

Alexander Sartore

October 15th, 2008

RCO 210

Professor Grieve

Reading Response: Community

In this chapter, Boellstorff argued that a community is able to thrive in a virtual world, and that it is clearly existent in Second Life. There have been some who argue that a community cannot exist in a virtual world due to the belief that "the term 'community' is of questionable utility because virtual worlds engender a 'faceless community' that is less authentic and meaningful than actual-world sociality." (Young 1998:96; see also Guimaraes 2005; Boellstorff 180) However, Boellstorff argued for it by claiming that communities have existed in virtual worlds since the 1800s when the press and book publishing were invented. Boellstorff emphasized the fact that real people actually interact in Second Life. He stated over and over again that it is the people and their interaction with each other is what makes Second Life work.

This chapter was much easier to read, because it was very forward with its ideas and arguments. It wasn't too dense or complicated, but at the same time, it wasn't simple or superficial. His thoughts and ideas were very clear, and Boellstorff backed up his arguments very skillfully with quotes and examples. He did a good job at incorporating his field notes into this chapter, showing how community does exist in Second Life.

The only thing that was bothersome in this chapter was the amount of quotes that Boellstorff used. Yes, it was indeed necessary to back up his arguments, but at times, the quotes made the text harder to follow due to the citing. This also brings up the question of how much did Boellstorff really come up with?

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Questions to Community

1. What makes community a community? Does it only require people and interaction?
(Page 181)
2. Does Facebook count as a community? (Page 181)
3. How can griefer be someone who you disagree with? Is this truly what a griefer is? (Page 188)