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## Keio University and Dentsu Announce the Commencement of Second Life® Joint Research

*-- Keio University Second Life® Campus*

*to Hold Japan's First Metaverse-Based University Course --*

Keio University (President: Yuichiro Anzai; Head Office: Tokyo) and Dentsu Inc. (President & COO: Tatsuyoshi Takashima; Head Office: Tokyo; Capital: 58,967.1 million yen) announced today that they will conduct joint research covering a number of issues relating to metaverses, and particularly Second Life® (Note 1), a 3-D virtual community that has gained worldwide popularity. Planned research topics include issues on social systems, distance learning and continuing education, the potential for marketing activities within a metaverse, and the potential for technological development.

As a facility to carry out their joint research, Keio University and Dentsu plan to establish the Keio University Second Life® Campus within Virtual Tokyo (Note 2), which Dentsu will open in August this year as a virtual city within the Second Life® metaverse. Through demonstration tests conducted in the Keio University Second Life® Campus, the joint research group aims to contribute to finding solutions to a range of issues relating to virtual societies. In addition, the joint research group plans to study the potential for educational content within 3-D virtual communities and consider various aspects about the future of education.

### **Outline of the Joint Research**

Keio University and Dentsu will establish a joint research facility, Keio University Second Life® Campus, within Virtual Tokyo. Virtual land for the campus as well as authority to manage the campus will be provided by Dentsu to Keio University Research Institute at SFC. The research group will utilize this land to conduct their research. The land area allocated for the campus will be 1 SIM, which is the standard land unit in the Second Life® metaverse and is equal to 256 x 256 meters (16 acres). Within this virtual space, the research group will conduct the following research.

- (1) Within the Keio University Second Life® Campus, the research group plans to explore new education possibilities by utilizing the experience Keio University has built up in distance teaching methods, for instance, through operating the Keio University SFC Global Campus (Note 3).

Utilizing the educational video content Keio University has accumulated until now, the research group plans to examine the potential for Second Life® in the education field. This will be the first time for a university in Japan to offer lectures from regular university courses within Second Life®.

- (2) The research group will conduct research within the Keio University Second Life® Campus and Virtual Tokyo on the behavior of Second Life® consumers and economic activities such as virtual currencies.

Utilizing the Linden Dollar, the virtual currency circulating within Second Life®, the research group will study such areas as the virtual economic mechanism, analysis of consumer behavior, and legal or ethical issues within the metaverse. The research group also plans to collaborate with the makers of Second Life®, Linden Labs, in research on technical aspects of Second Life®.

### **Research Group Participants**

A number of researchers from the Keio Research Institute at SFC, based at the Keio University Shonan Fujisawa Campus, will participate in the research. These researchers include such specialists in Internet, digital media, and other social applications for new technologies as Professor Jun Murai and Professor Masahiko Inakage from the Faculty of Environment and Information Studies; Professor Ikuyo Kaneko from the Graduate School of Media and Governance; and Professor Jiro Kokuryo from the Faculty of Policy Management.

From Dentsu, specialists in marketing and media content will participate in the joint research. Dentsu Group companies will also provide cooperation and support for the construction and operation of the virtual campus.

### **Note 1: Second Life® 3-D virtual community**

Second Life® is a 3-D virtual community, created and operated by U.S.-based company Linden Lab, with a rapidly growing population from 100 countries around the globe. Residents of the Second Life® metaverse themselves create and build the world that includes homes, vehicles, nightclubs, stores, landscapes, clothing, and games.

The Second Life® Grid is a sophisticated development platform created by Linden Lab, a company founded in 1999 by Philip Rosedale, to create a revolutionary new form of shared 3-D experience. The former CTO of RealNetworks, Rosedale pioneered the development of many of today's streaming media technologies, including RealVideo. In April 2003, noted software pioneer Mitch Kapor, founder of Lotus Development Corporation, was named Chairman. In 2006, Philip Rosedale and Linden Lab received WIRED's Rave Award for

Innovation in Business. Based in San Francisco, Linden Lab employs a senior team bringing together deep expertise in physics, 3-D graphics and networking.

## **Note 2: Virtual Tokyo**

Virtual Tokyo is a comprehensive virtual city being created based on the concept of “Vitality–Future–Tokyo.” It is a collaboration between Dentsu and Tetsuya Mizuguchi, CCO of Q Entertainment Inc.

Virtual Tokyo will condense the images and energy of Tokyo and disseminate to the rest of the world the pop culture created within it. Virtual Tokyo will not be a one-way content source but provide a place for creators (users) to actively participate. By doing so, Dentsu wishes to recreate the dynamism of Tokyo—an ever-changing city—within Second Life®. Virtual Tokyo will cover 85 hectares, making it one of the largest cities within Second Life®. It will comprise various zones, including a public zone with stadiums and museums, and other zones such as those focusing on education, experiential activities and commerce.

## **Note 3: Keio University SFC Global Campus (<http://gc.sfc.keio.ac.jp/>)**

The Keio University Shonan Fujisawa Campus (SFC-GC) provides lectures that are shared globally and accessed by learners outside the university. It was opened in 2002 and from the 2002 autumn semester to the 2007 spring semester, 297 courses (each comprising 13 lectures) have been made available for access as approximately 4,000 video material content items. At present, Keio University runs the distance learning program, which allows people who are not Keio University students to utilize SFC-GC to enroll in courses. Furthermore, the content, which is provided free of charge, may be accessed without the need for user registration.

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