# HW3: 3D Web Debate

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Will the 3D web become the dominant way to interact with services on the web? 3D is typically understood to mean a new, immersive, graphical experience, such as Second Life. However, 3D also has a technical meaning that implies any interface with 3D effects – such as the OS X Fast User Switching “box spin”, or Android 2.3 Gingerbread’s 3D effect on the scrolling app list.

## Pro

* Computers are getting more powerful, allowing 3D environments to be rendered quicker and with more detail than was possible in the past.
* Social use of the web is increasing. 3D interfaces can appear more social. As social features gain greater penetration on the web, the time might be right again for 3D interfaces.
* Touch screens – 3D interfaces might be in our future, but not in the way we think. For example, Android tablets present a normal 2D interface with subtle 3D effects. These effects might become more pronounced over time, but are not immersive 3D we think of when we think about Second Life.

## Con

* Such interfaces have failed miserably before. Microsoft Bob, a 3D interactive desktop released in 1995 was severally criticized both now and when it was released. For example, CNET.com called Microsoft Bob the worst product of the decade.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* People want efficiency. Other novel user interfaces like Clippy, the Microsoft Office paperclip agent, are widely despised because they got in the way of users. People want to get in, and get their tasks done. 3D interfaces complicate tasks.
* 3D interfaces pull users of the desktop. A 3D interface pulls a user away from the desktop they are used to. This prevents users from using a 3D interface in one application while also using a traditional 2D interface in another application.
* Second Life use is falling. All of the articles we were assigned were from > 4 years ago. Even in 2007, TechCrunch ran an article called Will The Last Corporation Leaving Second Life Please Turn Off The Lights.[[2]](#footnote-2) The rush for corporate presences on Second Life was not justified, and companies leaving over 5 years ago. Second Life has fallen out of the media zeitgeist, while Facebook and Google have taken over.
* Computing will be increasingly mobile – Simpler 2D interfaces display better on phones with small interfaces. Users will likely be using 2D interfaces on electronic devices, but interacting with the “real-life” 3D world

1. http://cnettv.cnet.com/cnet-top-5-worst-products-decade/9742-1\_53-25029.html?tag=cnetfd.mt [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://techcrunch.com/2007/07/14/will-the-last-corporation-leaving-second-life-please-turn-off-the-light/ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)