

# Metaverse and its impact on human rights, the rule of law and democracy

A joint Council of Europe – IEEE report

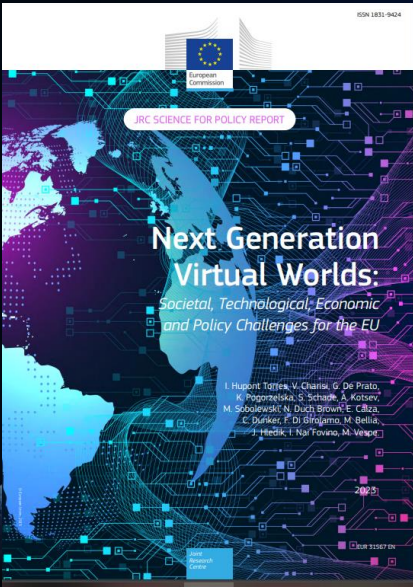
*Digital Partnership Workshop*

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*\* Views expressed are the personal views of the presenter/views of the report contributors*

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# Metaverse: from fiction to a transformative reality



## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION





## Council of Europe: uniquely placed

- Shift towards human rights-based approach in regulation (HRIAs etc)

IEEE: joined in 2020

Representing technical community & nearly 500k members globally

IEEE SA – pioneer in sociotechnical standards and AI ethics frameworks

Governance & thought leadership

- Thought leadership in governance of digital technologies (AI)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE DIGITAL PARTNERSHIP

**Call for participation (IEEE community)**

**Over 50 experts**

**Review by CoE**

**Impact of the metaverse on human rights, the rule of law & democracy**





# The report: an issues paper

Link to CoE frameworks and standards



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A first step towards assessing sufficiency of existing tools or need for new ones

Transformational potential

Potential of the metaverse as enabler and risk

Similar yet exacerbated issues and risks to AI, digital platforms + new

Governance (regulation, self-regulation...) and considerations

# Metaverse - a new notion of expected privacy and freedom of thought

Invasive sensing/collection of data and perceptual manipulation



Mental privacy, autonomy and human agency

Reassessment of freedom of thought

Worldscraping and bystander privacy



Informed consent? Right to be forgotten?

Re-interpretation of known concepts and concerns? Effective enforcement of existing rights or creation of new rights/frameworks?

- No harmonized language or alignment in understanding
- Transformative potential of the metaverse – changing fabric of society & values
- Complex issues in development: Mapping of metaverse ecosystem, stakeholders and dependencies; roles of governments, internet intermediaries and platform operators in the virtual realm and attribution of responsibilities
- Similar concepts (leveraging lessons learned), new scope and meaning (identity, privacy...)
- From content to behavior control; combination of agent behavior space management
- In-depth impact assessments for each issue and analysis on sufficiency of existing frameworks; gap analysis for standards; technical solutions to guarantee guardrails
- Need for awareness & technical understanding → digital skills & literacy
- Trade-offs and importance of promotion and protection of human rights by design – participatory dialogue



# Governing the metaverse

**Regulation (existing, new, anticipatory)**

**Self-regulation**

**Co-regulation**

**Growing importance and recognition of standards**

**Complementarity to and support of regulatory and other governance efforts**



# Relevance for the Digital Partnership members

- Impact at different layers and relationships (users, assets, platforms and providers)
- Increased power of ecosystem stakeholders; shift of traditional roles
- Need to establish roles and responsibilities in human rights protection and enforcement (public and private sector)
- Bring in technical considerations – challenges and solutions – and private sector perspective
- Discuss governance models and feasibility
- Trade-offs due to compliance, effects and possible gaps in guardrails





**WHAT'S IN  
IT FOR ME?**





# What is next?

COUNCIL OF EUROPE DIGITAL PARTNERSHIP

**EuroDIG**  
European Dialogue on Internet Governance

Launch: June 17, 2024, Vilnius (hybrid)

Continued dialogue and cooperation

# CONNECT WITH US

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