

My Journey as a ROCKETON Avatar Rocked

June 25, 2008 — 05:59 AM PDT — by Kristen Nicole of Mashable



ROCKETON is a new, downloadable avatar service that lets you use the entire Web as your virtual world. You create an avatar, and let it journey with you as you surf the Web.

Currently ROCKETON is in private alpha, but I got early access to the site in order to check it out. Below is my journey as a ROCKETON avatar:

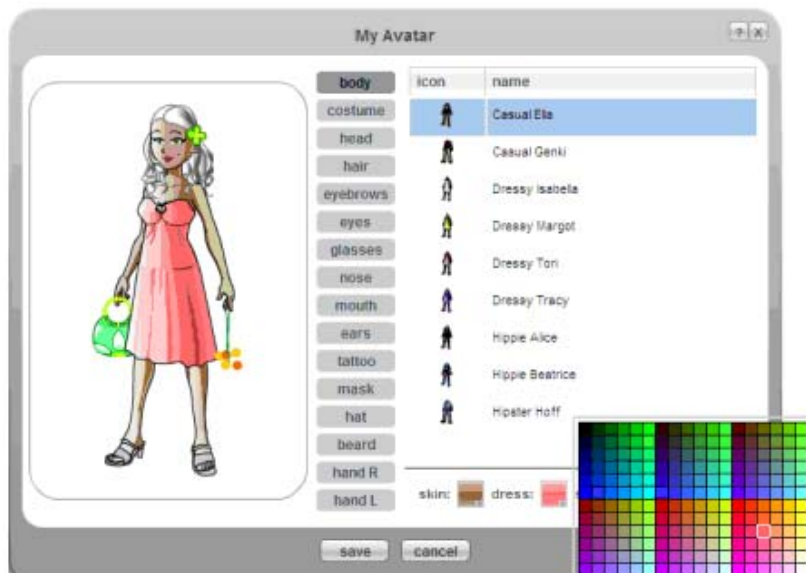
Hour 1



KristenNicole

Downloaded the ROCKETON application. Easy, quick. I found myself on the ROCKETON launch pad, where all the newbies come to play. Here, you customize your avatar, and finish registering your account. The custom options were pretty basic in terms of the type of outfit I could choose, or the hairstyle I wanted, and that's when I realized why most of the avatars on the launchpad were wearing the same thing. Details like color, however, can be changed.

Even though it was quick and easy to set up, my first impression of ROCKETON was reminiscent of my first experience with Second Life, when you're left in a virtual environment full of users that are as clueless as you are. That soon changed.



After getting my avatar customized, I noticed a sleek menu at the bottom left corner of my browser. This had just about everything I needed to play with ROCKETON. Here, you can "hide" your avatar and the ROCKETON menu, see the top sites where avatars are visiting, view all of your info (profile, rank, points, preferences, etc.), change your avatar, access your store, buy points, trade items, view friends and play games with other users.

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Hour 2

Clicking on a few avatars that were walking around the launchpad, I noticed that I could invite them to do things like play games, private chat, or even go on a date. Avatars can chat publicly, though there are private chat options that will carry throughout browser tabs if you happen to leave the room. If you'd like to go to another Web site with an avatar, invite them to meet you at another URL. If you'd like to let yourself be enticed by the wormholes ROCKETON has placed across the Web, jump on in (think StumbleUpon "surprise me").

Hour 3

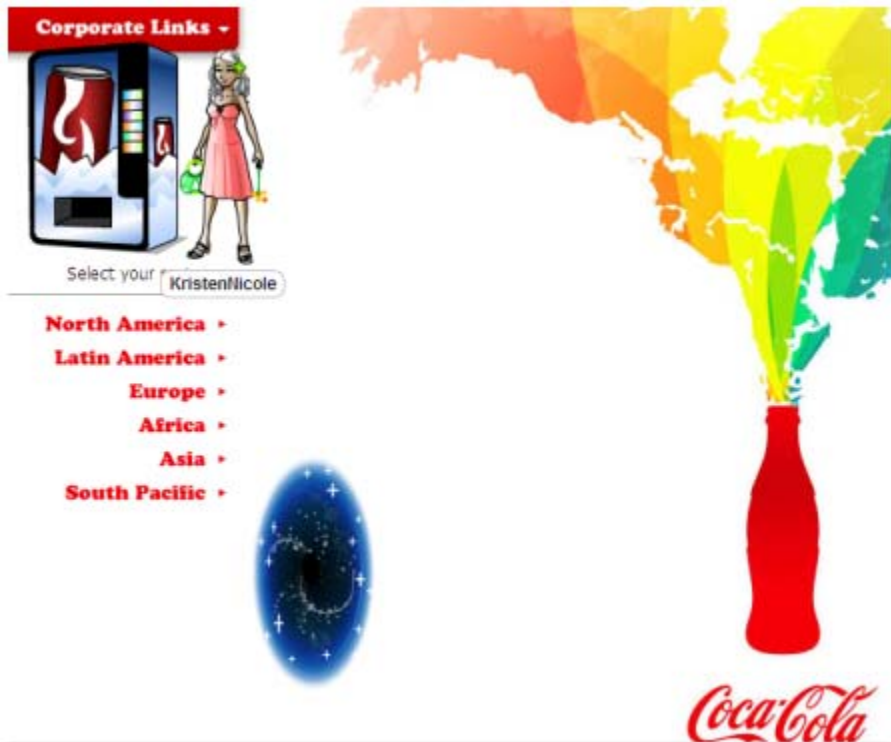
After realizing that wormholes often take you to places where ROCKETON has placed gifts and prizes, I ended up spending far too much time surfing the Web vicariously through my avatar. At Coca Cola's Web site, I found a vending machine that gives you a soda. Drag this from your Stuff folder to any Web site where your avatar is present, and it will explode. It's a fun little interaction that makes socializing with avatars on the Web that much more fun.

You can also give away gifts, and if you barter with avatars beforehand, you can even wager a trade. Currently there's no secure system in place by ROCKETON to control these trades, so you do run the risk of giving without receiving, but a more secure transaction system is in the works.



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In terms of other things I eventually noticed in My Stuff folder, there's all sorts of outfits, hairstyles, accessories, items to tow around (i.e. brooms, flowers, panda bears, swords), and gizmos to play with. The more active you are with your avatar, the more points you earn. Some items are only available via secure credit card transactions, which is a virtual economy instituted by ROCKETON, similar to [Meez](#).

Users can't create items to sell here, but it's a good place for brands to present virtual goods. The items that can be found across the Web through ROCKETON's application are also great for brands. I spoke briefly with ROCKETON co-founder Eric Hayashi about his hopes for branding opportunities with ROCKETON and he hopes that such discoverable items can be utilized by brands as interactive objects that users can find, play with, and share with other users.

I'll be quite anxious to see the beta launch of ROCKETON, as well as any commerce and branding opportunities that evolve as a result of its unique blend of virtual world and Web surfing. But for now, I think I've neglected my earthly needs, like food and water, for long enough, exploring ROCKETON. Watch the video for now, and sit tight for the day when you too will be able to walk around the Web with your avatar in tow.

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<http://www.rocketon.com/>

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What's coming next for ROCKETON...

- In-World Games - we're building games within the...More»

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What's coming next for ROCKETON...

- In-World Games - we're building games within the virtual world that you can play with your avatar. Soon your avatar will be able to compete in virtual game shows, adopt pets, solve puzzles, or participate in group games, like slime wars, team trivia, and treasure hunts.
- Social Interaction - we'll be adding new ways to interact with other players and meet your friends online. You'll also be able to choose your avatar, dress it up, exchange items, and decorate your place.
- Virtual World - eventually you'll be able to download a spaceship, rocket across cyberspace, and visit all sorts of planets and places. There will be an enormous universe to explore.