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BBC to launch virtual world for children

Kids to create their own avatars

by Amber Maitland published on 23 January 2007

The children's programming arm of the BBC is planning to launch a virtual world for children, the Corporation revealed today.

CBBC, which is aimed at 7- to 12-year-olds, said it would give children access to characters that they know from programming.

Although users will be able to create avatars and then share content, there won't be chatrooms or building tools to expand the world as in other virtual life programs like Second Life.

It also will lack the financial aspect where people can make money or business can raise their profile.

"It will give children a chance to move around a safe, secure world where they can not only interact with familiar characters, but have an opportunity to make that world a more fascinating place with their own imaginations", said a spokesperson for the BBC.

It will go live in the summer, with a full launch in the autumn.

It has not yet been revealed how the BBC will monitor the site so that adults who wish to prey on children cannot create an online presence.

