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Taking a Broader View by Looking Deeper

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The field of virtual worlds is vast, interconnected and expanding. In this issue, we take a review lantern and shed some light on some of this field's aspects. Clearly, we do not cover everything. We will often see shadows and not the full image. Ultimately, we hope to encourage further exploring of the field.

The first thematic issue of JVWR 7th year (2014) focuses on a literature review of 3D3C worlds according to specific topics. Due to the substantial amount of responses to our "Lantern" CfP which resulted in 15 accepted manuscripts, the Lantern issue is published in two parts: Part 1 on the 1st quarter of 2014 and part 2 on the 3rd. Both parts connect with our workshop "Via the Looking Glass" held in Milan, Italy on December 15, 2013 (as part of AIS ICIS 2013).

Figure 1: Prof. Yesha Sivan at Bocconi university, Milan

For this issue, "topical review" means a review of a corpus of knowledge of one aspect of virtual worlds. It can be a classic literature review, a more formal statistical meta-analysis or other forms suggested by authors.

In that respect, "3D3C Worlds" is defined as a combination of four factors:

- **3D** stands for the three dimensional representation of worlds as seen in Google Earth, Augmented Reality, 3D printing and the like;
- **Community** as in a collection of people work, play and act together. Consider Facebook and Twitter as one example, and enhance it by the dynamics of World of Warcraft guilds;
- **Creation** is the ability to create new artifacts, as seen for example in Second Life or in Open Source movement;
- **Commerce** is the ability to harness these previous factors to gain monetary real value (consider Bitcoin, exchanges, etc.)

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- David Gefen, Drexel University's LeBow College of Business, Philadelphia, PA, USA.
- Abhishek Kathuria, Hong Kong University's School of Business, Hong Kong, China.

Part 1 of the Lantern issue includes :

1. **Review of Educational Research Methods in Desktop Virtual World Environments: Framing the Past to Provide Future Direction** by Dennis Beck / Department of Curriculum and Instruction/ University of Arkansas, USA & Ross A. Perkins / Department of Educational Technology/ Boise State University, USA. This article describes educational research methodologies being used in the investigation and evaluation of desktop virtual world environments (DVWEs) as used to teach a variety of subjects in higher education. An extensive search that resulted in 127 peer-reviewed papers chosen was carried out to locate journal articles that relate to the field.

2. **The Aspatial Economics of Virtual Worlds** by Edward Heath Robinson / The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA. This article compares and contrasts the economic geography of the physical world with that of virtual worlds, with an analytical focus on the spatial (and aspatial) characteristics of Blizzard Entertainment's *Diablo II* (released in 2000) and its massively multiplayer online roleplaying game *World of Warcraft* (released in 2004). The purpose of this article is to show that although virtual worlds are not immune to aspatial economic laws, geographic constraints on economic interaction in virtual worlds are optional inclusions

3. **Privacy in Virtual Worlds: A US Perspective** by Jeannie Pridmore /University of West Georgia, GA, USA & John Overocker /Associate Attorney at Candace E. Rader, P.C., Carrollton, Georgia, USA. The article explains why virtual worlds (VW) should be considered separate from other Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Then privacy rights in the United States are discussed, and how these rights could, or should, apply to VW. Privacy laws or the right to privacy is critical at this point in the development of VW. As in the days of the Wild West, the law has been slow to make its way into the realm of VW. In conclusion, critical issues are identified to be addressed in future research projects.

4. **Overview: Virtual Reality in Medicine** by Pensieri Claudio & Pennacchini Maddalena /Institute of Philosophy of Scientific and Technological Activity, Campus Bio-Medico University of Rome, Italy

The base of this article is 3,443 articles retrieved from Pubmed in 2012 and 8,237 from Isiknowledge in 2011. This large number of articles covered a wide range of themes, but showed no clear consensus about Virtual Reality (VR). The authors identified 4 general uses of VR in Medicine, and searched for the existing reviews about them. Specifically the authors found 364 reviews in 2011, although only 197 were pertinent to their aims: 1. Communication Interface (11 Reviews); 2. Medical Education (49 reviews); 3. Surgical Simulation (49 Reviews) and 4. Psychotherapy (88 Reviews).

5. **Taxation of Virtual World Economies: A Review of the Current Status** by Jamie S. Switzer & Ralph V. Switzer, Colorado State University, CO, USA. In this article the authors argue that virtual transactions are already subject to taxation under current U.S. law, at any point in time that the U.S. Internal Revenue Service should decide to enforce the current law, whether taking place in game worlds or unscripted worlds. This would include virtual-to-virtual transactions as well as virtual-to-real transactions, as the issue at hand is whether or not virtual activity is taxable, regardless of realization, because all goods and services have a fair market value.

6. **Linguistic and Multilingual Issues in Virtual Worlds and Serious Games: a General Review** by Samuel Cruz-Lara, Alexandre Denis, and Nadia Bellalem / LORIA (UMR 7503) / University of Lorraine, France. In this paper the authors present a general review on linguistic and multilingual issues related to virtual worlds and serious games. The expression "linguistic and multilingual issues" considers not only any kind of linguistic support (such as syntactic and semantic analysis) based on textual information, but also any kind of multilingual and monolingual topics (such as localization or automatic translation), and their association to virtual worlds and serious games.

Happy, healthy and productive 2014 in the virtual and the real.