



Metaverse as a promise of a bright future? – social interactions in a world of isolation

12/13.03.2022 | online workshop

SIWI workshop is a part of:



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<https://workshop.htt.events>

The Metaverse is before us. Extended Reality, which has so far been on the periphery of life, has a chance of becoming an element of everyday life. The arrival of such a world has been accelerated, on the one hand, by technological development and the readiness of IT corporations to invest in VR/XR technology, and on the other hand, by a pandemic that prompted us to look for alternative ways to exist in isolation.

This situation forces us to face completely new challenges. We must find ways to define ourselves in the virtual world in various dimensions, including establishing social relationships or creating our own identity. We invite you to our online workshop – a **space for reflection on issues of social functioning in the world of the Metaverse**. The event has been designed to allow participants to interact in three autonomous forms: lectures combined with Q&A sessions, an experiment involving participant observation in the VR environment, and thematic discussion sessions.

We plan to conduct the meeting as a half-day workshop. We will start with a **panel featuring participants' presentations**. Then, participants will be invited to the VR Chat application prepared by LBM UW to participate in a **specially designed game called "Prohibition."** Participation in this game will involve experiencing risk, competition and dynamic social relations, and give players a chance to reflect on their own identity in the virtual space. Some will participate in the game, while others observe and analyze it using a previously prepared observation card. The day will end with a **summary discussion**. We will examine individual and group functioning in the virtual world based on the experience of the game and take up methodological themes regarding research in this environment. We will share not only our thoughts from the workshops but also our experiences related to VR/XR research.

The presentations and discussion topics will concern various aspects of **social interactions in XR/VR**. We are interested in whether and how designing virtual worlds can condition human behaviour. What is **communication like in XR/VR**, what tools can enrich it and what can limit it? What is the **specificity of intercultural interactions**? How do players create **an identity in XR/VR**? How do they perceive themselves? What are their **motivations**?

We also want to analyze **VR/XR as a way of breaking down social isolation**. What impact can interaction in VR/XR have on people who struggle with exclusion and loneliness? **Virtual escapism** as a path to a more attractive reality has become an important issue during the pandemic, but it should not be forgotten that, regardless of the current situation, VR/XR opportunities provide a unique opportunity for **people with disabilities**.

Another thread is the relations between **technology and humans as social animals**. What solutions are missing to make the user experience entirely satisfactory? Does VR/XR technology change us by creating cyborgs? Does it **take away our humanity or support us in our development as social creatures**?

We invite you to reflect and share your experiences!

A list of the **workshop's topics**:

We welcome position papers, preliminary research results, case studies or novel concepts on topics related to XR/VR technology and humans as social animals

- Establishing social relationships in XR/VR environments
- Creating an identity in XR/VR environments
- Intercultural communication in XR/VR environments
- Influence of XR/VR design on human behaviour
- VR/XR in the context of social motivation
- Social interactions in XR/VR
- VR/XR as a way to overcome social isolation
- VR/XR as a potential inclusion space for people with disabilities

The workshop's **submission guidelines**:

In this workshop, we aim to bring together researchers, developers, and industry practitioners to explore the challenges of the social dimensions of the Metaverse. We invite you to submit papers up to a maximum of 6 pages (without references).

Instructions for authors: [see here](#)

A list of important dates:

- Submission deadline: January 12, 2022
- Notification deadline: January 18, 2022
- Camera-ready deadline: January 25, 2022
- Workshop: March 12/13, 2022 (exact date to be announced)

The Organizing Committee

- prof. dr hab. Tomasz Gackowski (University of Warsaw, Poland)
- dr hab. Anna Mierzecka (University of Warsaw, Poland)
- Marcin Łączyński (University of Warsaw, Poland)
- Adam Balcerzak (University of Warsaw, Poland)
- Marlena Sztzyber (University of Warsaw, Poland)
- Łukasz Bis (University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów, Poland)
- Grzegorz Kowalczyk (University of Warsaw, Poland)

The Scientific Committee

- Dr Lynn Silipigni Connaway (OCLC Research, USA)
- Prof. Sonia Fizek (Technische Hochschule Koeln Cologne Game Lab, Germany)
- Prof. Jamie Johnston (Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway)
- Prof. Veli-Matti Karhulahti (University of Jyväskylä / University of Turku, Finland)
- Prof. Tomas Krilavičius (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)
- Dr Jan Lacko (Pan-European University, Slovakia)
- Prof. Krystyna Matusiak (University of Denver, USA)
- Prof. Bhuvan Narayan (University of Technology Sydney, Australia)
- Prof. Aleksandra Przeglasińska (Kozminski University, Poland)
- Prof. Wayne Wanta (University of Florida, USA)
- Prof. Adriaan van der Weel (Leiden University, Netherlands)
- Prof. Magdalena E. Wojcieszak (University of California Davis, University of Amsterdam)