

## CHECKING INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION | ALOFT IN SECOND LIFE



Announced last year as W Hotels' new brand for the select-service hotel category, the first aloft hotel won't open until 2008. So, what does a brand do to create some pre-opening buzz, and give future customers a taste of what's to come? Build a virtual hotel in [Second Life](#), of course. Like American Apparel's foray into Second Life (which we wrote about here: [brave new retail world](#)), aloft is set on an island within SL. The hotel's virtual developers, [Electric Sheep](#), started off with 64 acres of raw virtual land, and are working their way up to a beautifully landscaped island featuring a full-fledged aloft hotel. Each step of the design and building process can be followed, both in Second Life, and via a dedicated blog: [virtualaloft.com](#). aloft is the world's first hotel brand to place a replica inside a virtual world, and will open its virtual doors this September. If well-executed, a three-dimensional metaverse outpost can be valuable in conveying the feel of a new product or concept, in this case the transformation of the mid-scale, business hotel segment from drab to delightful. At least that's what aloft is aiming for 😊 If you'd like to read up on branding in virtual worlds, [trendwatching.com](#)'s [YOUNIVERSAL BRANDING](#) is a good place to start. Not part of big brand? Why not start an agency specializing in helping other brands set up shop in the Second Lives of this world. Plenty of space in the US, and absolute virgin territory in Europe, South America and so on.

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