

Strategic design recommendations

Inclusive urban metaverses

Where to start from for designing urban services and spaces in the metaverse? Follow these recommendations to ideate platforms that operate under a social justice lens.

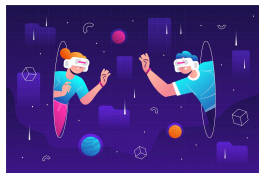


Image credits: Pch.vector/freepik

1 - Learn the lessons from urban regeneration

Build on best practices, such as: understanding the perspective and expectations of the stakeholders involved, detecting real-world problems, having an inclusive approach, focusing on capacity-building. Scope and agree upon your foundations.

2 - Centre problems that are hard to solve in the physical world

By detecting pain points of citizens, it is possible to federate a motivated community of co-designers and participants.

3 - Think in terms of extending the right to the city

Consider which social groups struggle to exert fundamental rights in the city and how their needs could be supported with less initial friction in this new environment.

Suggestion: Utilise the recommendations as inclusiveness pillars to navigate the ideation phase. They can serve as thematic nodes in a 1 or 2 full-day workshop.

4 - Build a feedback loop with the city

Creating an escapist parallel world has little social impact and will only deepen social fractures. Consider the platform a place to speed up change and prototype a different kind of social aggregation, knowledge sharing and capacity building that can impact existing initiatives, for instance, via community building, fundraising, new policy topics.

5 - Refrain from falling into the imaginary crisis

Think of how you can extend possibilities instead of simply reproducing digitally the existent city. This also includes having a critical view of technology and making sure that the means are adapted to the purpose.

6 - Set strong social requirements for technology

Once your concept is ready, ensure that privacy, trust and safety are inherent in the platform infrastructure and functionalities.



Futuribile

DesignLibrary Kaunas



<https://meta-manifesto.com/>

Design principles

For inclusive urban metaverses

As cities across the world prepare for the next step of the “smart city” and look into Extended Reality (XR) we convened international experts to develop the first set of design principles to orient the Extended City towards social justice.

Cybersecurity

Immersive environments can collect a new array of personal data (face and eye movement, neurological activity..) for which regulation and ethics are still in their infancy. Investments in cybersecurity will prevent abuse, unauthorised commercial exploitation and discrimination.

Dis-accessibility

The physical world is dominated by ableism and most infrastructures can't cater to the needs of all people. Here the experience adapts to individuals' characteristics and makes possible what is unthinkable IRL.

Sensorial care

The experience does not produce a sensorial overwhelm: an augmented city should not put our bodies out of their natural capabilities or generate extra anxieties and diseases. It is a matter of public health.

Social serendipity

The possibility to reshuffle and mix different demographics/social groups in a safe way is part of the design of the system. This could be allowed for instance by spending one day in the shoes of a person with a particular disease.

Environmental frugality

Virtual worlds have a strong environmental impact. Skip accessorial, unnecessary and ultra decorative employments of metaverse to focus on use cases with a promising impact in the real world.



Image credits: Pch.vector/freepik

Finitude/infinity ethics

Put in place decision-making mechanisms to square the difference between the finitude of the real urban environment (for example resources, or human mortality) with the endlessness of the metaverse.

Reflexivity

Utilise reflexive design to continuously gather and take into consideration feedback from people with diverse backgrounds when developing/enhancing the virtual environment.

Antagonism and transformation spaces

Allow the possibility to express antagonism against the system, which is engine for political and creative production. Squatting, demonstrations or temporary occupations should remain a spontaneous, sudden, free, accessible practices for all.

Multi-idioms society

Preserve endangered languages and consider every single systems of writing as a priority to be enabled in the systems. Integrating different languages indicates a positive process of communication systems equality.

Interoperability of virtual and IRL worlds

Develop a user friendly scheme and tools to 'land' the digital experiences, initiatives, prototypes, ideas into the built city or vice-versa. It includes tools for measuring the impact and ensure the legacy of projects.