The wholly virtual world known as Second Life has attracted more than a million active users, millions of dollars, and created its own—very real—economy.

The Making of Second Life is the behind-the-scenes story of the Web 2.0 revolutions most improbable enterprise: the creation of a virtual 3-D world with its own industries, culture, and social systems. Now the toast of the Internet economy, and the subject of countless news articles, profiles, and television shows, Second Life is usually known for the wealth of real-world companies (Reuters, Pontiac, IBM) that have created virtual offices within it, and the number of users (avatars) who have become wealthy through their user-created content.

What sets Second Life apart from other online worlds, and what has made it such a success (one million-plus monthly users and growing) is its simple user-centered philosophy. Instead of attempting to control the activities of those who enter it, the creators of Second Life turned them loose: users (also known as Residents) own the rights to the intellectual content they create in-world, and the in-world currency of Linden Dollars is freely exchangeable for U.S. currency. Residents have responded by generating millions of dollars of economic activity through their in-world designs and purchases—currently, the Second Life economy averages more than one million U.S. dollars in transactions every day, while dozens of real-world companies and projects have evolved and developed around content originated in Second Life.

Wagner James Au explores the long, implausible road behind that success, and looks at the road ahead, where many believe that user-created worlds like Second Life will become the Nets next generation and the fulcrum for a revolution in the way we shop, work, and interact. Aus
story is narrated from both within the corporate offices of Linden Lab, Second Life's creator, and from within Second Life itself, revealing all the fascinating, outrageous, brilliant, and aggravating personalities who make Second Life a very real place—and an illuminating mirror on the real (physical) world. Au writes about the wars they fought (sometimes literally), the transformations they underwent, the empires of land and commerce they developed, and above all, the collaborative creativity that makes their society an imperfect utopia, better in some ways than the one beyond their computer screens.

My Personal Review:
A very comfortably understandable read, even for the non-technnarati. As a very involved resident of Second Life I very much enjoyed this insider look at the beginnings and build up of what has become Second Life. It goes over the people involved, the expectations of the software platform and it's users, and obstacles, and the often unexpected outcomes that overturned a lot of preconceived notions of what people thought was going to happen. Because Second Life is always changing, there is some dated information, but a nice added chapter to bring people up to date on the most recent events and changes. I enjoyed the read, and would recommend this to anyone really interested in Second Life. I've already loaned it to friends who use Second Life and have gotten favorable responses. As a hard back book it's a bit pricey. So a note to the author/publisher: Hey! Fancy putting a digital publication for sale inside of SL? For a less weighty fee? Right now I'm sending my hardback copy to a few SL active friends who might not otherwise get a look at it.

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The Making of Second Life: Notes from the New World by Wagner James Au - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!