

Liboriussen, Bjarke, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark

Vampire, Dog, Gay: Uses of "Fiction" in Collective, Online, Creative Practices

During a 14 month "virtual ethnography" of collective building projects in "Second Life", it emerged that the online home builders relied on several frameworks for social stability as well as for scaffolding of their creative practices. These frameworks were interconnected and ranged from the entirely fictional (e.g., a vampire fantasy), over frameworks with varying degrees of importance to the real-life of users (e.g., exploration of BDSM lifestyle), to shared real-life personality traits (e.g., sexual orientation). The presentation uses this virtual ethnography to reflect on the role of "fiction" in collective, creative online projects; on the relative nature of "fiction" when it is used with pragmatic, creative motivations, and to question the wisdom of relying on the (stable) label of "fiction" when exploring online practices through ethnographic means.