

Exploring the Knowledge Sharing Dynamics in Virtual Communities Within the Metaverse Domain

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter aims to explore the knowledge sharing model in virtual communities within the metaverse domain and proposes a way to enhance knowledge sharing and innovation in these communities. The study takes into account the practical implications of digital ethics and digital citizenship and the impact they have on the shaping of digital ethics. Based on the analysis of relevant practices and prior research, a knowledge sharing model for virtual communities in the metaverse is constructed. The results show that the basic process of knowledge sharing involves the selection and acquisition of community knowledge in three dimensions, internalization and absorption of situational knowledge to form a “knowledge black box,” and finally, sharing through private domain knowledge broadcasting and diffusion. The current practices in virtual communities within the metaverse domain are limited and lack empirical evidence.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the metaverse has sparked an immense amount of creativity and scholarly debates regarding the evolution of human society. With the advent of technologies such as virtual reality, artificial intelligence, big data, 5G networks, and blockchain, the metaverse has gained the necessary technical support for its growth. As the metaverse continues to shape and influence the form of virtual communities, it has become imperative to study the knowledge sharing behaviors and models in these communities (Alpala, Quiroga-Parra, Torres, & Peluffo-Ordóñez, 2022; Buhalis, O’Connor, & Leung, 2023).

The popularity of virtual communities such as VRChat, Roblox, and Second Life highlights the potential for knowledge sharing in the metaverse. This chapter explores the existing research on the

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metaverse, virtual communities, and knowledge sharing, and delves into the possible transformations of knowledge sharing models in virtual communities due to the impact of the metaverse. By taking into account the unique features of the metaverse, this chapter aims to construct a future knowledge sharing model for virtual communities and provide a roadmap for further research and development (Cappannari & Vitillo, 2022; Chen & Lee, 2021; Dahan et al., 2022).

The contribution of this chapter is significant as it sheds light on the importance of knowledge sharing in virtual communities in the metaverse domain, and highlights the need for a comprehensive understanding of the knowledge sharing models that are relevant to this space. The chapter also provides insights into the future of knowledge sharing in virtual communities, making it a valuable resource for researchers, practitioners, and anyone interested in the development of virtual communities (Dai, Wang, & Gao, 2022; De Ketelaere, Smeets, Verboven, Nicolai, & Saeys, 2022; Hariharan, Risling, Felic, & Ostertag, 2023).

Moreover, this chapter sheds light on the challenges and opportunities that the metaverse presents for knowledge sharing in virtual communities. For example, the increased access to information and the diverse perspectives available in virtual communities may enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of knowledge sharing. However, these communities also face challenges such as information overload, information quality control, and the lack of trust among participants. To address these challenges, it is crucial to understand the existing knowledge sharing models and to identify the changes that the metaverse will bring to these models (Harisanty, Anna, Putri, Firdaus, & Noor Azizi, 2022; Huynh-The et al., 2023).

Additionally, this chapter highlights the importance of considering the cultural and social factors that influence knowledge sharing in virtual communities. In a metaverse, individuals from different cultural backgrounds may interact, leading to the emergence of new norms, values, and behaviors regarding knowledge sharing. Thus, it is crucial to take into account these cultural and social factors when constructing a future knowledge sharing model for virtual communities in the metaverse.

RESEARCH STATUS AND THEORETICAL BASIS

Connotation of Metaverse

The Metaverse refers to the overall meaning and perception associated with future versions of the Internet. It encompasses the continuous development of a virtual realm that is interconnected with our physical world. Extensive research and discussions have been devoted to exploring the concept and significance of the Metaverse in both academic and industry circles. The term was initially introduced in N. Stephenson's science fiction novel "Snow Crash" and it represents a shared virtual space with three-dimensional elements that are closely tied to a tangible virtual environment (De Ketelaere et al., 2022). The term gained attention following Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg's declaration of his goal to turn Facebook into a metaverse company (Dubey, Gupta, Mikalef, & Akter, 2022). Since then, researchers and entrepreneurs have been exploring the meaning of the metaverse, with different perspectives on its definition and characteristics. Eom (2022) believes that the metaverse should have a high degree of realism and be capable of mapping people's real-life experiences to the virtual space. On the other hand, Faraboschi, Frachtenberg, Laplante, Milojicic, and Saracco (2022) see the metaverse as an independent and parallel virtual space that is becoming increasingly realistic. Duan et al. (2021), the founder of r. Beamable proposed a framework that classifies the metaverse into different levels.

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