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## **Weblo seeks virtual sovereign**

Mahesh Sharma | *June 06, 2007*

**SYDNEY has a new mayor, and an Australian may soon become the next King or Queen of England, or at least a version of it built in cyber space.**

The creator's of a new online virtual world called Weblo.com said they had built a virtual England online and an Australian could tender the winning bid to buy rights to become its next sovereign.

Weblo.com sells web portals based on geographic locations, allowing internet users to become virtual "governors" by buying up states, cities, buildings and even celebrities.

The web portals' owners upload news and information to the virtual sites in the hope of attracting as many visitors as possible to generate traffic.

The properties maybe virtual but the money isn't. Site operator can generate revenue, or "taxes" , on business activity such advertising and traffic referrals that take place within their virtual terrain.

Weblo.com has also generated income from selling the web portals.

It said that it had sold most major cities and towns in Australia from an inventory that has grown to 9000 cities, and over 750 states and provinces around the world.

Weblo has auctioned a portal based on Sydney and its Queensland-labelled portal recently sold for \$US6350 (\$7530).

The highest value portal auction was to sell California, which fetched \$US53,000 dollars.

Technology industry analysts remain cautious about Weblo's business model.

Jupiter Research media analyst Barry Parry recently told CNN reporters that he couldn't understand the economics behind the business model. "You can't value things simply on the ability to sell them to someone else. I don't know what's going to drive the audience. It doesn't feel like a sustainable business."

While the identity of Sydney's "virtual mayor" is unknown, the individual uses the online alias Dr Johnson. Dr Johnson's Weblo 'celebrity' page reveals that the individual also governs Los Angeles, Texas, Paris, London, and Mexico City.

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