

International Journal of Information Management

Special Issue Call for Papers

Metaverse disruption: Supernatural Transformations of Businesses and their Stakeholders

Paper submission deadline: 1 November 2023

Special Issue Editors

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Overview and purpose of the Special Issue

Business has been profoundly disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic (Bagozzi et al., 2022; Foroudi et al., 2021; Izadi et al., 2021), and they are concerned for future pandemics. Floating in the metaverse is the best way to succeed in future pandemics, which entails stakeholder management, knowledge of the capital markets, and complex approval processes. In recent years, several studies have demonstrated the critical role of digital technologies in the post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery and extenuation of the limitations to physical environments. For example, virtual reality programs may provide users with temporary escape tools (Pillai et al., 2021) that could contribute to the improvement of customers/tourist confidence (Debusmann, 2020; Shiau et al., 2022).

Businesses benefit from human-machine interaction during pandemics and after (Pillai et al., 2021; Trkman and Černe, 2022). Moreover, companies are increasingly creating virtual experiences, products, and services by using the metaverse (Dincelli and Yayla, 2022). The worldwide metaverse market is expected to reach \$760 billion by 2026 (Lapienyte, 2022). It is viewed as the next evolution of the internet. However, its success as “an innovative, dynamic ecosystem depends on its ability to converge physical and synthetic customer experiences seamlessly” (Heller et al. 2022, p.2). Through the metaverse, digital representations of people can interact with one another in a variety of ways (Ukko et al., 2022). Additionally, virtual communities can be created through the metaverse using devices such as virtual reality headsets, augmented reality glasses, and smartphone apps (Clement, 2022, Nvidia, 2021). A metaverse is transforming the pandemic-hit business (Forbes, 2022). Therefore, practitioners are increasingly considering metaverse technology as a tool to showcase their offerings, and helping, for instance, customers plan better holidays (Campbell, 2022), search better hotels, and live new experiences. This could involve two people traveling to the same city while being in two separate cities (Traveldaylynews, 2022), virtual flying, kayaking, and participating in expeditions. It is expected that the metaverse will be a new way for tourism to connect with tourists and, therefore, provide them with unique experiences and opportunities (Campbell, 2022).

There is a growing body of research pointing to the metaverse as a means to achieve sustainability (Hsu et al., 2022). As an example, it can be seen as accelerating progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Foroudi et al., 2022; Umar, 2022). This is not surprising, as previous studies have highlighted the role that artificial intelligence (AI), one of the pillars of the metaverse, plays in enabling organizations to identify the cultural changes necessary to achieve SDGs (Di Vaio et al., 2020). AI, machine learning, Big Data, and sensor technologies, for example, are enabling

personalized health care (Latif et al., 2017), transforming education (Goralski and Taei Keong, 2020; Mckinsey Digital, 2022), and developing sustainable business models (Di Vaio et al., 2020).

While the metaverse appears to be very promising for businesses, there are a number of issues associated with this technology, including privacy, health, access inequality, desensitization, and identity theft (Marr, 2022). It has also been suggested that the metaverse may lead to new psychological problems, which are not covered by current criminal law (Zhandan, 2022). Moreover, the adoption of the metaverse by companies faces challenges such as managers' perceptions of the digital world (Dwivedi et al., 2022; inews, 2022). In order to fully leverage the metaverse, companies must develop strategies to take advantage of its opportunities while also overcoming the challenges it presents. It will be necessary to establish trust in the system, develop the safety and security of the enabling technologies, such as blockchains, and improve reality with technologies such as augmented, virtual, and neuro-augmented reality (Heller et al., 2022). Moreover, companies will need to develop talent in a range of areas, such as user experience design, 3D modelling, game design, blockchain implementation, and integrating content from multiple partners, which will require experienced developers for the platforms on which they wish to operate. In order to succeed in the metaverse, companies will need to develop new technological capabilities as well as disseminate knowledge.

In recent years, academic societies have begun to recognize the critical role that digital technologies could play in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and in easing limitations to physical environments. Yet, there is a lack of research in the field of metaverse disruption. This special issue addresses questions related to metaverse disruption (i) by examining the lessons to be drawn from this disruption, and (ii) by outlining post-pandemic directions for this strategy.

Sample Topics

Against this background, it is not surprising that there is a paucity of academic studies addressing the opportunities and implications of the metaverse for businesses and users. This may be due to the fact that social science researchers historically lag behind rapid technological advances in the digital domain, although this is not always the case. This Special Issue aims to identify the implications of recent advances in the metaverse for marketing, sales, service, and related business models, including disruption of competitive norms in different sectors. This Special Issue invites empirical submissions that employ mixed methods, multi-study, or longitudinal approaches that will lead to the development of more advanced metaverse perspectives, models, and empirical studies that address specific business challenges. Potential metaverse-related approaches to be covered include, but are not limited to:

- What impact has COVID-19 had on business using the metaverse and its related technologies, including VR (virtual reality), ER (extended reality), AI (artificial intelligence) and AR (augmented reality)?
- What companies could do in the event of a new pandemic by adopting the metaverse
- How are companies embracing the metaverse, VR, AI, ER, and AR in order to provide an immersive customer experience, customer engagement, and brand recognition?
- What are the barriers to the adoption of the metaverse, VR, AI, ER, and AR within global business?
- How is the businesses adopting the metaverse, VR, AI, ER, and AR?
- How can the metaverse, VR, AI, ER, and AR strengthen organizational performance and provide a competitive advantage post-COVID-19?
- How do you anticipate that the metaverse, VR, AI, ER, and AR industries will evolve?

- How can the metaverse, VR, AI, ER, and AR be used to improve businesses pandemic preparedness?
- How have consumer psychological and behavioral outcomes changed following adoption of the metaverse, VR, AI, ER, and AR since COVID-19?
- Is there any consumer sentiment toward the metaverse, VR, AI, ER, and AR?
- How can a company build a brand in the metaverse? How can a brand actually add value to a virtual space?
- What rules and policies may be needed to ensure the success of the metaverses economic activities during turbulent times?
- How can COVID-19 affect business models in the metaverse?
- What is the impact of the metaverse on consumer purchasing decisions when choosing metaverse offerings compared to traditional alternatives?
- How do consumer satisfaction and loyalty in the digital world differ?
- How do managers manage their physical and virtual environments?
- How do businesses (re)develop marketing communications plans in the metaverse? What is the impact of this change?
- How do companies design digital products and services?
- What role does the metaverse play in supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals?
- How do businesses' managers and consumers perceive digital value?
- What are the contributions of the metaverse to customer relationship management?

For any enquiries regarding this call, please contact both guest editors.

General information for prospective authors

Submitted papers should not have been previously published nor be currently under consideration for publication elsewhere. We welcome research embedded in context and which adopts sound theoretical foundations and different methods. This Special Issue invites empirical submissions that employ mixed methods, multi-study, or longitudinal approaches that will lead to the development of more advanced metaverse perspectives, models, and empirical studies that address specific business challenges.

Submission procedure

The *International Journal of Information Management* provides a valuable outlet for research and scholarship on technology management-orientated themes and topics. It publishes articles of a multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary nature as well as empirical research from within traditional disciplines and managerial functions. With contributions from around the globe, the journal includes articles across the full range of business and management disciplines.

Prospective authors are strongly encouraged to contact the Special Issue editors regarding potential topics of interest or any questions/suggestions regarding the Special Issue. Abstracts (up to 500 words) can be submitted directly to the guest editors via email (P.Foroudi@mdx.ac.uk; kkooli@bournemouth.ac.uk) by 1 July 2023. Abstracts must be concise and to the point, with appropriate references. Full papers must be submitted by 1 November 2023 through the journal system, the online submission and peer review system. Registration and access is available at: <https://www.editorialmanager.com/jjim/default2.aspx>. Please select the correct issue to submit to: "Metaverse Disruption". Author guidelines for IJIM can be found at: <https://www.elsevier.com/journals/international-journal-of-information-management/0268-4012/guide-for-authors>

Review process

Each paper must pass the following review procedures before it can be published in this Special Issue:

1. Guest editors will review it to determine whether it is suitable for this Special Issue.
2. A rigorous double-blind review process will be conducted if it is deemed suitable by three reviewers.
3. Following the recommendations of the reviewers, the guest editors and the Editor-in-Chief will decide whether a specific paper should be accepted, revised, resubmitted, or rejected.

Timeline

Abstract submissions:	1 July 2023 (Email to P.foroudi@mdx.ac.uk)
Date of abstract decisions:	1 August 2023
FINAL deadline for paper submissions:	1 November 2023
Decisions and revisions:	February 2024
Publication:	2024

Biography for Guest Authors

Pantea Foroudi (PhD, SFHEA, MSc (Honor), MA, BA (Honor)) is business manager and solution architect at Foroudi Consultancy as well as is a member of marketing, branding, and tourism, Middlesex University London. Pantea is working in the field of design, branding, and marketing since 1996 and she has experience as a creative innovator and practical problem-solver in visual identity, graphic design, and branding in different sectors. Her primary research interest has focused on consumer behaviour from multidisciplinary approach based on two research streams (i) corporate brand design and identity, and (ii) sustainable development goals (SDGs). Pantea has published widely in international academic journals such as British Journal of Management, Journal of Business Research, European Journal of Marketing, International Journal of Hospitality Management, and so on. She is the associate/senior/editor of International Journal of Hospitality Management; Journal of Business Research; International Journal of Hospitality Management; International Journal of Management Reviews; International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management; European Journal of International Management (EJIM); and more

Kaouther Kooli (SFHEA, UKCGE) is a Principal Academic in Marketing in the Department of Marketing, Strategy and Innovation at the Faculty of Management, Bournemouth University. She holds a PhD in Marketing. She has over 18 years of higher education teaching experience acquired in Tunisia, UK and France. Her research interests are in digital B2B marketing, digital marketing and consumer behaviour. She is an expert in both quantitative and qualitative research methods. She is a Senior Editor of the marketing section of Cogent Business and Management, a member of the editorial board of the Journal of Business to Business Marketing and the curator board of the Journal of Customer Behaviour. She is also the Chair of the Academy of Marketing B2B Special Interest Group. She has published in top journals such as International Journal of Hospitality Management and more. She has established an annual conference on B2B marketing where academics, students and practitioners get together to debate current issues and challenges facing B2B marketing. She has been invited to give talks at a number of Universities both in the UK and abroad.

Richard Bagozzi is a professor at the University of Michigan, Ross School. He holds honours causae from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, Antwerp University, Belgian, and the Norwegian School of Economics. He also was a Senior Fulbright Hays Research Scholar in Germany. He was awarded the Medal of Science from the University of Bologna, Italy. Professor Bagozzi is among the top 1% most cited researchers.

Demetris Vrontis is the Vice Rector for Faculty and Research at the University of Nicosia and a Visiting Professor and Research Fellow at various top tier universities across the globe. He has widely published over 200 refereed journal articles, 70 chapters and cases in books/edited books and presented papers to over 80 conferences at a global basis. He has also the author of 45 books in the areas of business management, marketing, human resource management, innovation and entrepreneurship. Professor Vrontis is the Founding Editor and Editor in Chief of the EuroMed Journal of Business, the Associate Editor in Chief of the International Marketing Review, the Associate Editor of the Journal of Business Research, and more. He is also the President of the EuroMed Research Business Institute.

Shan L Pan is a professor and an AGSM Scholar and Deputy Head of School (Research) at the School of Information Systems and Technology Management, UNSW Business School. He is the Director of the Digital Sustainability Knowledge Hub (DS Hub), which specialises in research and education on digital sustainability, with a specific aim to contribute to achieving the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs). In addition, Shan is the inventor of a sustainability intelligence system that tracks leading business organisations' Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategies and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) performance.

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