

Diversity & Inclusion in the Metaverse: Themes, Trends & Gaps

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CONTEXT & PURPOSE

🌐 The metaverse is growing as a space for work, identity, education, and play.

⚖️ **DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion)** is essential but inconsistently implemented.

🎯 **Goal:** Review how DEI is currently addressed and where gaps remain.



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METHODOLOGY SNAPSHOT

📅 **2020–2024 sources** reviewed for recent DEI discourse in immersive environments.

🔑 **Keywords:** metaverse, diversity, accessibility, representation, virtual worlds.

🌿 **Classified by theme** (e.g., gender, access) and method (e.g., case study, conceptual).

🔍 **Primary outreach** to companies via survey and interview received no engagement, with one reply calling DEI “a dying trend” – highlighting a transparency gap.

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THEMATIC FINDINGS



Inclusive Design

🌿 **Equity from the start**

- 87% say avatars reflect real identity
- 60% feel virtual spaces lack inclusion
- 29% use avatars for escapism → design must balance realism & expression
- Limited customization reinforces norms
- Dev team homogeneity narrows perspective

🌟 **Examples:**

- Meta’s assistive avatars,
- Spark AR for diverse creators
- Zallio & Clarkson’s 10-point manifesto (co-creation, VPPS, accessibility)

Organizational Practice

🏢 **Inclusion in virtual work**

- Virtual hiring reduces bias
- VR-based DEI training builds empathy
- Platforms like Mesh and Omniverse support inclusive collaboration
- **Risks:** digital fatigue, misconduct, weak policy

🔧 **Best Practices:**

- Avatar conduct rules
- DEI onboarding
- Behavior monitoring
- neurodivergent-friendly interaction

Governance & Ethics

⚖️ **Systemic inclusion & oversight**

- **MSF** promotes inclusive language, codes of conduct, and reporting tools
- Data ethics, ID systems, and interoperability remain underdeveloped, limiting inclusive governance

🚧 **Challenges:**

- Most governance models are **conceptual**
- No clear enforcement or shared accountability standards

EMERGING GAPS

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❓ **Underexplored**
Neurodivergent inclusion, Cultural & linguistic representation

🧠 **Needs Focus**
Turning policy into practice, Improving corporate transparency

🔮 **Future Work**
Inclusive co-design approaches, Measuring long-term DEI impact

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CONCLUSION

✅ To move beyond surface-level diversity, the metaverse must embed **DEI into design, governance, and accountability.**

🔍 Yet, direct engagement proved difficult, with limited company response, **raising questions about whether DEI is becoming deprioritized in practice.**

💡 A truly inclusive metaverse **must be a shared digital commons, built with and for everyone.**