

Call for Papers

Metaverse-Mediated Communication: Theories of Working, Learning, and Socializing Through XR Technologies

A Special Issue of the *Journal of Media Psychology*

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With the rise of affordable and ubiquitous virtual (VR), augmented (AR) and extended reality (XR) technology and a push to develop the *metaverse* – a series of interconnected immersive environments in persistent multi-user platforms that allow for real-time user interaction (Mystakidis, 2022) – XR-based meeting spaces are becoming a new communication reality. Whether for education, work, or social interactions, people are meeting and experiencing daily life through XR, eliciting behaviors researchers have yet to explore fully. This collection will feature theoretical and empirical work that investigates the role of XR in how we learn, work, and socialize.

Metaverse-Mediated Communication

With an increase in social and business interactions on novel video and VR conferencing platforms, there is a need for theory-driven understandings of communication using XR media. XR platforms have been used for workplace meetings, holding conferences, as alternative classrooms (e.g., <https://educatorsinvr.com/>), and for socializing (e.g., watching movies, communal sleeping, and attending events/concerts). While traditional theories about mediated social interactions give us insight into how we work, educate, and socialize with XR platforms and environments,

their varied and novel nature portends unknown effects. However, a review of 2022 XR research shows that a majority of academic literature primarily focuses on only three psychological constructs: avatars, presence, and immersion (Girginova & Gil, 2023). These concepts are often applied to novel contexts but are rarely critically interrogated or augmented. There is a need for both novel theory development and grounded empirical explorations of how XR technologies affect human psychology and behavior. Building from these foundations will better prepare us for XR-based communication's future.

This collection will focus on how XR environments impact communication in the realms of work, education, and socialization. Works for the issue should answer: How can established theories be extended to understand behaviors and attitudes within XR spaces? What new theoretical frameworks are necessary? We invite theoretically grounded empirical research that examines the influences and implications of XR spaces and technologies. Submissions that focus on various theoretical and methodological perspectives in the areas of VR, AR, XR, and/or mixed reality are welcome. We also welcome studies that use empirical methodologies to support theory. Submissions should focus on the effects of XR and affiliated environments/platforms and how they can change, improve, or extend social, educational, or work-related experiences. Articles for this issue are expected to contribute to existing discussions on communication technologies and mediated communication.

Example topics that would be of interest include (please note that this is not an exhaustive list):

- How can existing communication theories be extended to XR work/social spaces?
- How do XR environments affect meetings, remote work, and productivity?
- What new theoretical approaches/frameworks can inform research on learning, training, and socializing in XR environments?
- What outcomes can we expect as XR-mediated communication becomes commonplace in the realms of physical and mental health, diversity and inclusion, and social change?
- What novel tools and methods can we use to examine XR-mediated communication?

Criteria for Selecting Manuscripts

Papers are welcome from all countries and cultures and across diverse methods, from large surveys to qualitative empirical work (e.g., semi-structured interviews)

Timeline and Criteria for Sending Proposals

Extended abstracts/preliminary proposals are due December 10, 2023 for priority consideration. Abstracts should include a tentative title and a 1,000-word (max) description of the proposed paper, including theory, methods, and analysis plan. Abstracts will be submitted through the Editorial Manager software (see instructions below). Decisions on abstracts will be made by January 10, 2024. Please note that approval of a proposal will not guarantee publication.

Full paper submissions are due May 15, 2024. Paper submission, with final acceptance decisions made by November 15, 2024. All submitted full papers will be anonymously peer-reviewed and will follow the *Journal of Media Psychology*'s editorial process.

This Special Issue is being published in collaboration with the Meaningful XR 2024 conference, being held May 23–25 in Stanford, CA. Top papers for Meaningful XR 2024 will be automatically considered a “Revise and Resubmit” for this

Special Issue. For more information on Meaningful XR 2024, go to <http://meaningfulxr.org/>.

Manuscript Preparation and Submission

To submit an abstract, please send an email with your abstract attached as a Word (.docx) or .pdf document to jmp@syr.edu. If your abstract is invited for submission, you will then submit a manuscript (either a Research Report or Research Paper) in accordance with the manuscript submission guidelines as detailed under “Instructions to Authors” on the journal’s website (<https://www.hogrefe.com/us/index.php?eID=dumpFile&t=f&f=14491&token=eb52a2ebdf2191179b744b46dddb02d25aad5333>). Address your cover letter to the issue’s Editor, and note in your cover letter that your manuscript is being submitted for consideration for publication in the issue on “Metaverse-Mediated Communication.”

Any questions about proposals should be directed to the issue Lead Guest Editor: David Beyea (beyead@uww.edu).

Questions regarding the editorial process should be sent to the Editor-in-Chief (nbowman@syr.edu).

Planned Dates

December 10, 2023	Extended abstract submissions due (1,000 words, theory, method, expected findings)
January 10, 2024	Invitations for full paper submissions sent out
May 15, 2024	Invited paper submission deadline
November 15, 2024	Final publication decisions made
Early 2025	Publication

References

- Girginova, P. I., & Gil, M. (2023). Studies of the medium-term effect of nanoconsolidants on wall paint layers with a lack of cohesion. *International Journal of Conservation Science*, 4(3), 1205–1220. <https://doi.org/10.36868/IJCS.2023.03.28>
- Mystakidis, S. (2022). Metaverse. *Encyclopedia*, 2(1), 486–497. <https://doi.org/10.3390/encyclopedia2010031>