, how does the library enforce it?

Signed,
Anonymous Student

Dear Editor:

As a concerned student at the college I wanted to bring attention an issue I believe to be important. From my perspective I feel there is a lack of security at the Central Campus. On November 10th at approximately 12pm, there was firecracker set off in the TV lounge. Fortunately there was no wide spread panic, just a slight startle. However the idea of someone being able to set off explosives in a high traffic area of the college is disconcerting to say the least. I would not be so upset if public safety had been on top of the situation, but it took almost 5 minutes for an officer to come to the lower level of College Hall to investigate the incident.

I would not be as concerned if the firecracker was an isolated incident, but that is not the case. Later that same day, on my way from College Hall to the Phys Ed building, another incident occurred where I questioned the level of concern the college has towards safety. As soon as I walked out of College Hall at 6pm I found myself in complete darkness. Not a single working light was in sight within the Morris Road parking lot. To top it off ever one of the lights that illuminates the path down to the PE building were out. This is a huge safety liability on the college for many reasons. One, I could not see what was right in front of me and caused me to trip when I wondered off the path slightly and stepped onto the grass. Another reason is that I could not see the person 25 feet behind me and could not see his face until he was about 3 feet away from me. I had no idea if this person was a student, faculty member, or someone that

does not belong on campus and possibly pose a potential threat to me or other members of the college.

When I finally reached the PE building I went upstairs into the first unlocked class room I was amazed to find that there was no phone in the class room. So I went down the hall to the next open class room only to find the phone did not work. After finding two rooms with possible communication tools I went down stairs to talk to the person at the front desk that lets out sports equipment to see if they could call public safety and let them know what was going on. He told me that he was not sure of the number and thinks it is 666, but whenever he calls that number it normally does not work. So from there I was forced to walk around the PE building to press the emergency button in the parking lot. When I finally pressed the button it took almost 2 minutes for someone to pick up the phone, and when they did pick up the call they could not hear me talking. After not being able to hear me talk public safety sent over an officer in a car to investigate what was happening, and I am happy to say that only took a few seconds for the officer to arrive. I was happy to hear that public safety already knew about the problem with the lights.

Although Public Safety was already investigating into the problem, it still concerns me that all the lights were out in the first place. As well as when I tried to use a phone in the PE building only to find out that they are all broken and forced to use one of the limited quantity emergency polls on campus. Where I found out that the intercom only works in one direction. With all of these problems I ask myself, does Public Safety do routine checks of the schools equipment? Why did it take so long for Public Safety to pick up the call when I used the emergency poll? I know other colleges have a 30 second response time, why can't we?

Signed,
Anonymous Student

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