



Entering the Matrix? A Mixed-Methods Assessment of the Benefits and Risks of Continuous Extended Reality Use

Background

Extended reality is increasingly positioned as a space where everyday life can be conducted. Popular culture has explored this possibility for decades, often depicting full-time virtual living as dystopian, as seen in *The Matrix*, *Ready Player One*, and related works. These portrayals raise concrete questions about how continuous XR immersion is framed in contemporary discourse and how such experiences might unfold in practice. This thesis addresses these questions through two methods. A content analysis identifies dominant narratives, concerns, and expectations surrounding life in XR. A VR prototype then offers a situated way to examine how these narratives align with interaction in an immersive environment. Together, these components provide an evidence-based view of the potential benefits and risks of extended XR immersion.

Approach

Based on an initial review of academic work and cultural discourse, recurring patterns in how full-time XR living is represented will be identified and organized into thematic categories. These categories will inform the design of a representative VR prototype that embodies key elements of the identified narratives. The prototype will then be evaluated in a user study to examine how participants experience extended immersion and how these experiences correspond to the themes surfaced in the content analysis. Technical choices, tool selection, and implementation details will be shaped by the final problem definition.

Based on Bachelor or Master level the thesis will be adapted

Contact



Albin Zeqiri
Institute of Media Informatics
albin.zeqiri@uni-ulm.de
027 3 337

Focus in this project

Content Analysis
Virtual Reality
User Evaluation