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Building a Better Community: A You-Centralized Experience

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ABSTRACT

Through a metaverse hosted art show we use novel mechanisms to control access to content in virtual spaces. In these spaces where anonymity is the standard, and requiring interaction is secondary to being viewed or received, we explore unique means of service deployment by requiring viewers to create "content" in the form of survey responses and other interactions prior to accessing the show's content. To strengthen the connection to the virtual space we offer POAP's to participants to add a layer of accountability and a way of monitoring attendance and interaction on the blockchain. Content moderation is only part of the picture, community moderation viewed as a holistic space is central to evolving sustainable groups which can grow and thrive. Successful meta-worlds still require the translation of real world social practices and constructs to their virtual systems -- not necessarily in the same way they are used in real life, but perhaps in innovative and authentic ways that improve on current practice. The metaverse in its infancy is a perfect place to make large changes to social structures before they are cemented in place. The focus of this research is to explore new ways to provide inclusive education opportunities, invest in the democratization of virtual spaces, and to promote computer skills and literacy. In many current forms, metaverses are inherently non-inclusive because of economic and technological inequality as well as lack of access to Computer Science education resources. We look to disincentivize predatory practices in UX/UI design and service blueprinting, such as dark patterning that subtly create non-inclusive structures. Designing inclusion into a framework implies that a framework or service is inherently non-inclusive. This project challenges this view, and suggests instead that a virtual service should be inherently inclusive, and must be designed in such a way that it avoids the addition of non-inclusive features.

Keywords: Metaverse, Art, Experience design, Inclusion framework, Web3, NFT, Blockchain, Human-centered Design, Service engineering

INTRODUCTION

No participation implies experience does not occur. Those able to avoid digital worlds would have a minimum virtual fingerprint; choosing to engage with email or the internet at all is the contract agreement for committing to your digital self. If this profile identity is truly the best digital representation of any one person then virtual interfaces should focus on the experience of that identity–a YouCentralized experience. This opens the door to endless identity possibilities for one to explore, created to engage with others. Social norms that become universal in digital spaces should be seen as significant

but not solidified. These standards change with the onboarding of new users as well as technology limitations and the frameworks that allow for virtual networks. Conversations revolving around human versus Artificial Intelligence (AI) content generation will continue beyond the relevance of this writing, but is it significant to point out the variation of the two realms prior to a synthesized experience. With this in mind this research explores blockchain based art worlds to establish a baseline of virtual gallery experience in order to optimize engage to earn models focused on participation and eventually education. This research will culminate in three unique art shows in various virtual environments to observe how users interact with the space.

YOU-CENTRALIZED EXPERIENCE

The Internet of things is becoming increasingly apparent by looking at authentication procedures in the digital space, multilayered proximity security protocols occurring through mobile device use and layered identity shielding with virtual private networks (VPNs) or email forwarding services. The digitization of all experiences has placed large expectations on users for attentive identity security behaviors. If no steps are taken to protect your digital self, it is hard to prepare for an exponentially expanding user experience within the token based infrastructures of Web3.

Exposure to technology education between those with reliable support versus subpar tech is dramatically widening every second not to mention the impact advances quantum computing and AI learning have on the very technology interface we experience on a daily basis. Transitions from ad-centered marketing of current web structures to layered interaction points of Web3 will reward based on participation. Whether this experience is in a physical place, virtual place, or beyond can downplay the influence of transgressors or bad actors because of the authorization process. A synthesis of digital and physical is already becoming evident with the integration of NFT assets as profile pictures on social media or how Amazon Go marketplace authorizes your purchases based on what you take with no tollbooth style payment procedure. Both of these examples show digital and physical integration in a way that directly ties to a verifiable trail of authorship. “Crypto Economies have already begun to shape the future of work. They blend how we play, learn, organize, socialize, and create, with ownership generation, (Tsang, 2021). This virtual fingerprint is only the beginning, but it is important to note the ties to market valuations and the tradable nature of these commodity backed spaces.

A collective want to be included in an experience starts as an individual expression interfacing with the desires of others based on the environment at a specific time. Not only does this line of observation tie to core influences when evaluating artworks, digitally speaking, these virtual environments can replicate any reality, controlling all variables through the context of that program. This reveals the need to question baseline standardization of virtual experiences and whether that could even be achieved, specifically when naturally occurring redundancies of technology optimize the process, it is humans that get in the way or alter the process. Because human experience

is a priority of digital spaces, observed with the commodification of data collection, shifting away from toll booth check and validation process of Web 2.0 would naturally imply we are leaning to individuation for authenticity, breaking down the autonomy of the digital identity facade. "In the real world, identity is probably our most important asset — it's quite literally who we are. And much in the same way as identity and authentication play such an integral part in today's brick-and-mortar and digital worlds, the metaverse will also require people to claim an identity and permit businesses, organizations, and other virtual citizens to authenticate who they are" (Sawers, 2022). Naturally there are layers of privacy to a degree, but not wholly, because documented blockchain data is tied to a real crypto wallet address–claim to any virtual asset inevitably has ties to the physical reality (disregarding AI generated content for AI consumption).

ART, CREATION, AND THE IN BETWEEN

When the right combination of ingredients and environments coexist, memorable and magical moments are formed. Similarities between dynamic flow of an artist or athlete in the zone parrots the finesse of elegant coder designing an experience. Themes connecting these dramatically different worlds would indicate that time and focused dedication to any specific passion possesses an undefined value and is simultaneously identity as well as essence beyond the self shared with others. Looking at the fundamentals of neuron wiring "…evidence from a number of sources now suggests that the highest levels of the primary somatosensory cortex are also vicariously activated when we see the actions of others...regions involved in experiencing emotions also become vicariously activated when we witness others experience similar emotions, including the insula for disgust, pain and pleasure, the rostral cingulate for pain and the striatum for reward" (Keesers and Gazzola, 2014). Because of the empathy wired through experience, it would seem natural for community building to be based on both a passion driven participation model and an empathetic standard. Finding common threads of any environment will give insights to people that fill that space.

Looking for solutions to situations rather than casting blame could be the standard with a blockchain backed commerce/accountability system. All information backed by a digital log for all to see – this new way to perceive how data is documented could cut down on miscommunications, expedite delivered products, and optimize user experience. Data drives this integrated metaverse and inputs are driven by authenticity. "Digital identity, unlike the real world, uses a cryptographic Root of Trust, rather than a humanistic Root of Trust. When we operate in the real world, I see you, I know you, therefore I trust you. Online, these essential components are missing…When I come across you online, there's a leap of faith where I believe you are who you say you are" (Lucatch, 2021). Sharing what one authentically creates is hard enough in person let alone across the internet where anyone anywhere has access to your work at any time. The demand for universal design and broad cultural awareness could not be more critical now than ever. Humans

create things and in that process we make the unimaginable; blockchains help document these experiences.

The act of creation is often missed and in place of this event is the result or object. Manifestations from thought to expression and beyond is nothing new, but the value placed on these totems of time is typically viewed through a financial lens. Deconstructing all assets in this way implies transactability of all things that can innately be reduced to a sum. The shift that Web3 presents on the most basic level is a shift in ownership from a system of corporatocracy to a decentralized autonomous organization (DAO). "Meanwhile, other Web3 believers think the most important part of the tech has nothing to do with buying stuff. They're most interested in the way it can help people organize themselves online and create organizations that could rival or replace existing companies like Facebook or Google" (Kafka, 2022).

When participants in any system have a certifiable voice authenticated with blockchain validations, which give actual representation through tokenomics, the utility of a vote becomes evident. Currently traditional regionalism, associated with governance structures, direct citizens to vote locally with the hope their ideas make it to the next level of discussion. In a decentralized system backed by digital authenticity, voting is near instantaneous, and verifiable immediately because everyone has access to the blockchain data. When all actions are logged in the community ledger for any particular organization, the authenticity of an organization gains clout, respect, and authorship because of transparency. According to the Deutsche Bank corporate bank research report from October 2020, Blockchain and Corporates Transparency is the New Marketing:

> The benefits of using blockchain for decentralised supply chain management are manifold: (a) a transparent ledger system that can trace every product movement; (b) real-time tracking and quality control of any material within the system; (c) faster transactions; (d) improved trust among manufacturers and vendors via use of smart contracts; (e) product certifications that ensure everything is certified on the blockchain, eliminating human error and fraudulent activities; (f) greater security as immutability ensures protection and improves accuracy; and (g) reduced costs as it removes middlemen, offers greater accuracy, and eliminates counterfeit products. (Laboure and Reid, 2020).

This encourages good actors in a space that connects funds with needs in ways not previously possible. Actual verifiable monetary movements by large corporations to fund public services or provide general aid can be validated with near instantaneous transfers using blockchain technology while allowing everyone to see the movement.

Creating art galleries in various virtual environments allows for a multitude of representations to influence any series of artworks or for artworks to influence any virtual environment. How environments influence experience begins to provide feedback for future gallery adjustments prior to any real world installation. This virtual space also opens content to global experiences and opportunities with an incredibly low overhead of virtual attendance. Finding how people interact with layouts prior to the construction of any

space could save millions in cost by avoiding reconstruction and miscommunications in the design processes. Because of the current digital arts boom, an endless amount of content has been created for virtual exploration. The premise of art and the naturally occurring conversations revolving around content, metaphor, reference, design, meaning, and the human condition provides a rich ecosystem for strong feedback.

Accessibility is the vehicle of adaptation and virtual spaces have a massive influence on human organization and information dissemination. The digital renaissance we are experiencing will continue to create the framework for future digital infrastructures and social experience expectations for decades to come. Remembering the human behind the screen is critical to any positive and constructive enterprise in the future internet of things, particularly as these screens dissolve, and our digital experiences are ubiquitous with real world experiences. Finding the best ways to provide accessibility for all to these new virtual spaces will ensure there is care given to understanding the human base that will interface with them. Art is a unique platform for exploration when pursuing research of this area because of the innate accessibility to the intrinsic cultural and social values art provides.

CONCLUSION

Equity and collective health is the one of the next waves of human expansion and is why there remains a demand for distributed social infrastructures to support wellbeing for all. The transition to signature backed interactions of Web3 is beyond the value of energy used to maintain blockchain hashes in the proof of work protocols because of the transparency smart contracts provide to the masses. Blockchain spaces expand and advance at incredible speeds while new utilities for the blockchain implementations develop. Smart contracts go beyond a picture on a screen seen with the NFT explosion, and signify that any one participant is making contract decisions within the virtual network. Current interpretations of non-fungible-tokens tend to look to past examples of digital collapse seen in the dot-com bubble, however this new digital frontier references data and wallet key holders first, communities created around these contracts, DOA voting and community representation, use case examples, then finally market structures. User engagement based scaffolding offers a more personal connection to decisions made by advancing projects. A large number of projects may see the loss of commodity value from investment speculation, but the contract and on-chain data still exists–this is what is significant. How virtual and physical worlds integrate will continue to be the vein of this research with further exploration of art and identity in the digital age presented through various developing lenses. How virtual communities develop and grow can aid and guide real world equity engagement through designed spaces and experiences.

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