

Will Parisians embrace Second Life?

During my lunch-hour reading I came across an interesting piece on the BBC site about how a Paris residents' association is using the virtual world of Second Life to get the town hall to move ahead with plans to redevelop a central area of the city.

Given the somewhat ethereal nature of Second Life, I'm always on the look-out for good examples that demonstrate the practical use or purpose of this technology. And I think this is one.

Residents are being urged to come up with ideas for a new garden for Les Halles in the centre of Paris, originally a wholesale market destroyed in the 70s to make way for a shopping centre.

The use of Second Life has been introduced by local residents' association Accomplir. They claim that residents haven't been consulted over the gardens, which they say are at the heart of local life. And they're enticing residents to participate with the lure of a cash prize – 275,000 Linden dollars to the contributor of the winning idea! (That's 785 euros or £530 to those of us unfamiliar with the conversion rate for Second Life currency).

I'll be interested to see if they achieve their ultimate objective: "To put pressure on officials to speed up the redevelopment process."

Put that way, the potential benefits of Second Life suddenly seem a bit more tangible...