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## Unchaining digital responsibility from innovation in the world of metaverses: insights from the EU metaverse policy

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## Unchaining digital responsibility from innovation in the world of metaverses: insights from the EU metaverse policy

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Metaverse refers to extension of the physical world with the use of augmented and virtual reality technologies, thus enabling the users to have a seamless interaction between the physical and the virtual environments with the use of avatars (Dwivedi et al, 2022). The use of metaverses is expected to generate value by releasing a new spectrum of opportunities for economy, businesses, and society, encapsulating a multitude of actors collaborate, exchange data, and co-create value. The adoption of metaverses is expected to bring a plethora of implications for businesses and society (Polyviou & Pappas, 2022). From releasing a new range of business opportunities to introducing new ways of business-to-consumer interaction, metaverses are expected to create value for organizations (Polyviou & Pappas, 2023). However, their use is also challenging especially from a societal perspective as metaverses bring a wide spectrum of challenges such as identity management, changes in consumer and employee emotional state etc.. Despite the potency of metaverse-related technologies to set the stage for accelerating innovation, it is necessary to also consider the bearings of the technology for society. Policy makers to pay more attention to the dark side of metaverses, aiming for ensuring that metaverses will be used responsibly by stakeholders while ensuring that their guidelines do not restrict business from unlocking metaverses' full potential and innovating. The European Union (EU) is interested in sustaining a central position to transformation by metaverses through the development of the EU vision. The aim of the initiative is to come up with a vision which considers respect of digital rights, and EU laws and values in the design and use of metaverses while ensuring that they are used with confidence by the citizens and the businesses and they remain open, interoperable, and innovative. For describing its vision and addressing the opportunities and societal challenges in metaverses, the EU has held an open consultation with the public between April and May 2023. 169 stakeholders, organizations or individuals, have contributed to the open consultation by sharing their opinions in the forms of posts or letter attachments. This research follows a grounded theory approach aiming to shed light on the perspectives of different stakeholders who have contributed to the open consultation. Through its analysis it aims to shed lights on the perspectives of two groups of stakeholders: the organizations and the individuals. The results of this work are expected to highlight the contrarian perspectives between the two groups and provide insights on their diverging interests. The implications of this work are expected to contribute to the existing debate on the tension residing technological capacity and our human, social structures in which the technology is used (Conboy, 2019).

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