

INNOVATION

Home | innovation | Digital industry – This Vaudois became king of virtual real estate on Second Life

Abo **Digital industry**

This Vaudois became king of virtual real estate on Second Life

Among the biggest landowners in the game, Christian Dallinges has been living comfortably from his virtual real estate business for fifteen years. Remarkable resilience for those who still believe in the “metaverse dinosaur”.



Joan Placade

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Kristaki Hudson, top 10 of the most important owners on Second Life, rents more than 400 private islands.

at a time when the runaway for ↗ decentralized metaverse sees companies, artists, architects or promoters surging in search of hypothetical fortunes, Christian Dallinges is charting his merry way. Away from the turmoil, he continues his real estate activity started fifteen years ago on Second Life, a pioneering experience that many believed had fallen into the oblivion of tech. Owner of 450 private islands (as many servers), his virtual real estate agency Coral Estate ↗ rents them, ensuring the native Nyonnais a comfortable five-figure monthly income.

SUITE APRÈS LA PUBLICITÉ

Real estate professional, gone virtual

The most surprising thing is perhaps to note that Second Life [↗] is still breathing, with an average of 50,000 to 60,000 players connected continuously and nearly one million visitors per month according to Linden Lab, publisher of the platform. We are of course very far from the prosperous period of 2006 to 2008 when companies like Swisscom, Cisco, or the BCV rubbed shoulders with the candidates for the French presidential election campaigning on Second Life.

During this same period (2007), Christian Dallinges, already a real estate professional in real life, created his virtual agency Coral Estate. Inspired by an acquaintance "who earned his living on EverQuest [↗]", he bought his first islands, then embarked on a frenzy of acquisitions, "up to several dozen per month". An investment and a significant risk, since each island was then paying 1650 dollars, together with a monthly payment of 179 dollars to Linden Lab.

"It was madness, as we see now on Decentraland or others. Everyone wanted to position themselves. In 2006, Chinese Anshe Chung, a millionaire on Second Life, made the headlines in the United States. Then the soufflé fell, companies left the game, attendance fell. The fault in particular with "the ban on casinos, which hurt, then the application of VAT on transactions in the game in different countries", according to the specialist.

Under the guidance of Linden Lab

Kristaki Hudson (his name in the game) then stays the course, and will even take advantage of desertions to continue to grow. He thus becomes the proud owner of an *Estate* (one region, 80 servers) for around 40,000 dollars, bought from "an acquaintance who had recreated the Seychelles". The opportunity to visit him - physically this time - in the Seychelles where the seller actually resided. "It's the advantage of this job, to be able to exercise it from anywhere", notes the one who lived in particular in Colombia and Spain, before returning to settle in the canton of Vaud.

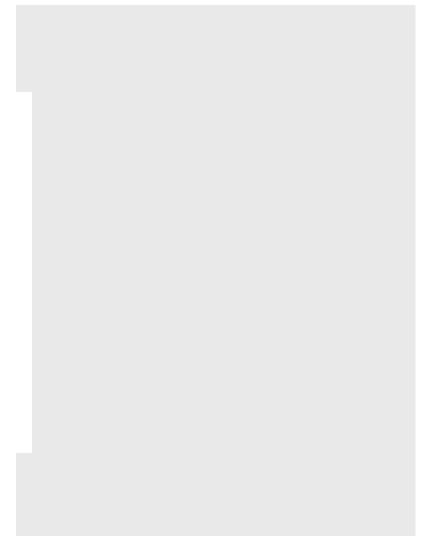
Living for fifteen years of the metaverse requires expertise as well as the ability to overcome obstacles. Independent, he could not create his company, for lack of a bank which agreed to open an account for him. "When I was explaining the business model, it scared them." Yet Kristaki Hudson generates an average of 50 to 60 dollars per month in profit per server (he has more than 400 assets, out of the 50,000 or so in the game, hosted at Amazon). With 60,000 to 65,000 dollars of subscription paid each month to Linden for his properties, he must ensure that a very large majority of his 927 plots are rented.



A great traveler, Christian Dallinges can practice his profession from anywhere.

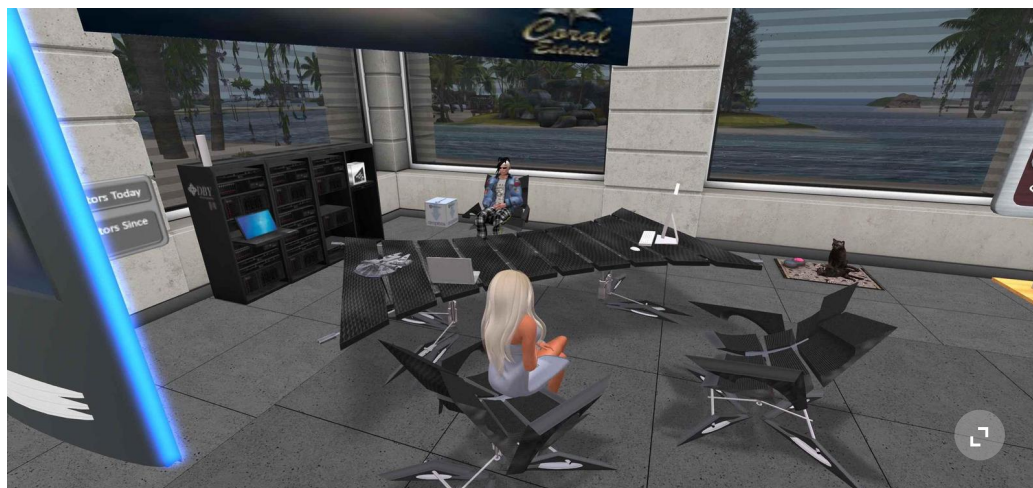
"It's a daily tension," notes the one who recalls that after "a month in the red, you can be suspended overnight, and cease to exist." A sword of Damocles that weighs on the all-powerful publisher Linden "who takes commissions everywhere", as when the latter increased the monthly fees on the land from 189 to 229 dollars in the mid-2010s.

CONTINUATION AFTER THE AD



Professional ecosystems in the metaverse

Among the responsibilities of this king of real estate, pay his two employees both domiciled in the United States, and with whose avatars he interacts in his virtual office. Collections, payments, advertising in groups, referencing in the search engine of the game, the team is not idle. And ensures a continuous presence on Facebook, Instagram or Flickr. "One of my employees is part-time. She recently got married on Second Life, a beautiful ceremony in a virtual church rented for the occasion, with groups of bikers, it was nice.



Kristaki Hudson hosting a business partner in her virtual offices.

Its leased land is teeming with activity. Luxury yacht resorts, marketplaces, fashion stores to dress avatars, as well as two French people who “create avatars, a good business too, very sharp”. He also notes the companies that create entertainment, “in particular to make his avatar dance in nightclubs, a popular activity”. Also very present, the virtual sex industry, with night clubs, escort agencies. “Basically, avatars don't have sex, you can buy it. In fact everything can be bought, there is no limit”, smiles Christian Dallinges

What future for Second Life, at a time when the tech world is throwing billions at new metaverses? Far from NFTs and cryptos, the veteran still wants to believe in it: “When I see Decentraland or The Sandbox, I see that the graphics are much more advanced in Second Life, it's more pleasant and immersive for the user. If it will last another three days or three years? I do not know. But it is a profession that I love and in which I am recognized.

Linden Lab, Almighty Editor

^ Show less

Unlike decentralized metaverses, Linden Lab alone administers and governs the second virtual life of the million players who connect each month, with its own currency, the Linden dollar. Founded in 2003, Second Life was under media fire in the mid-2000s, before experiencing a decline and laying off a third of its workforce in 2010. Its founder, Philip Rosedale, had left the company in 2018, before becoming a remarkable return at the start of 2022 as an advisor. Thanks to some 50,000 servers hosted by Amazon, an annual product of 650 million dollars would be generated each year by players on Second Life.

Joan Plancade is an economic and investigative journalist for Bilan, a critical observer of the Swiss and international tech scene. He is interested in fundamental trends that are reshaping the economy and society. [More informations](#)

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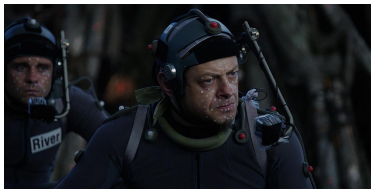
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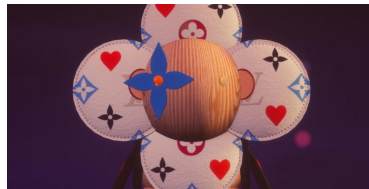


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