

Chapter 4

Doing Inventory: Managing Your Stuff



How to . . .

- Clean house
- Track down and throw out duplicates
- Organize your Inventory
- Build your own storage boxes
- Purchase professional storage gadgets
- Find lost items

Your Second Life (SL) Inventory is a filing system with folders, subfolders, and items stored within it. Your Inventory can grow as large as you want it to. Some people have over 25,000 items stored there.

But that doesn't mean *you* should bloat your Inventory by clinging to every freebie and cheesy gift you ever get throughout your entire SL life. For one thing, it's hard to find things you really like to wear or landmarks you really want to revisit if they're hidden within thousands of other items in a hugely inflated Inventory.

And another thing: A giant Inventory can load slowly, search itself slowly, and even put a burden on Linden Lab servers to slow down everyone else as well. A big Inventory retards things even after it's loaded. It can give you lag problems, meaning that your movements can become jerky, things around you render (show up) more slowly, neighbors experience slowdowns because of you (what a naughty spacetime hog you are), and, in general, the SL experience becomes more sluggish in various ways. Menus don't fall as fast, mouse controlled camera movements become irregular. It's bad.

You're also punished for a bloated Inventory whenever updates are made to the SL asset servers. Inventory-loading issues most often happen after a major update, or even after a simple server reset. Everything slows down as a huge number of people try to log on all at once after the grid goes back online. Those with large inventories wait while all the items are reloaded.

Lag is an inevitable side effect when any application is on the cutting edge of graphics-intensive computing. And SL truly pushes that envelope. A swift Internet connection, lots of memory in your computer, a truly powerful graphics card—all these things can reduce the effects of lag. However, if you boost your draw distance up to the maximum in the Preferences dialog, you can welcome back your old friend lag. (Chapter 6 includes a variety of ways to optimize the various factors that can reduce lag.)

To be a good citizen, to locate items in your Inventory easily, and to get the most out of an ordinary computer (if that's what you have), your goal should be to keep your Inventory below 3,000 items. That's a healthy balance between easy access to your favorites and avoiding lag. Of course, not all SL residents are interested in good citizenship. And we all have a friend or two, don't we, whose house has that décor best described as antique shop gone amok. As Quentin Crisp said of his flat in London, "After four years, you don't notice the dust."

But if you don't believe me that Inventory affects your lag, start a brand-new account and move around SL with your fresh, low-item Inventory. Faster, cleaner, better, right? If you don't

notice any change, you probably either have a power computer that is compensating client-side or your computer is so weak that the Inventory lag factor doesn't make much difference in the context of the general sluggishness.

How much a bloated Inventory bothers you personally is an individual issue. Some people never even attempt to manage their Inventory in the ways suggested throughout this chapter. And, although their personal habits could easily be described by the rest of us as *squalid*, they sometimes even seem pleased with themselves. Perhaps they have a \$4,000 optimized computer and don't notice any lag at all on their end. That their monster Inventory spills bad lag over into our SL experience isn't, you know, all that important. How porcine.

So what should you do when you have more than 3,000 items stored in Inventory and you want to reduce the count? There are two solutions: dump 'em or box 'em. Dumping means simply throwing them away by deleting them. Boxing moves them from your Inventory into a "storage box" that you can leave in your house's attic, behind a screen, in your basement, in an armoire, or wherever you wish. If you don't yet own land, maybe a kind friend will keep your storage box for you. It will only add one prim to his or her land's prim count, no matter how many items you stuff into it.

Or you can rent a small plot of land just for storing things. Another tactic is to simply put the storage box back into your Inventory, where it adds only one item to the total of the things you must look through.

However, there's a danger if you keep storage boxes in Inventory. One of the advantages of boxing stuff is that you can also back up items—storing copies of Inventory items in your boxes. Linden Lab isn't responsible for accidents or other problems relating to loss of Inventory items, so it's best to keep copies of your Inventory—both the essentials and those in "attic" storage boxes—located somewhere other than in the Inventory itself. We'll get to boxing, along with various strategies for protecting your goods, later in this chapter.

But before storing stuff, you should first dump the real losers—that is, the totally useless or duplicate items.

TIP

An Inventory folder can be opened and closed in three ways: by clicking the white arrow to its left, by double-clicking the folder itself, or by pressing the enter key.

Clean House

Sooner or later, somebody will invent a script utility that goes through your entire Inventory and automatically deletes duplicate items (except those in Outfits). But for now, you're the donkey who has to carry this load.

Adjust the Sort and Filter Options

Before looking for duplicates to throw away, first click the Inventory's Sort menu and choose By Name. This way, your duplicates will cluster together because their names are alphabetized within folders. However, you must still go through the whole Inventory, opening each folder and looking for these clustered duplicates.

When I'm not organizing, I find it easier to have the individual items sorted by date. And I suggest you always leave the folders sorted by name (select this option on the Sort menu). Otherwise, whenever you buy something new, the folder you put it in will rise to the top of the Inventory.

The filters operate independently for the My Inventory and Recent Items tabs, so you can specify different filters simultaneously for these two views. Experiment a bit now to get the idea of how to employ filters to block certain items from being displayed. With the My Inventory tab clicked, choose Filters | Modify Current. A separate window opens, showing that, by default (or if you choose the Reset option or click the All button), each major Inventory category is displayed. But click the None button, and see that nothing appears in the Inventory—all of the category check boxes are cleared.

Click the Textures check box. Now the Inventory opens all folders containing textures. You can easily see how it might be useful to move some of the stray textures into the Textures folder, or perhaps locate some duplicates you might want to delete. In any case, this is a quick way to get an overview of a particular category.

How does SL know what items belong in what categories? Some things—such as textures, scripts, undershirts, and so on—are easily categorized from the moment they are created. They are given icons—for example, a little shirt, a pair of eyes, a pushpin (for landmarks)—representing their categories. (And you should try to memorize these icons, because they help you quickly find, for example, a jacket within a jumble of other kinds of clothes.) If an item is not easily categorized (or is a collection of boxed items), SL labels it as an *object*. The icon for an object is a box made of plywood.

Now try another experiment to see how the date filter works. Click the None button, and then display only clothing by clicking the relevant check box. You see all your clothes (plus hair, eyes, skins, and such that are included in this category). Now click the up arrow next to the Days Ago filter to change it from 0 to 1. You still see the folders displayed, but they're all probably empty. If they're not, then any clothes you bought within the past 24 hours will be shown to you. Obviously, this is a trick worth remembering when you're trying to locate something that you just acquired that seems to have sunk into the swamp of a massive Inventory.

Now click the arrow again to show two days, then three, and so on. As you continue to raise the Days Ago number, you're traveling back in time and seeing how many days ago you acquired which clothing. Combining date and category filters can assist you in quickly locating missing items (as long as you can remember part of the item's name).

Choose a Naming Convention

When I buy, build, or am gifted with something really cool, I right-click it in Inventory, choose Rename, and then append *xx* to the name. This makes it easy for me to use the Search feature in Inventory to find my favorites or, as someone rather creepily referred to them, *my precious*.

Similarly, I have a few other personal filter nicknames that I append, such as *6/7* to indicate that an outfit was created June 2007, *mine* if I actually built the object, and *bought* when I buy something (added to a box container, not to every individual item). If you work out a similar naming convention, you'll find that Inventory Search is more efficient. And remember that

Second Life automatically appends the word *worn* to everything you're currently wearing or that is attached to you. Searching for the word *worn* is an important technique. Worn items are also shown in boldface type. So you can find them that way as well, but looking for boldface type within 3,000 items isn't worth the trouble.

TIP

*When renaming Inventory folders or items, note that symbols come first, followed by numbers, and finally letters. For example, copies of one item named several different ways would appear in this order if your Inventory is sorted alphabetically: !!Office_Table, !Office_Table, **Office_Table, *Office_Table, 0_Office_Table, 1_Office_Table, X_Office_Table, XX_Office_Table.*

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Detect Actual Duplicates

CAUTION

Just because two items share the same name in the Inventory doesn't mean they are the same thing! The Inventory in SL doesn't work like most computer filing systems, which forbid two identically named items from being stored in the same folder. SL permits this. So don't just automatically delete items sharing the same name. You might see 12 objects named Rug in your Inventory, and they might all be different rugs.

There are only two ways to be sure you're deleting true duplicates:

- Right-click their names in Inventory and choose Properties, and then compare their date/time of origin and other details. The date/time of origin is particularly useful when you have several versions of something you created and only need to keep the latest, best version.
- Rez them (drag them out of the Inventory onto the ground, and compare them—either visually or by opening the Edit dialog and comparing their properties).

With that warning in mind, open your Inventory and find duplicate names—things listed together because you've alphabetized the Inventory. It's sensible to keep duplicate items in your “outfit” folders (discussed in Chapter 3), but you don't need copies of notecards, landmarks, and most other things.

TIP

Stretch the Inventory dialog wider so that you can see the full name and description of each item. In the following example, you might choose to delete the second copy of this viewer. That would be wrong. The second copy is more versatile because it can be modified. But because your Inventory dialog was too narrow to show the (no transfer) permission that makes the first version the more restrictive, less useful one, you might have deleted the second one by mistake. Here's an example showing why you need to stretch the Inventory dialog wide:

World Screen Viewer Version 2.1 (no modify) (no transfer)

World Screen Viewer Version 2.1 (no transfer)

Similarly, if you see two identically named folders, open them before deciding which one to delete. They may not contain identical items.

Take a good look at Library items. They cannot be deleted; they are always available. Technically, the same Library is shared by everyone in SL, so its contents are not really “in” your personal Inventory. But you can copy rezzed versions of these items into your Inventory, have them returned to you, or otherwise get duplicates.

You don’t need copies of any Library items in your My Inventory area. These items will always be in the Library any time you want them. Use the Inventory Search feature to locate Library items in My Inventory, and then delete them from My Inventory by clicking to select them and pressing DEL or by right-clicking and choosing Delete from the drop-down menu.

How do Library items creep into My Inventory? One way is that whenever you rez (put on the ground, on yourself, or otherwise “make real”) an object by dragging it from the Library, then right-click it and choose Take or Take Copy from the pie menu, a copy is stored in a folder in your Inventory.

Get into the habit of right-clicking items that are already in your Library or Inventory and then just pressing the DEL key. This deletes them rather than making a new, unneeded clone in your Inventory.

Find Copies

Here’s one way to find copies of Library items that are taking up space in your Inventory. Look in the Library for something you might have once used (rezzed). Then type its name into the Search field.

Click each duplicate in the Inventory, and then press DEL to delete them. You’ll notice that the total number of items listed in the title bar of your Inventory stays the same—until you empty the Trash folder, that figure won’t go any lower. (Trash is the SL equivalent of the Windows Recycle Bin.) To really get rid of something once and for all, right-click the Trash folder, and choose Empty Trash. Now your Inventory numbers will go down.

TIP

Search for the word demo. Delete any you find. Either you tried the demo and didn’t like it, or you did like it and bought it. In either case, you don’t need any demos in your Inventory.

You might also find duplicate items in the Lost And Found folder. This folder holds things that you accidentally left on someone else’s land and they returned to you (they right-clicked your object and then chose More | Return in the pie menu).

Review Every Folder

Your best approach to locating duplicates, however, is also the most time-consuming: Go through each folder and look for multiple entries.

CAUTION

I repeat: Before you delete items with duplicate names, remember the warning at the beginning of this chapter. You might have 12 objects named Rug, and they might all be different rugs. The only ways to be sure you’re deleting real duplicates are:

Rez them (drag them out of the Inventory onto the ground, and compare them). Right-click them in Inventory, choose Properties, and then compare their dates of origin and other details.

You might also find empty folders (a folder with no white arrow next to it, indicating the folder is empty). Delete those, too.

The calling cards in the folder of that same name are of little use for most of us. They're sort of a larger Friends list—they get added without any deliberate friendship offer, though that action adds one, too.

You can right-click a calling card to send an instant message (IM) or offer teleportation. Or you can drop several of them into a new folder (choose Create | New Folder in the Inventory dialog), then right-click the new folder, and send a mass IM mailing from the drop-down menu.

CAUTION

Notecards, photos—indeed many things that are sent to you while you're offline—are simply slipped without any notice into your Inventory. You don't see an Accept? Decline? message when you log on. Inventory, likewise, can have lots of calling cards added to the Inventory without you agreeing to it. These stealth items certainly deserve scrutiny when the time comes to reduce the size of your Inventory.

Common default names in the Notecards and Photo Album folders are the dreaded *New Note* and *Snapshot* names. Perhaps you or someone else has forgotten to rename the item when it was first created, leaving you to wonder what the heck it is. These files could be anything from anyone, and there really is no way of knowing without looking at the properties and the actual note or image.

Get Rid of Debris

Often, when you buy something, you must rez (drop onto the ground to make “real”) a box that contains what you bought, along with various other items, such as notecards (some telling you how to do things, others just plain ads); a landmark showing where the store is; and perhaps scripts, a posing stand, or other items. When you right-click the rezzed box, choose Open, and then choose Copy To Inventory (to actually be able to wear that shirt or use that gun), everything in the box is sent to your Inventory—the useful as well as the things you might not want. It's a good idea to get into the habit of looking at these new items when they're first copied (or moved) into your Inventory and delete any that you really don't need. You already have a posing stand, don't you? No need for two of them. Do you need that item's advertisement notecard? Do you need its teleport address landmark? And remember that if you're overly hasty and regret deleting something, you can always find it in the Trash folder until you right-click that folder and choose Empty Trash.

Reorganize Your Inventory

Now that you've gotten rid of those duplications, it's time to completely wrestle the Inventory to the ground. This means reducing the number of folders visible when you first open it. You should do this before boxing things, because it's easier to figure out what to put in storage when the Inventory itself is organized by categories.

Move Folders

When reorganizing the Inventory, you'll often want to drag one folder into another, thereby creating a subfolder. (Subfolders can also be created from the Inventory's Create menu.) Perhaps you want to drop a folder containing Lovely Skins into the Body Parts folder. To drag without problems, hold the dragged folder on top of the target folder until the target folder's white arrow starts pointing downward. This helps you ensure that you drop it where you want it to go.

An alternative technique for moving folders around is to choose File | New Window. A second Inventory window opens. This isn't a different Inventory, however, so when you drag a folder from one window and drop it into the other one, you're actually moving, not copying, this folder. The Inventory in either window will still bounce around, scrolling madly when something gets dropped into it. But some people find using two windows a more intuitive way to organize.

Some folder icons have a small icon on them—clothing, landmarks, and so on. These folders are permanent and cannot be renamed, deleted, or dragged to another folder to become a subfolder. One strategy for organizing your Inventory is to make all other folders subfolders inside one or another of these permanent folders. I find this a bit restrictive, but surely many, if not most, of your ordinary (plain icon) top-level folders will be just fine if made subfolders within the permanent categories.

Some of your Inventory folders are likely to be items you've purchased or been given: clothing, body parts, and so on. Drag that folder named Fab Flexi Hair and drop it in the Body Parts folder. Drag the Western Shirt folder and drop it into Clothing. Keep this up until you have relatively few folders showing in the main Inventory, with lots of subfolders hidden within these primary categories.

Select Items to Drag

And don't forget to use the familiar shortcut keys when selecting multiple items that you intend to drag. For example, holding down SHIFT selects all items between two clicked items; holding down CTRL selects (or clears) individual items in the Inventory.

I've gone through my immense Objects folder, clicking items here and there, all the while holding down the CTRL key. I've ended up with as many as 50 items selected, and then was able to drag them all as a unit into a subfolder I named Misc House Parts. Windows, doors, roofs—all kinds of bits and pieces of houses went into that folder. And my Objects folder became that much less complicated.

TIP

To make it easier to drag folders without having to scroll through the Inventory, drag your Inventory dialog box until it is really tall and takes up most of the screen vertically. But if you do have to scroll, drag the item to the top or bottom of the Inventory list and hold it there until the Inventory items themselves scroll automatically.

Consider choosing the Inventory's File | New Window feature when you need to drag content between folders. You can keep at least one window in a locked position (preventing scrolling or unwanted folders from popping open) with two Inventory windows open. The trick with this two-window method is to be quick enough at dragging. You have to release the mouse button and drop the content before the receiving folder in the other window actually opens. There is about a one-second delay before the left arrow next to the receiving folder starts to turn downward and spills open its contents. Once that arrow points fully down, the folder will pop open, and it can be a pain to close it again if it contains a few hundred items, forcing an automatic scroll past the window height. If this happens, do take the time to close the folder and resume where you left off.

This two-window method also comes in handy when uploading new content (choose File | Upload), which will always appear in the default folder locations. It makes the task of relocating new items to folders of your choice quick and painless. For example, if you've uploaded a granite texture, you might want to move it from the default Textures folder into a Stones subfolder.

Once you've got this far in organizing, start really working with subfolders. Take a look at your Landmarks folder, for example. Perhaps you can subdivide it into subfolders, like this:

- Upscale malls
- Friends' houses
- Possible good land
- Interior design stores
- Places to visit sometime
- My role-play regions
- Victoriana
- Most fun beaches
- Best gadget shops

Create whatever categories make sense to you and help make it easier to locate things. Categorizing by subfolders is especially useful to organize those main category folders—objects, clothing, landmarks, and others—which seem to grow the largest over time.

TIP

Here's a quick way to get to the Library section in your Inventory. Collapse all other folders by holding down the left arrow key with the Inventory active (selected). This collapses all folders, leaving only My Inventory and Library still visible. To undo the collapse and redisplay all the top-level folders, also reopening whatever folders were previously opened, hold down the right arrow key.

Boxing Day

Now that you've thrown out the trash and organized the Inventory, it's time for the final step in gaining control of your bulging Inventory: putting stuff in the attic. This means creating a storage box, or possibly several. So let's have a little fun and see how to build storage boxes. If this is the first time you've created anything in Second Life, you're in for a treat. You'll now get a preview of the cool things you can do with prims (primitives, the elementary building blocks in SL), textures (the surface appearance on a prim), and scripts (things that you can make prims do)—subjects covered in greater depth later in the book.

Build Storage Boxes

To create a storage box, follow these steps:

1. Find a quiet place on your land, or search for a sandbox by pressing CTRL-F and then clicking the Places tab in the Search dialog. Lots of places in Second Life don't permit you to create objects, but public sandboxes do.
2. Press B
3. If the Edit dialog isn't fully open (that is, you don't see tabs for General, Object, Features, Texture, and Content), click the More button to reveal them.
4. Click your mouse pointer on the ground. A box appears.
5. Click your mouse pointer on the ground. A box appears.
6. Click the Texture tab to color the box for fun.
7. Click the white color square to open the color picker.
8. Click somewhere near the middle of the horizontal bar (on the far right) until the color square becomes darker.
9. Click in the color spectrum to select a color you like. The chosen color will appear in the color squares each time you click.
10. Click the Select button to close the color picker.

Now you have built a perfectly good storage box. You can put things into any prim—we'll see how in a minute. First, let's give it a name that we can see when it's up in the attic with other storage boxes. You can choose your own name; I'm dumping all my freebies I don't use into this box, so I'll call it *Freebies*.

Display Hover Text

Follow these steps to create a script that displays some "hover text" above your box:

1. Click the Content tab in the Edit dialog. If you've closed the entire dialog, just right-click the storage box and choose Edit.
2. Click the New Script button.

3. A default script is always in each new script, and it says “Hello, Avatar.” Don’t be alarmed. We’ll edit it.
4. Double-click the Script icon that appears in the Contents folder in the Edit dialog. This opens the script editor.
5. Select and delete the following default text, because we don’t want any response from this prim when it’s touched (clicked):

```
touch_start(integer total_number)
{
    llSay(0, "Touched.");
}
```

6. Then replace the line containing “Hello Avatar.” Edit the text until the entire script looks like this:

```
default
{
    state_entry()

    {
        llSetText("Freebies",<1.0, 1.0, 1.0>, .5);
    }
}
```

We’ll get into the details about scripting in Chapter 14. You can copy all the scripts in this book by visiting <http://howtosl.blogspot.com>. You can put any text you wish between the quotes. Adjust those numbers between the < > symbols to change the text color. Replace, if you wish, the .5 with anything between 1 and 0. This final specification (which programmers prefer to call an *argument*) indicates how transparent you want the text to be. I prefer not to have my screen all mucked up with text everywhere, so a nice, semi-transparent .5 is my choice if labeling an object is absolutely necessary.

7. Click the Save button.

If the dialog doesn’t say *Compile successful*, check your script for a typo (the error message will tell you the line where the error is located, or at least where it’s near). The most common error is to have the wrong number of braces } or to omit the necessary semicolon. Just fix the error, and click Save again.

Now you’ve labeled your storage box, and it’s ready to be used.

8. Close the script editing window and the main contents window.

Duplicate a Storage Box

In my opinion, you'll want to create at least two storage boxes. In fact, I suggest treating them a bit like folders—make one box for clothes, another box for landscaping and decorating items, and put miscellany in another. So here's how to make as many copies as you want:

1. Right-click the storage box. This *selects* it. In Windows, left clicking selects, but in Second Life, left clicking is called *touching*, and it can trigger behaviors such as teleportation, sitting, displaying a menu of choices, and so on.
2. Press CTRL-D as many times as you wish. Each keypress duplicates your box. (If no duplicates appear, you either don't have permission to copy this box or, more likely, you've stored a no-copy item inside the box. Open it, select the no-copy item, and click the Move To Inventory button in the storage box's Contents window.)

NOTE

A duplicated copy will rez at a default .5 × .5 meter offset to the original on the x and z axes.

3. To delete a box, right-click it and press the DEL key.
4. You might want to change the hover text for these different storage boxes, naming them *clothes*, *garden items*, and so on. Just right-click a box, choose Open, double-click the script, modify the text between the quotation marks, and click Save to recompile. When it says "Save Complete," close both windows, and your new box is renamed.

Warn Before Deleting or Moving

You don't want to accidentally delete one of your storage boxes, do you? After all, you've moved lots of stuff into the box. You freed up all kinds of space in Inventory or copied the Inventory as a backup. What good would it do if you then freaked out and deleted the box? Or took (right-click and choose Take) the storage box back into Inventory? To avoid these awful possibilities, when you finish filling a storage box, select the *Locked* option on the Objects tab of the Edit dialog. This doesn't prevent you from deleting or moving the box, but it does display a warning message to you before permitting you to carry out those actions. Also, when an object is locked, any contained scripts can't be edited, you can't hold down CTRL and drag the object anywhere, and so on.

TIP

If you prefer, you can create an entirely new avatar (called an alt) whose main raison d'être is to hold copies of your Inventory for you. Go to www.secondlife.com, click the Log Out link (located in the upper-right area) if necessary, and then click the Join link. When this new avatar's account is set up, press CTRL-F, and click the People tab. Type this new avatar's name, and when you locate it, click the Profile button. Follow the instructions in the section "Give a Storage Box to Someone Else" to give the box to your mule avatar or a friend.

Give a Storage Box to Someone Else

You can't give a storage box to anyone else if it contains any no-transfer items. That permission setting forbids selling or giving away an item. If your storage box is free of no-transfer items, however, you can give it to someone to store it for you for safekeeping. Right-click the box and choose Take from the pie menu. This puts it into your Inventory. Press CTRL-I to open your Inventory. Click the Recent Items tab. If the storage box says "no transfer" in your Inventory, there's still an item with that permission setting in the box.

Drag a copy of your Inventory storage box into the other person's Profile dialog area where it says "Drop Inventory Item Here."

TIP

Although you can't copy folders from Inventory into a storage box, you can drop folders (if the contents can be copied and transferred) into a person's profile. There's a limit, however, of 43 items.

Fill a Storage Box

Close the Edit dialog, if it's still open. To transfer items from your Inventory into your storage box, follow these steps:

1. Press CTRL-I to open your Inventory.
2. Right-click the storage box, and choose Open. This displays the Contents dialog for this object. The script is in there, but you're going to dump stuff from your Inventory in there, too.
3. Type *Freebie* in the Inventory Search field (or whatever category of items you're dumping to the storage box).

TIP

When you use the Inventory's Search feature, you see listed only those folders or items with the search term included in their title. However, you might want to see all associated items in the same folder. To do that, click the target item or folder to select it. Then delete the search term in the Search field. This causes the Inventory to display items adjacent to the selected item.

4. Remember, you can't transfer entire folders, just items. In the Inventory, select the item or a range of items (hold down the CTRL or SHIFT keys while clicking items) that you want to transfer to the storage box. Then drag the selected items from the Inventory and drop them in the storage box's Contents window. If you drag a script into the Contents window, it will run. This might cause your hover text to change, for example. If that happens, just double-click your script in the Contents window to open it, and then click the Reset button.

CAUTION

It might take a while for Second Life to complete the transfer. If the items don't immediately show up in the Contents window, wait a few seconds.

5. Notice that dragging items into the storage box does not delete them from the Inventory; it merely copies them into your box. If you're sure you want to completely move them out of Inventory, you must select an item or group of items, and then press the DEL key. Even then, it's not really deleted; it's just moved into the Trash folder in your Inventory.
6. When you've finished filling your storage box, right-click it and choose Take. It can now be found in your Inventory in the Recent Items section.
7. Walk, fly, or teleport to your house or wherever you want to store it. Open your Inventory and drag it in the attic, storage room, or whatever.
8. Protect it from being deleted or moved by right-clicking it, choosing Edit, clicking the More button (if necessary to reveal the tabs), clicking the Object tab, and then clicking the Locked option. Be sure to memorize where you are leaving this storage box, or you may never be able to find it again.

Purchase Professional Storage Gadgets

Some people like the convenience of using gadgets you can buy that offer extra features beyond the basic, homemade storage boxes we created earlier in this chapter. One gadget I like is called Inventory Box Organizer. Find it at a store named THiNC SL. Get the copyable version. That costs more, but you can then create as many individual storage trunks as you wish. You can store an unlimited number of items in one of these trunks, but it's suggested that you limit yourself to about 100 per box. The reason is that you view the contents by clicking the FORWARD or BACKWARD buttons, causing the name of each item to be displayed in turn. The transfer process is via a simple menu, security issues are taken care of, and the trunks look cool. See what you think. (They also sell some other interesting gadgets, including a nice texture organizer.)

Manage Textures

If you do a lot of building, you've probably been gathering quite a few textures. Some people swear by professional texture organizers. Visit Memnochs Madness store or Zor's Emporium. With these gadgets, you can view a display of texture thumbnails, categories, and quickly click your way to the exact texture you're after.

By the way, as long as you're at Zor's, you might want to pick up one of his effective and versatile security orbs. They eject uninvited residents who stray onto your land or into the airspace above it. The orbs give you lots of options, including a range of responses, from a gentle push to blasting them back to their home, wherever that might be.

Use Your Hard Drive

There is also the option of backing up textures by saving them to own computer's hard drive. Builders need the extra flexibility of being able to manipulate or add to textures in one of their builds. A lot of texture vendors sell textures with full permissions (and a strict license agreement,

of course) for just this purpose. It is permissible to sell objects containing modified textures, but it is not okay to sell the raw textures by themselves. A lot of customers have come to expect full permissions when buying textures for building, so quite a few texture vendors offer this.

If you are disciplined about keeping their names identical in your Inventory (or storage box) and your hard drive, try saving textures in both places. This way, you can take advantage of the useful features built into the Windows Explorer file system: Search, View | Thumbnails, and other utilities. This helps you to quickly find a texture. An image viewer like ACDsee is even better. Simply locate the texture you need, copy that texture's name, and paste it into the Search field in your SL Inventory to instantly find it.

Also, if you lose a texture permanently in your SL Inventory, you can always upload it back into SL from your hard drive for L\$10 (Linden dollars). Not much of a price to pay if you really need that one texture.

To save a texture, right-click it in Inventory, and then choose Open. Now choose File | Save Texture | As, and it will be stored where you specify.

TIP

One way to view multiple textures in SL is to select a group of textures by holding down shift and clicking a range of them in Inventory. Then right-click the group, and choose Open. The Preview window opens with Next, Previous, First, and Last buttons.

Find Lost Items

Remember that one of the drawbacks to having a large Inventory is that you can lose things in it. Maybe you can't remember the exact name of an item, for example, so searching is difficult. Or perhaps the word *shirt* doesn't even appear in the name, even though it is a shirt. Maybe the creator named it *Flamenco Upper*.

Various tips throughout this chapter help assist you in tracking down missing items. Perhaps you can use a date filter, or a filter for *clothing* that prevents all kinds of other items from being displayed. Or you could scan through the Inventory looking for the shirt icons. Here's another thought: If you can't find something, try choosing Filters | Reset Current to ensure that no filters are active, thereby preventing the item you're looking for from being displayed. Choosing Reset Current turns off all filtering, so that every item is displayed, regardless of its category or date of acquisition.

Another way to lose items is to choose Drop after right-clicking an attachment. This causes the item to fall to the ground. Or perhaps you were dragging something with the Edit window open, and the object flew away into space or somebody else's land. Or you created something and left it where you put it. In many cases, landowners will return such items to their owner (you). If somebody returns several objects to you at once, they can be hard to find, because they'll be boxed into an object with a random name. If this person returns three shirts, for example, the box will be named after one of those shirts. The trick to finding this box is to use the date filter to locate recent objects. The box will be in your Lost And Found folder, now filtered by date.

If you open your Inventory and lots of things are missing, you might be able to retrieve them by *clearing the cache*, as it's called. In other words, the items might be still available on the

Linden Lab server's database, but for some reason are not showing up in your local computer. Press CTRL-P to display the Preferences dialog, click the Network button, and select Clear Cache. You'll have to log off and log back on to see if this worked.

Sometimes, sad to say, items just plain evaporate. It's just one of those things. Some people never experience Inventory evaporation effects (I haven't), but others suffer from it. Also, sometimes your Linden money amounts show up as zero. That can be scary and quite stressful if you have a lot of money in your account. Logging off and then logging back on can sometimes fix this problem. Or you may have to wait a day or two if the problem is system-wide.

Now and then there is trouble in Linden world—the *grid* (as they call the entire Second Life universe) can become temporarily unstable. You can always check to see if there's some current grid problem by going to the official Linden blog at <http://blog.secondlife.com>. This is where Linden Lab always posts the latest issues.

About once a week, the grid goes down for repairs and upgrades—usually Wednesday morning. You'll find info like that at the blog. And it's best to wait a few hours after the grid has come back online before logging in (if you're not in a big hurry). Most problems occur as the asset servers play catch-up.

But it could also be something *you* do that sends objects off into space. In my younger days, I had a beautiful three-story house filled with great stuff: a priceless gold antique vase (I've never been able to remember where I bought it), a cool radio disguised as a calla lily...things I really liked. Well, one evening, encouraged by a couple of Tom Collins, I decided it was time to rotate my entire house. Better view of the bay, you know? Experienced residents will probably start laughing at this point. Selecting and then rotating an entire house full of prims can be risky. During that operation, my house exploded. Somebody, somewhere has a beautiful gold vase.

Another thing to avoid: If an object contains many linked prims, *do not* select the *Physical* checkbox in the Edit dialog (Object tab) and then unlink the object. The resulting meltdown is quite spectacular to watch, but cleanup is a nightmare. Clicking the Physical checkbox invokes gravity, causing all your newly unlinked prims to follow that universal law and collapse to the ground. Now who's going to put Humpty Dumpty back together again?