

Chapter 13

Unlocking the Potential of the Metaverse: A Path Towards Intelligent Libraries

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the potential of the metaverse as an enabling technology for the development of intelligent libraries. The metaverse has provided new opportunities for growth and challenges to the competencies of intelligent librarians. The chapter evaluates the advantages of the metaverse and its supporting technologies, emphasizing its central role in propelling libraries towards complete intelligence. The impact of the metaverse on various aspects of library operations, including collection management, reading spaces, cultural promotion, reading experiences, and special user services, is analyzed. The chapter concludes that intelligent libraries must embrace this opportunity to pioneer a new form of immersive experiences, catalyzing a transformative breakthrough in the evolution of these institutions, driven by the diverse digital technologies of the metaverse. This exploration of the transformation of the intelligent library service model under the perspective of the metaverse is significant in driving the development of these institutions and enhancing their services.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-8312-1.ch013

INTRODUCTION

In today's world, a new wave of technological revolution and industrial change is emerging. Virtual reality technology is a representative technology of the new revolution in science and technology, and will become a key technology to promote the development of the digital economy and industrial transformation and upgrade. On October 20, 2021, the World VR Industry Conference pointed out that the development of virtual reality industry has a vast space and great potential; we should further carry out "VR+" action, enrich terminal products and content services, and promote the industrialization of virtual reality technology and industrial scale up (Zhang et al., 2022). The innovation and development of virtual and reality industries have changed the services of traditional cultural venues, and the emergence of metadata has brought new opportunities to libraries. Each development of technological revolution has brought disruptive changes to the service model of libraries. From information to knowledge to big data, the service model of libraries has experienced from the traditional service model to the digital library service model to the intelligent library. The currently mentioned metaverse represents another disruption of the library service model.

There are 3 stages in the development of intelligent libraries: pseudo-intelligent, partially intelligent and fully intelligent (Njoku, Nwakanma, Amaizu, & Kim, 2022). From the current stage of development of intelligent libraries, libraries are still in pseudo-intelligent and partially intelligent stages (Alpala, Quiroga-Parra, Torres, & Peluffo-Ordóñez, 2022). Technologies such as Web 3.0, Internet of Things, big data, and cloud computing (Dai, Wang, & Gao, 2022) are widely used in the intelligent services of libraries, but their intelligent services are limited by time and space. The emergence of Metaverse will break the boundary between the digital and physical worlds, expand the service boundary of intelligent libraries, and bring more possibilities for their intelligent development. Therefore, exploring the transformation of intelligent library service model under the perspective of Metaverse has distinct significance for the development of intelligent library services.

The main purpose of this chapter is to analyze the development opportunities presented by the Metaverse and its potential applications in Intelligent Libraries, with a view towards promoting innovation and optimizing library services. It aims to evaluate the advantages of the Metaverse and its supporting technologies, while also delving into the theoretical basis behind its utilization in libraries. The chapter seeks to establish the centrality of the Metaverse in propelling libraries towards complete Intelligence, and to highlight its impact on various aspects of library operations.

The proposed methodology for this chapter involves a comprehensive analysis of the existing literature on the topic, drawing from relevant studies and perspectives from academia, industry, and government. The main contributions of this chapter to

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