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NASA has created a virtual personality using web technology from the Gold Coast to keep the public up to date with its latest mission to Mars.

Using artificial intelligence technology created by MyCyberTwin, NASA has created a virtual expert, aka cyber twin, who will act as a spokesperson for the Phoenix mission to Mars in the popular online world of Second Life.

Visitors to NASA Island in Second Life can chat with the cyber twin, who has been trained by real-life experts at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Houston.

It will field questions about the Mars mission 24/7.

MyCyberTwin chief executive Liesl Capper said this was the future of communication with clients and customers across a range of industries.

"It can handle multiple conversations at once at any time of the day. It brings their virtual world environment to life," Ms Capper said.

Phoenix landed in Mars' northern plains on May 25 for a three-month mission. It is not a rover like some Mars missions, and its instruments cannot directly detect past or present life.

The \$US420 million (\$A438.87 million) mission is being overseen by the University of Arizona, with support from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

The first sample of Martian dirt dumped onto the opening of the Phoenix lander's tiny testing oven failed to reach the instrument and scientists said on Saturday they would devote a few days to trying to determine the cause.

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