

Transhumanism in the Metaverse

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Transhumanism in the Metaverse – Why?

The Metaverse provides an ideal meeting space and workspace for the non-local, geographically distributed worldwide, scattered community of transhumanists

The Metaverse provides an ideal training and “edutainment” environment for futurists and students of advanced NBIC technologies

We can make \$\$\$ in the Metaverse

And last but not least:

The Metaverse is where we may well spend the rest of our very long lives

What is the Metaverse anyway?

Stephenson's Metaverse is a high definition 3D digital virtual world where users, represented by their avatars can meet and interact just like they do in the physical world. Instead of building websites like in today's Internet, Metaverse developers build fully 3D virtual spaces (scapes) which can closely mimic the physical world, or be as different from the "real world" as the imagination of the developers permits. For example, in the Metaverse you can visit an accurate replica of a real city, a future imaginary space settlement on Mars, a microscale world where you can see individual molecules and cells, etc.

The term Massively Multiplayer Online Game (MMOG) is used more and more frequently. I still prefer Metaverse because it is not always a game.

What is the Metaverse anyway?

A few years after writing SnowCrash, Stephenson said that his vision had not emerged in reality. This may have been a premature statement.

In 2006 we can see a growing number of operational implementations, with popular events taking place in a MetaVerse, and an emergent economy consolidating.

I believe that the Web of the future, beyond the technologies known today as "Web 2.0", will be a "Web 3.0", or better "Web 3.D", based on P2P online 3D Virtual reality.

The situation is quite similar to that of the Web of the early 90s.

The Metaverse is taking off

Remember the late lamented VRML?

It was proposed at a time (mid nineties) when very few users, if any, had computer systems and network links powerful enough to permit accessing a realistic VR world.

Things are quite different today.

Stephenson's Metaverse is emerging from the computer gaming world.

Computer games

It is not surprising that Stephenson's Metaverse is emerging from the computer gaming world.

Quoting Rudy Rucker:

"Academia hasn't quite caught on to the fact that computer games represent the convergence and the flowering of the most ambitious frontier efforts of the old twentieth-century computer science: artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and artificial life."

The Lifebox, the Seashell, and the Soul

Why is 3D better?

Philip Rosedale (CEO, Linden Lab): *"if you were trying to recall the latest three files accessed in your 'My Documents' directory, you probably can't remember them, but you can remember a list of the items in your kitchen, most likely. This is because you've been building a space in your mind three dimensionally, and storing information in it"*

In other words, 3D is a much better user interface. This is not surprising: while we have been working with documents for only a few hundreds of years, we have evolved fast responses to the real 3D universe, like running from predators and hunting prey, for hundreds of thousands of years. Now that technology permits doing so, 3D VR will become the preferred online interface for users with powerful PCs and enough bandwidth.

Being there

More and more users do not consider virtual worlds as a means to escape real life but, on the contrary, as useful means to complement and enhance real life and enabling technologies to support "real-world" social, educational and business activities.

Those who have participated in voice-enabled events in a modern virtual world know that the feeling of being there, meeting other people and talking to them, is much more pronounced than with IRC chat, phone or video meetings.



Vivox staff meeting in
voice-enabled SL room

Real virtual communities

Users of a modern MMOG where the sensation of being there is above a certain threshold can form real virtual communities, much tighter than today's social networks and virtual communities.

I am persuaded that the establishment of tight global, trans-national virtual communities, held together by a common worldview rather than by geography, will do a lot of good to the world.

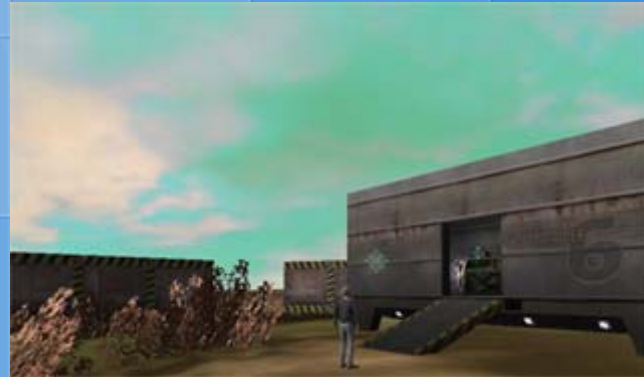
VR is an enabling technology for the emergence of planetary (and beyond), global, trans-national communities of reasonable persons for a better world. For this I cannot think of a better slogan than "**Avatars of the World, Unite!**".

Examples of Metaverses and MMOGS

Second Life



Entropia Universe



Red Lights Center



Second Life

400.000 members and growing very fast

Real economy, in-world item sales, “Linden Dollar” exchange

City sims, pubs, discos, clubs, fashion, sex, ...



Second Life

“Serious” things happening in Second Life:

Global, trans-national communities

Distance education

Sales of real world products and services, advertising

Business meetings

Art

Social and political action groups



Entropia Universe

Typical FPS –like MMOG

500.000 members

Hunting, mining, commerce of in-world items (quite dull if you ask me)

Real economy (PED), advertising, cash card (!)

Much less freedom to create than Second Life

Emerging “serious” applications



Entropia Universe

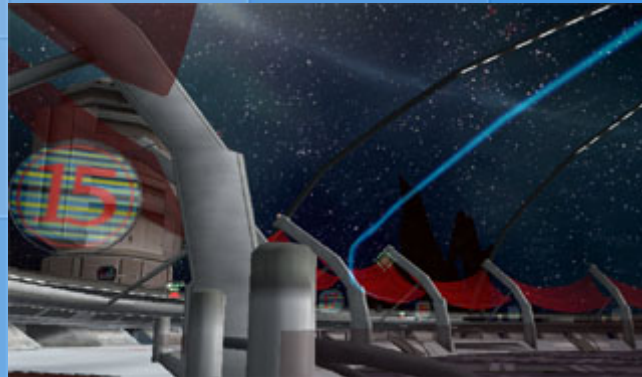
Club Neverdie

Auctioned for 100.000 US \$

The Greatest virtual night club in the Universe

Very transhumanist name!

I think CND is the “right place in the wrong universe”



Red Light Center

Porn MMOG in beta

Business model: chat for free, porn for \$\$\$

Porn is often the first commercially successful application of new online technologies

Where porn pioneers go, others will follow



CENSORED

Transhumanist works in Second Life

uvvy island in SL: VR meeting point and workspace for transhumanists

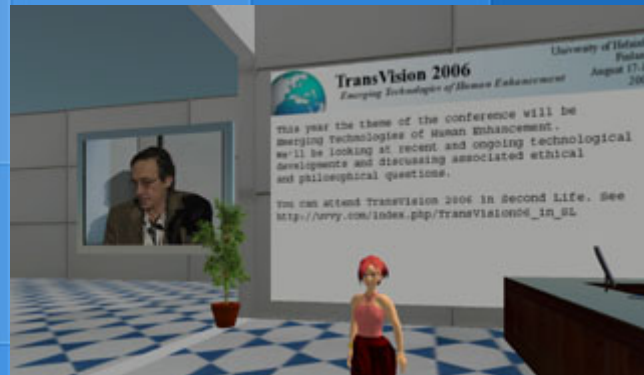


Transhumanist Day, June 7 - IEET
Presentation, June 30 - Virtual
TransVision 2006, August 17-19



Presentations and meetings with
IRC gateway and voice chat

“Being There” in VR can unite
transhumanists separated by
geography



More transhumanist works in Second Life

uvvy island will become a world-class VR environment

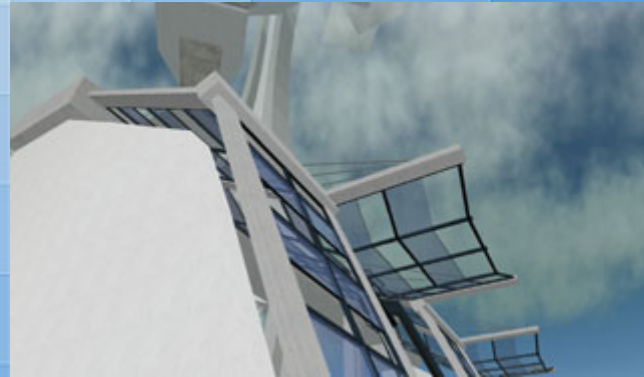
Worldwide transhumanist social network in VR

Mixed-reality events (you are attending the first)

Museum of transhumanist art and film

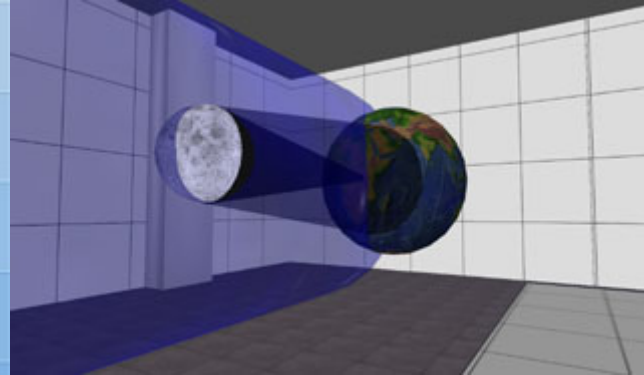
Presentations, distance education

Avatars of the World, Unite!

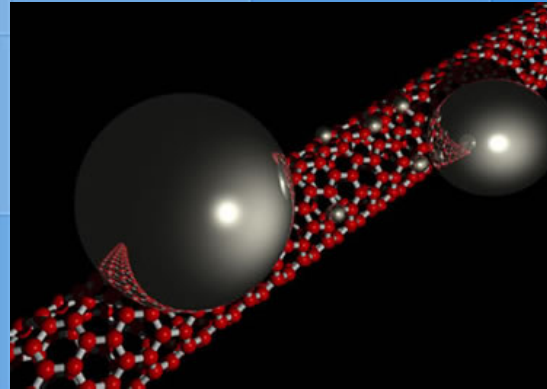


Effective VR distance education in NBIC technologies

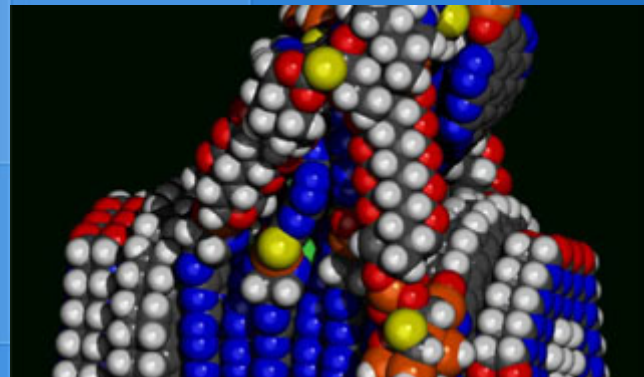
3D concepts in engineering, chemistry.. can be visually explained in VR, also with animation



Molecular and nanoscale engineering, biotechnology



Micro and nanoscapes: training environments where students see and interact with cells, molecules and nanoscale devices



Project: WTA distance education course in VR

Case study: Church of Virus in Second Life

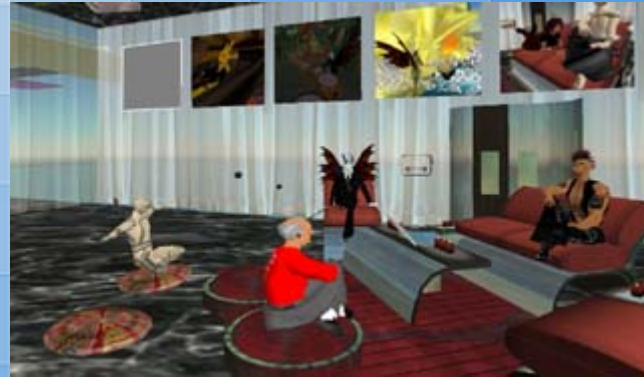
Virus is a collection of mutually-supporting ideas (a meme-complex) encompassing philosophy, science, technology, politics, and religion

See churchofvirus.org

20 members in Second Life

Weekly chat in SL with IRC gateway (same we are using)

VR-enabled “transhumanist religion”?



Living forever in the Metaverse

The Metaverse is where we may well spend the rest of our very long lives

Mind uploading:

making a complete copy of the **important** information contained in the brain

storing the copy (mind file) on suitable media

uploading and "running" the copy on a new support different from the original biological brain.

The devil is in the details: what is the **important** information?

Living forever in the Metaverse

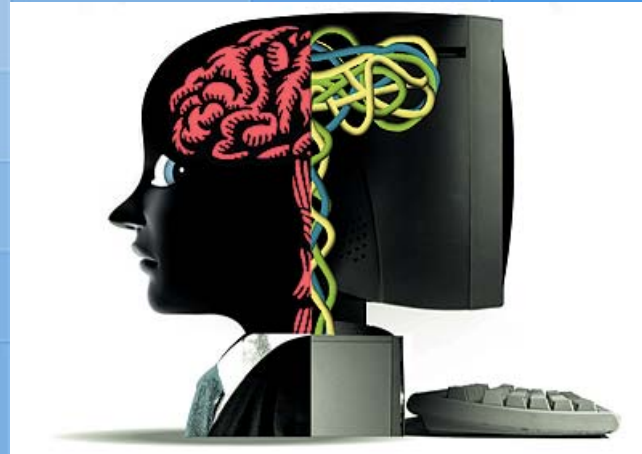


Living forever in the Metaverse

Some persons will feel no permanent need for a physical body and migrate their consciousness to virtual reality.

A computational consciousness is something that you can cut, paste, edit, backup, and reload from backup as needed.

So this is practical immortality: Neverdie.



OA Metaverse: a mature hard SF MMOG

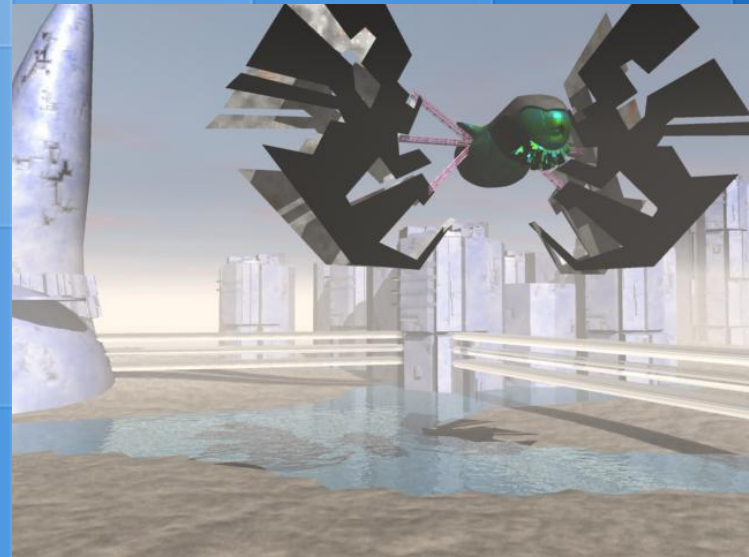
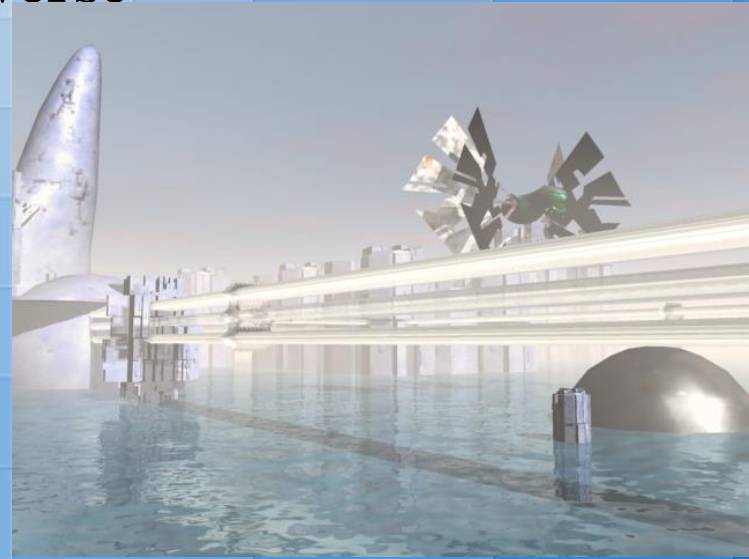
The OA Metaverse will be a Massively Multiplayer Online Game (MMOG) based on the Orion's Arm science fictional universe.

Orion's Arm: an on-going, open-ended, multi-authored, hard SF shared universe or “future history” developed and maintained over the Internet by a dedicated community of science fiction enthusiasts, creative writers and artists.



Transhumanist ideas in OA Metaverse

A consistent, realistic vision of a possible post-singularity future, based on speculative but plausible advanced technology (**germline engineering, nanotech and femtotech, personality uploads, megascale engineering, navigable wormholes**, etc), avoiding popular Sci Fi cliches, and incorporating cultural along with technological development.



OA art by Juan Ochoa

Development of OA Metaverse

Some similarities to Entropia Universe

Much better and more detailed hard SF background

State of the art videorealistic graphics

Advanced AI

Business and development plan in elaboration

Looking for \$\$\$, see me in coffee break

