

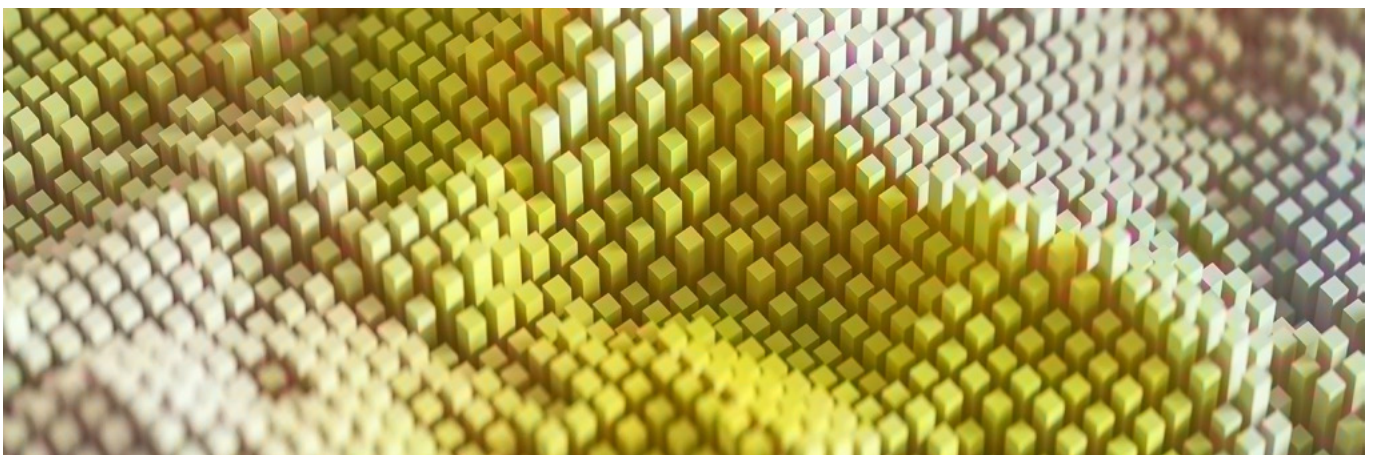


## OPPORTUNITY #35

What if we had a convention of rights for digital realities?

# A DIGITAL REALITIES CONVENTION OF RIGHTS

An international convention of digital human rights for life in a virtual world providing levels of protection for people as they live, work and socialise in digital realities.



**MEGATREND**  
Digital Realities

**TRENDS**  
International Collaboration

**SECTORS AFFECTED**  
Communication Technologies & Systems  
Consumer Goods, Services & Retail  
Cyber & Information Security  
Data Science, AI & Machine Learning  
Education  
Immersive Technologies  
Media & Entertainment

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## WHY IT MATTERS TODAY

The number of people online continues to grow. Today, two-thirds of the global population – just over 5 billion people – have access to the internet<sup>615</sup> and there were 4.6 billion social media users worldwide in 2021<sup>616</sup> compared to 3.5 billion in 2019.<sup>617</sup>

Video games are witnessing similar growth, with global revenues rising 32% between 2019 and 2021. Revenues are expected to rise at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.4% through 2026, creating a \$321 billion industry.<sup>618</sup>

In terms of geographies, China and the United States accounted for around half of the global gaming and esports revenues in 2021. However, Turkey – followed by Pakistan (21.9% CAGR) and India (18.3% CAGR) – is likely to be the fastest-growing video games market between 2021 and 2026 with a 24% CAGR.<sup>619</sup>

In addition, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are both paving the way towards digital realities. The AR and VR market was valued at \$15 billion in 2020 and is projected to reach \$454 billion by 2030 with a CAGR of 40.7%.<sup>620</sup> VR and AR have the potential to add \$4 billion to the United Arab Emirates' economy by 2030.<sup>621</sup>

It is no surprise that increasing engagement online and advancing AR and VR technologies are leading to increasing cybersecurity risks.<sup>622</sup> With hazards ranging from privacy and data breaches to ransomware, around one in three people fell victim to cybercrime in 2021, and many more will have encountered content that is legal but potentially harmful or unreliable.<sup>623</sup> Data breaches will cost over \$5 trillion annually by 2024.<sup>624</sup>

While the Council of Europe and the United Nations respectively published a 'Guide to Human Rights for Internet Users'<sup>625</sup> and a 'Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet'<sup>626</sup> in 2014, these documents have not evolved to include the risks that individuals will face in more immersive digital realities, which will be made more complex through advanced machine intelligence. Moreover, while the Council of Europe's guide is binding for all 47 of the council's members, the United Nations' charter is not legally binding.



## THE OPPORTUNITY

Life online brings new possibilities and challenges. Most of modern individuals' financial, work and social activities are already dependent on digital platforms and the rules and regulations that govern them. But, to date, beyond the protection of data, many of those rules have simply been carried over from the physical world and have not been adapted to new forms of community, behaviours or social and economic norms. A convention of human digital rights could be designed for future digital realities.

An internationally agreed convention of human digital rights could specify what is acceptable behaviour and provide levels of protection for people as they live, work and socialise in digital realities. It could preserve people's right to determine and protect their own digital identity and dignity and could also offer a base that different platforms and communities could use to develop frameworks to protect people's rights in virtual worlds. Digital reality spaces and communities adhering to the convention would be more transparent, trusted and attractive, and would be able to grow their user populations and give them a commercial advantage.

## BENEFITS

Greater protection and a common international basis for evaluating digital spaces.

## RISKS

Inflexibility of the convention, making it a source of division among communities and digital realities. Slow evolution of legal systems, meaning they fall out of sync with the convention, making enforcement challenging.



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PEOPLE**

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