THE GOAL OF THE PROJECT

**AUGMENTED EUROPE.
OUR FUTURE IS CONNECTED.
DIGITAL AWARENESS AS A TOOL FOR INCLUSION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, FOR A BETTER EUROPE.**

AUGE 2ND AUGMENTED EUROPE IS A PROJECT FUNDED BY THE CREATIVE EUROPE PROGRAMME

A renewed and meaningful sense of Europe, based on the past but that looks straight at the future, focusing on societal challenges and on how youths can contribute to shape the EU political agenda.

augenext.eu

AUG

MILAN
BERLIN
RIGA
BARCELONA
GDANSK

The five European cities cooperated during the Artathons: transnational, phygital, participatory events that aimed to shape ideas and projects on five challenges. The key subjects involved digital awareness, inclusion, climate change, future economies, democracy and public health.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

CELESTE CORREALE SANTACROCE

Virtual worlds expert Celeste Correale Santacroce held a short seminar on 'Humans in the Metaverse' to kick off the day. Her talk addressed the profound transformations that the Metaverse is bringing to our society. Her background includes visual arts, film, video art and multimedia. She currently works at ULTRA, a multidisciplinary studio producing immersive experiences and virtual worlds.
Her presentation was a precious contribution that set the tone for the workshops that were held later, introducing the participants to the concept of metaverse and to the possible connections it can bring forth, linking digital and real life.

INCLUSION AND DIGITAL LITERACY HAVE BECOME PRIORITIES TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT FROM THE ADVANTAGES OF TECHNOLOGY

METAVERSE EVENT

AN EVENT FULLY HELD IN THE METAVERSE AS A CHANCE TO EXPLORE NEW PATTERNS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR OUR FUTURE.

As part of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV), the project Augmented Europe aims to continuously and actively engage young people through digital media, shaping the future of Europe in a more sustainable and inclusive way.
The Metaverse Event on Thursday 11 April offered an engaging and interactive experience, with people from different parts of the world virtually united in the METEverse.
Participants, virtually and physically, were invited to discuss six challenges related to the Metaverse and its ethical and social implications.
The project aimed to explore the use of digital technologies to enable the active and informed participation of young people in the political debate on the future of the European Union.

The participants were engaged in six group work sessions, divided into national and international teams, each dedicated to a specific topic. The subjects of discussion involved different and contemporary themes, such as education, psychological impact, inclusion and social barriers, online identity and future work prospects.
In these sessions, various thoughts were addressed and innovative ideas were developed to address the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities in the Metaverse.
At the end of the working session, each group proposed their project on the Metaverse. Presenting the assigned theme, they shared their ideas and proposals to address the challenges of the contemporary world in an innovative and inclusive way.

One person per group summarized the work done in the two-hour discussion, providing a comprehensive overview of the ideas and solutions developed by the team.

DOZENS OF YOUNG PEOPLE JOINED FROM ALL OVER EUROPE TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF THE PRESENT AND SHAPE AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE.

MEET

**AUGMENTED EUROPE.
OUR FUTURE IS CONNECTED.
DIGITAL AWARENESS AS A TOOL FOR INCLUSION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE, FOR A BETTER EUROPE.**

AUG
AUGMENTED EUROPE

MEET MILAN

Inclusion, equality and diversity for a better Europe

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE METAVERSE

Challenge 1

THE METAVERSE REVOLUTIONIZES EDUCATION THROUGH INCLUSIVITY AND IMMERSIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES, THOUGH ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS LIKE PRIVACY AND SECURITY REQUIRE ATTENTION. TEACHER TRAINING IS CRUCIAL FOR EFFECTIVE INTEGRATION, BUT DESPITE CHALLENGES, THE METAVERSE OFFERS VAST OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION THROUGH COLLABORATION.

BALANCING REAL AND VIRTUAL IDENTITY

Challenge 2

ACHIEVING BALANCE BETWEEN REALITY AND THE METAVERSE REQUIRES AWARENESS AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO MANAGE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS, INCLUDING IDENTITY MANAGEMENT, SOCIALIZATION, TIME MANAGEMENT, MENTAL HEALTH, AND ETHICAL CONCERNS. BALANCING VIRTUAL AND FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS IS ESSENTIAL FOR MAINTAINING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS AND A BALANCED LIFESTYLE

INCLUSIVE VIRTUAL WORLD

Challenge 3

THE METAVERSE PROMOTES SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH EQUAL ACCESS TO CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES, SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, AND INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE. IT FOSTERS INCLUSIVE SPACES, EMPOWERMENT, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, WITH EDUCATION AND AWARENESS CRUCIAL FOR PROMOTING RESPECTFUL BEHAVIORS.

ETHICAL DIGITAL BEHAVIOR

Challenge 4

MAINTAINING ONLINE IDENTITY INTEGRITY ENTAILS PRIVACY PROTECTION AND RESPECTFUL CONDUCT. ETHICAL CONCERNS LIKE CYBERBULLYING DEMAND VIGILANCE, WHILE DIGITAL LITERACY ENSURES ACCURATE INFORMATION EVALUATION. ADDRESSING ANONYMITY'S POTENTIAL FOR ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOR UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING RESPONSIBILITY AND MUTUAL RESPECT FOR A SAFE ONLINE SPACE.

WORK IN THE METAVERSE

Challenge 5

THE METAVERSE RESHAPES WORK BY REQUIRING DIGITAL SKILLS AND FOSTERING FLEXIBILITY, YET IT POSES CHALLENGES LIKE DATA SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY EQUITY. REGULATIONS ARE NECESSARY TO ENSURE FAIRNESS, HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED FOR ADAPTATION, ADVANCED SKILLS, AND ETHICAL COMMITMENT IN NAVIGATING THIS EVOLVING LANDSCAPE.

ART: ARTISTIC STRATEGY IN METAVERSE

Challenge 6

THE METAVERSE DIGITAL SPACE ALLOWS ARTISTS TO OVERCOME THE LIMITATIONS OF PHYSICAL MATERIALS AND TRADITIONAL EXHIBITION SPACES, CREATING IMMERSIVE AND INTERACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS. NFTS (NON-FUNGIBLE TOKENS) HAVE TRANSFORMED THE ART MARKET, ENABLING ARTISTS TO SELL THEIR WORKS DIRECTLY AND DEMOCRATIZING ACCESS TO ART.

During the metaverse event, one group addressed the topic of education and the transformation of learning and teaching in the metaverse. Learning here becomes experiential and interactive, allowing students to immerse themselves in virtual environments that replicate real or abstract situations, and teachers can use immersive technologies such as virtual reality to create engaging simulations. Teaching in the metaverse can be customized to fit students' specific needs, enabling more flexible, student-centered learning. Virtual tutors and personalized learning environments can support students in achieving their educational goals in innovative and challenging ways. The metaverse also offers the opportunity to break down geographic and socioeconomic barriers in accessing education, allowing students to participate in virtual classes from anywhere in the world. This promotes equality of educational opportunity and fosters diversity and inclusion in the context of education. By designing inclusive and culturally sensitive virtual environments, the metaverse can foster interaction and collaboration among students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Do you want to contribute to making education more inclusive and accessible in the Metaverse?

One group focused their research mainly on issues related to balancing metatarsis and reality. Specifically, people are developing strategies to maintain consistency between their online and offline identities. This may include practices such as reflect one's physical appearance or participating in virtual communities that promote discussions and activities in line with real-life interests and values. Another issue is that although the metaverse offers new opportunities for socialising, there is still a risk of social isolation when people spend too much time in virtual environments supported by translation and interpretation tools. A healthy balance can be maintained by, for example, encouraging the use of the metaverse as an extension of real relationships rather than a substitute, encouraging face-to-face interactions as fundamental to meaningful relationships, and maintaining awareness of the importance of the balance between the virtual and real worlds. The metaverse can have a significant impact on people's time management, behaviour and mental health. It is therefore important to raise awareness of the possible consequences and to promote practices of self-regulation, critical reflection on one's virtual actions and open communication.

Are you interested in exploring how to harmoniously merge your online identity with your real one?

Another group explored the potential of the Metaverse as a tool for social leveling. Through virtual platforms, geographic and financial barriers can be overcome, enabling disadvantaged people to access cultural and educational resources. Grants for technological devices and Internet connections, along with digital literacy programs, are crucial to improving inclusion. The Metaverse promotes intercultural exchange and mutual understanding by creating inclusive virtual environments supported by translation and interpretation tools. Targeted policies and protocols ensure respect and prevention of discrimination, while resources and support services protect users from harassment and violence. Accessibility is another key aspect. Virtual environments must be designed to include people with disabilities, integrating assistive technologies and improving the accessibility of multimedia content with subtitles and audio descriptions. The Metaverse is also a powerful platform for social activism, providing spaces for advocacy and community organizing. Educational programs and awareness campaigns raise awareness of inclusion issues, while training and professional development initiatives improve skills and job opportunities, promoting economic empowerment. The Metaverse can be a catalyst for social, cultural and economic inclusion, creating a more equitable and inclusive society. It provides opportunities for education, cross-cultural exchange, social activism and professional development, enabling everyone to participate and thrive in a respectful and inclusive virtual environment.

How can we use the Metaverse to reduce socio-economic disparities and promote accessibility?

One group focused their research mainly on issues related to maintaining authenticity and integrity in the virtual environment. Individuals must balance personal expression online with the consistency of their offline identity. This balance requires creating an accurate representation of oneself, considering the psychological implications of sharing personal information in a vast and anonymous environment. Addressing this challenge also means developing strategies to protect privacy and maintain control over personal information without compromising integrity. It is essential to adopt approaches that allow people to express themselves freely while preserving their identity and respecting privacy. This requires constant evaluation of information sharing practices and data protection strategy. Only then can individuals navigate the virtual world safely and authentically.

How can we preserve the authenticity of our digital identity and privacy?

The development of critical and digital discernment skills is essential in the digital age. These skills enable accurate evaluation of online information, distinguishing between accurate and manipulated content. Strategies such as cross-checking sources and analyzing context are critical to this process. Digital discernment also involves recognizing the manipulation mechanisms used online, such as emotional persuasion and distortion of facts. These skills not only protect individuals from misleading information, but also contribute to the health of society as a whole.

The last group focused on issues related to how the Metaverse offers job opportunities and at the same time can change others. Specifically in the Metaverse, new digital and virtual skills are emerging as essential to navigate and operate effectively in this environment. Workers must adapt to these new demands through training and professional development to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the Metaverse. This change offers opportunities for new digital professions in emerging fields such as developing virtual worlds, designing immersive experiences and managing online communities. Certainly, the Metaverse has made more hybrid and flexible working possible, allowing people to better balance work and personal life. This flexibility has an impact on company policies and employee wellbeing, requiring new ways of managing and organising work. At the same time, the Metaverse has made job opportunities more accessible for people around the world, contributing to a more integrated global labour market. However, challenges emerge related to global competition and the need to ensure the inclusion of all workers, regardless of their geographical location or background. This context highlights the need to adapt company policies and working practices to promote equity and accessibility in the Metaverse context. Finally, in the Metaverse, there are ethical and social challenges associated with data security, privacy and equity in accessing virtual work opportunities. Addressing these issues requires the development of appropriate regulations to ensure a fair, safe and inclusive working environment in the Metaverse.

What skills are essential for navigating the Metaverse and how do they influence the work?

In recent years, the Metaverse has emerged as a three-dimensional virtual universe that combines augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR) and other technologies, revolutionizing art. Despite the immense opportunities, the integration of art into the metaverse also presents challenges. The issue of intellectual property, the protection of artists' rights, and the regulation of the NFT market are still evolving themes. Additionally, accessibility to the technology required to participate in the metaverse remains a barrier for some communities. However, the potential of the metaverse for art is vast. With advancements in AR and VR technologies, artistic experiences will become increasingly immersive and engaging. The metaverse could also foster international collaborations among artists, creating a global network of shared creativity. The metaverse is inherently a social place. Collaborating with other artists, programmers, designers, and community members can lead to richer and more varied projects. Additionally, building a community around your work is crucial for long-term success. Participating in events, organizing virtual exhibitions, and interacting with the audience are fundamental activities. Finally, ethical and sustainability considerations must be integrated into the artistic strategy. The energy used for NFT transactions, for instance, has an environmental impact. Artists should seek eco-sustainable solutions and promote ethical choices in their digital work.

The metaverse offers immense opportunities for art, international collaborations and creating new forms of expression.