Ethical Guidelines

Project Amplify is a free initiative that aims to elevate the voices of young people in the design and use of new and emerging digital environments. The 2023 implementation of Project Amplify focused on the Metaverse. One of the cornerstones of Project Amplify is the development of a set of ethical guidelines by which other organisations, developers, government agencies and policymakers can inform their own design processes of the Metaverse and other digital spaces.

1 PRIVACY & DATA PROTECTION

Consider how personal data is collected, stored and shared and how that is communicated to the end user. Recommendations include: collect and store only necessary data, require multi-factor authentication, utilise encryption best practices, decentralise data storage, simplify Terms and Conditions (T&C's) and incorporate multimodal access to T&Cs.

2 AUTONOMY

Autonomy refers to the amount of control participants have as they interact with and within a digital environment. Here we prioritise creative expression, self-paced/self-guided onboarding and navigation, clear and enforceable reporting mechanisms, and explicit guidelines of what it means to be in community. Data protection is also a key feature of a space that fosters user autonomy.

3 HUMAN FLOURISHING

An ethically-designed space promotes the well-being of its users. Some ways to accomplish this are through the inclusion of mental health resources, implementation of parental controls particularly for youth participants, and the adoption of clear and enforceable community guidelines. Finally, there is power in simple positive nudges including allowing users to track their usage and reminding them to take breaks.

4 ACCESSIBILTY & INCLUSIVITY

Adopting Universal Design Principles for Learning, providing multi-language translation, having dynamic support channels, and reducing the connectivity requirements are all ways to make one's platform more accessible. Equally important is ensuring individuals feel valued and respected, and ultimately included. Diverse representation in the team of developers as well as a broad range of avatars for users are some considerations which engender inclusivity.

5 REDUCING DECEPTIVE DESIGN PATTERNS

Reducing deceptive or dark design patterns starts with employing an ethical code of conduct to which one's developers are beholden. Consider how the very design of the space and the devices used to access it could be adversely manipulated and safeguard against these possibilities. Furthermore, educate users and allow for an effective evaluation, feedback and refinement loop.

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