

Advertisement

IHI Health Insurance
24 hours a day

International Health Insurance danmark a/s
A member of the Bupa group

- NEWS
- POLITICS
- OPINIONS
- LOCAL
- SPORTS
- ARTS & LIVING
- CITY GUIDE
- JOB
- CARS
- REAL ESTATE
- RENTALS
- CLASSIFIEDS

SEARCH: washingtonpost.com Web; Results by | [Search Archives](#)

washingtonpost.com > Technology

TechNews.com

[Print This Article](#)
[E-Mail This Article](#)

Latest News: [Sony, Virgin Comics to launch video game based on Hindu epic](#)

Advertisement

'Real' Estate Sale

Fantasy Properties Can Get You Actual Money on Weblo

By [Sam Diaz](#)
Washington Post Staff Writer
Thursday, August 9, 2007; Page D01

5.05%
ANNUAL PERCENTAGE YIELD

American Dream Savings Account™
More Money For Your Money™

EmigrantDirect.com™
Ask about our new Credit Card.

Member FDIC [Learn More ▶](#)

QUICK QUOTES

Enter Symbol
[Tables](#) | [Portfolio](#) | [Index](#)

MOST VIEWED ARTICLES
[Technology](#) | [On the Site](#)

- Updated 9:31 a.m. ET
- ['Real' Estate Sale](#)
 - [A Loss And a Gain for Sprint](#)
 - [Md. Panel Grills Verizon Over Delays in Repairs](#)
 - [Struggling Sprint Pushes Its Chips Toward WiMax](#)
 - ["Madden" said to regain past glory](#)

The mayor of Washington has put a For Sale sign on the nation's capital -- and he claims one of the 2008 presidential candidates is negotiating to buy the place for a fraction of what a [Georgetown](#) rowhouse might cost.

This isn't the real Washington, of course, but a virtual version of the city on Weblo, a new Internet site that is offering online versions of every piece of property on the planet and a real-money transaction system to go with them.

It all works like an online version of Monopoly, but aims for the appeal of fantasy video games such as [World of Warcraft](#) and social networking sites such as [MySpace](#).

In this online frontier, users are betting that a growing number of people will engage in real-estate speculation. Using real money, Weblo members purchase virtual properties -- cities, states or physical addresses -- around the globe and customize Web pages that correspond to those locations. Properties -- the [White House](#), [New York City](#), the state of [Virginia](#) -- are initially auctioned, and then can be resold. So far, 10 percent of the virtual globe has been sold.

There are a number of ways to make money on Weblo: Those who own the rights to cities or states collect transaction fees from members who buy virtual properties in their jurisdictions. Members can personalize Web pages associated with their properties and make money from advertising sold on those sites. Eventually, [Montreal](#)-based Weblo also plans to offer e-commerce so that people can add visual storefronts and sell real objects on their pages.

Weblo, launched last September, was the brainchild of Rocky Mirza, an Internet entrepreneur who has run online auction companies. Mirza started an international software development company to fund his new idea, and last month the site secured \$3.2 million in additional funding from VantagePoint Venture Partners.

One of Weblo's 44,000 members is Mike Jameson, a [Connecticut](#) real estate agent who so far has paid more than \$15,000 for 700 properties on Weblo, including [Andrews Air Force Base](#), [Walt Disney World](#), [Newark](#) and [Arlington](#). His original plan: Showcase

GRAPHIC

[Booming Real Estate in an Unreal World](#)
Weblo is a Web site virtual world where members can own the rights to replicas of real world property, including cities and states.

WHO'S BLOGGING?

Read what bloggers are saying about this article.

[Just MySpace News](#)
[Full List of Blogs \(1 links\) >](#)

Most Blogged About Articles
[On washingtonpost.com](#) | [On the web](#)

POWERED BY

SAVE & SHARE ARTICLE [What's This?](#)

[Digg](#) [Google](#)
[del.icio.us](#) [Yahoo!](#)
[Reddit](#) [Facebook](#)

FEATURED ADVERTISER LINKS

[Refinance Rates As Low As 2.9% - FREE QUOTES!](#)
[\\$300,000 Mortgage for \\$965/mo! Refinance & Save \\$1,000's!](#)
[Invest with Fidelity Total Retirement Advantage](#)
[Be Prepared. Fight Identity Theft! Equifax.com.](#)
[>>Refinance - Save up to \\$400/mo. - Lendingtree®](#)
[Asbestos, Celebrex, Mesothelioma, Lung Cancer, AMO](#)
[T-Shirts, Custom Hats, Custom Koozies, Wedding Favors](#)
[Cool Gadgets, Great Deals, Visit CircuitCity.com](#)
[T-Mobile, Verizon Wireless, Cingular/AT&T Phones](#)

E-MAIL NEWSLETTERS

View a Sample and Sign Up
[TechNews Daily Report](#)
[Personal Finance](#)
[Personal Tech](#)
[Manage Your Newsletters](#)

washingtonpost.com

Latest From Post I.T.

- [A Startup Hits Reality TV](#)
- [FCC to Decide on Auction Rules Today](#)
- [Investing In Twitter's Future](#)
- [SunRocket Sells](#)

[+ Add to Web Site](#)

actual properties for sale in the counterpart of his virtual city and collect referral fees when the listing leads to a real sale.

But Jameson also saw Weblo's own real estate potential: Just a few months ago, he paid \$95 for Washington, a transaction that earned him the title of mayor of the virtual city. "D.C. was one of the first cities I bought," he said. "That was a gold mine."

Today, his minimum asking price for Washington is \$99,000, and he said someone from one of the presidential campaigns contacted him as an interested buyer.


"Only because the election is coming up does this seem like a good move," said Jameson, who wouldn't name the candidate because the deal has not been finalized.

There's nothing fancy about Weblo properties, which appear to be little more than simple two-dimensional Web pages. Jameson's Washington, for example, consists of little more than a description of the city, some pictures of the monuments and memorials around town and links to his other Weblo properties.

But if the Weblo community grows and members start to invest more time and energy into sprucing up their online properties -- just as millions of MySpace members have invested hours designing their profile pages to reflect their personalities and attract visitors -- there is potential for more traffic and greater revenue.

CONTINUED 1 2 Next >

[Print This Article](#) [E-Mail This Article](#) [Permission to Republish](#)

Post a Comment AD Join the discussion. Sponsored by Cisco. welcome to the human network. 

[View all comments](#) that have been posted about this article.

Your washingtonpost.com User ID, colintreth, will be displayed with your comment.

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Log in](#) | [Register](#)

Comments that include profanity or personal attacks or other inappropriate comments or material will be removed from the site. Additionally, entries that are unsigned or contain "signatures" by someone other than the actual author will be removed. Finally, we will take steps to block users who violate any of our posting standards, terms of use or privacy policies or any other policies governing this site. Please review the [full rules](#) governing commentaries and discussions. You are fully responsible for the content that you post.

© 2007 The Washington Post Company

[Ads by Google](#)

Web 2.0 Suite -Free Trial
SuiteTwo combines wikis, blogs, RSS. Hosted or install on site
www.SuiteTwo.com

Metro 1 Properties, Inc.
Search 1,000s of Residential Commercial & Luxury Properties Free
www.metro1properties.com

NM Commercial Real Estate
Affordable Office, Industrial, Land Metro NM-incentives for relocation.
www.nmsitesearch.com

SEARCH:   

NEWS | POLITICS | OPINIONS | LOCAL | SPORTS | ARTS & LIVING | CITY GUIDE

JOB | CARS | REAL ESTATE | RENTALS | CLASSIFIEDS

washingtonpost.com: [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [Site Index](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Make Us Your Home Page](#) | [mywashingtonpost.com](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS](#) | [Archives](#)
The Washington Post: [Subscribe](#) | [Subscriber Services](#) | [Advertisers](#) | [Electronic Edition](#) | [Online Photo Store](#) | [The Washington Post Store](#) | [About The Post](#) | [National Weekly](#)
The Washington Post Company: [Information and Other Post Co. Websites](#)

© Copyright 1996- 2007 The Washington Post Company | [User Agreement and Privacy Policy](#) | [Rights and Permissions](#)