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**Title – The Metaverse – The Good, the Bad and the Ugly**

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## What is the Metaverse?

- The future of the internet?
- A future lived in virtual reality?
- Science Fiction?
- A gaming platform?
- A virtual world, parallel to reality ?
- Augmented reality?
- All of the above?





## The effect on the brain of virtual reality

- Visualisation techniques – Tiger Woods, Russian athletes, Olympians
  - Visualising every swing of a club, shot, jump
  - Noticeable improvement in ability
  - Weightlifters visualising lifting a weight – gaining strength despite not lifting a weight
  - Chess players visualising beating the world champion
  - Brain-wave patterns the same visualising an action as doing the action
- 
- Where am I going, with this?



## Virtual Reality or Reality?

- Immersion in the virtual world with VR headset
- Blinkered to the real world
- Having fun or being threatened?
- Being bullied?
- Assaulted?



## Roblox and Horizon Worlds



- Gaming platforms popular with children
- Roblox content can be tailored – build your own "universe"
- Adults mixing freely on line with children
- Children subjected to adult content (min age 13)
- Extreme behaviour of avatar – violent/aggressive/highly confident
- Unwanted predatory behaviour - Serious sexual assault!

## Haptic Technology

- Experimental technology
- Vest allows player to feel when their avatar is kicked or shot
- Vest vibrates on the part of the body of the avatar that is impacted – chest, stomach etc
- Player is able to touch and feel
- Potential unwanted touching
- Serious sexual assault?



# How will the virtual world be policed?

## Online Safety Bill

- Make the UK the safest place in the world to be online
- New rules for user generated content
- Fines for platforms that fail to protect people
- A duty to protect children and young people
- A duty to remove harmful content

## BUT

*68. We recommend that references to harmful “content” in the Bill should be amended to “regulated content and activity”. This would better reflect the range of online risks people face and cover new forms of interaction that may emerge as technology advances. It also better reflects the fact that online safety is not just about moderating content. It is also about the design of platforms and the ways people interact with content and features on services and with one another online.*



## The blurring of personal and bodily injury?

- VR and Reality perceived the same by the brain
- Present day – cases of personal injury – distress caused by online content
- Revenge porn
- Social Media Harassment
- Cyber Bullying
- Future state – Augmented reality and haptic technology



## Future state – litigation?

- Granting a legal persona to an avatar?
- Duties and rights conferred on the avatar?
- Second generation avatars able to learn through AI, from their owners
- Recognisable psychiatric illness – PTSD etc caused by assault in Metaverse/cyber space
- Suing for Damages for bodily injury ?
- Prosecutions of players for assaulting other players in VR?