

Discovering The CitiVerse: Unleashing the Potential of Virtual Worlds

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, August 2, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In June this year the UN celebrated the first "Virtual Worlds Day". On that day, the Global Initiative on Virtual Worlds (GIVW) – Discovering The CitiVerse was announced. This collaborative effort between Digital Dubai, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC) seeks to explore and harness the potential of next-generation virtual worlds to transform society, presenting new opportunities and complex challenges that demand the world's attention.

His Excellency Hamad Al Mansoori, Global Chair of the Executive Committee for the Global Initiative on Virtual Worlds (GIVW) and Director General at Digital Dubai commented: "The metaverse, a next-generation technology transforming social connections and digital experiences, can be a vital tool for advancing how humans connect, learn, shop, and play. Government entities can enhance public service delivery by integrating virtual worlds through the metaverse, driving the creation of sustainable, futuristic cities, globally."

By 2026, 25% of people will spend at least an hour, daily, in the metaverse. By 2035, the United States economy can see an annual GDP boost of \$760 billion through metaverse integration. New revenue streams that create pathways for added efficiency and innovation are not restricted to North America. Globally, the metaverse has the potential to add five trillion in value. In the Middle East, the UAE is at the forefront of artificial intelligence.

In Dubai's Metaverse Strategy, the city has expressed its mission to build one of the top ten metaverse economies. Released in 2022, the plan detailed a potential economic impact of \$4 billion. Within the next five years, Dubai's Metaverse Strategy is poised to create over 40,000 new jobs.

Cities as Innovation Hubs

Cities have always been the epicenters of innovation, where new ideas take root and flourish. The "Discovering The CitiVerse" initiative is a proactive approach to technological advancement benefiting society. By creating a galaxy of interoperable virtual worlds, the goal is to adopt emerging technologies to benefit society as a whole. "This initiative underscores our commitment to leveraging technology for the greater good, improving decision-making processes, and enriching urban living, on a global scale." Added Mansoori

The Promise of CitiVerse

The CitiVerse concept represents a bold vision for the future of urban living. These virtual worlds offer immense promise in creating new opportunities across various sectors, including urban planning, tourism, and education. For instance, virtual reality (VR) can revolutionize urban planning by allowing city planners to visualize and interact with 3D models of proposed developments, leading to more informed decisions and better outcomes for residents. Similarly, the tourism industry can benefit from virtual tours, enabling people to explore destinations from the comfort of their homes and making travel more accessible. In education, virtual worlds can provide better access to education, immersive learning experiences, enhancing student engagement and comprehension.

Complex Challenges

The potential of the CitiVerse also comes with significant challenges. Issues such as data privacy, cybersecurity, and digital equity need to be addressed to ensure these virtual worlds are safe while being accessible to all. Data privacy concerns arise from the vast amounts of personal information collected in virtual environments, necessitating robust safeguards to protect user data. Cybersecurity is another critical issue, as virtual worlds can become targets for malicious attacks, potentially compromising sensitive information and disrupting services. Additionally, digital equity is crucial to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their socioeconomic status, can access and benefit from these technologies.

Global Collaboration for a Better Future

The launch of GIVW is an example of the power of global collaboration. The international group is building a platform that champions open, interoperable, and innovative virtual worlds. The focus is on safety, user trust, and the development of normative frameworks will ensure these virtual worlds are used responsibly and effectively.

All cities face similar challenges in the face of nascent or novel technologies. GIVW has set itself up as a global platform to collaborate with cities and city-focused organizations to identify and address challenges early on and share that knowledge, which in turn will facilitate easier and expedited adoption by other cities.

Harnessing the Potential of Virtual Worlds

The GIVW will focus on several key objectives, including developing frameworks for the responsible use of virtual worlds, providing training and hosting events to share knowledge, and creating a sandbox environment for cities to test and experiment with virtual world scenarios. By fostering a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between technology, societal trends, and economic factors, the aim is to ensure that everyone benefits from the potential of virtual

worlds.

Looking Ahead

As we stand on the brink of this new era, it is crucial to anticipate and prepare for the technological developments that lie ahead. The world of the Metaverse presents both opportunities and challenges, and it is the responsibility of governments and authorities to explore and harness its potential to serve the goals of sustainable development, globally.

Mansoori concluded: "I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our UN partners, the ITU and the UNICC, for their unwavering support. Together, we will ensure that virtual worlds and the Metaverse contribute to the prosperity of every community in every city around the world. The future is before us, and I am confident that through our collaborative efforts, we will build a better, more connected world."

Key Pillars of the GIVW

The GIVW operates under three key pillars:

1. Bringing Virtual Worlds to Life: Developing strategic guidance, ensuring security and trust, raising awareness, and evaluating the impact of virtual world solutions.
2. Connecting Cities with the Virtual and Real Worlds: Exploring emerging technologies, identifying use cases, providing a sandbox facility, creating educational toolkits, and offering annual training.
3. Tunneling the CitiVerse: Establishing a global network, encouraging innovation through challenges, fostering talent development, and hosting annual assemblies for knowledge sharing.

By focusing on these pillars, we aim to unlock the full potential of virtual worlds to improve public service delivery, optimize resource use, and enhance citizen participation.

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