

**USING WEB 2.0 TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ABOUT NASA'S LUNAR RECONNAISSANCE ORBITER.** B.C.Hsu<sup>1</sup>, H.M. Weir<sup>1</sup>, and L.V. Bleacher<sup>1</sup>, <sup>1</sup>SSAI-NASA/GSFC 10210 Greenbelt Rd, Ste 600, Lanham, MD 20706 (First author email: Brooke.L.Hsu@nasa.gov).

**Introduction:** Launching in 2009, the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) mission is NASA's first step in establishing a permanent human presence on the Moon. LRO will provide scientists and engineers with a lunar atlas of unprecedented detail. In order to capitalize on the excitement of the mission, the LRO team makes use of social media networking and Web 2.0 platforms to broadcast LRO's mission goals and status updates throughout the build process. The most notable success of this effort has been the gathering of over 1.5 million names to be put on the spacecraft during the "Send your Name to the Moon with LRO" campaign. The platforms the LRO team utilizes include blogs, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Second Life.

**Using microblogging (Twitter) to disseminate information:** Twitter is a social media networking site that makes use of messages with a 140 character limit. It asks the user "What are you doing?" to which members respond with up-to-the-minute information about their activities. Twitter allows users to "follow" one another building up a network of people who are linked through a web of followers. A user will see a stream of individual messages, or "tweets" from the people on their follow list. LRO has made use of Twitter by "tweeting" about its ongoing construction, testing, and mission objectives. The Twitter screen name for LRO is "LRO\_NASA," and LRO has (as of this abstract) 1,549 followers. LRO broadcasted its "Send Your Name to the Moon with LRO" campaign through Twitter, and evidence of the tweets being picked up and "re-tweeted" can be found by using a variety of search engines designed specifically for searching the Twitter stream.

**Using Facebook as a networking and multimedia dissemination tool:** Facebook is a popular social networking tool, and LRO (along with many other NASA missions) have taken advantage of the opportunity to reach broader audiences by creating pages and interacting with the general public. LRO's Facebook page has pictures from the many people who have been able to see the spacecraft being built, videos of project staff interviews, and animations of what the spacecraft will look like when it is in orbit around the Moon. As of the date of the submission of this abstract, LRO had 890 friends on Facebook. Based on the feedback the project has received, Facebook has been a very effective means of information dissemination.

**Reaching alternative audiences through Second Life:** Second Life is a 3D metaverse, where users create avatars that can interact with one another, facilities,

and exhibits. LRO, in conjunction with the Lunar Precursor Robotics Project (LPRP) office has built the Return to the Moon Hall in Second Life (fig. 1). The hall resides on NASA's Co-Lab island. The Return to the Moon Hall contains interactive exhibits about lunar exploration, videos, 2D and 3D images, and external links to information on the web. The use of Second Life as an information disseminator enables LRO to potentially reach 40,000 to 50,000 users at any given moment [1].



Fig. 1: Return to the Moon Hall in Second Life.

[1] Ireton, F.M., et al (2008) *Return to the Moon in Second Life, a 3D Metaverse*. *Eos Trans. AGU*. 89(53) Fall Meet. Suppl., Abstract ED43B-0589.