University of Cambridge | Department of Engineering
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Plenary Speech

Speaker: Prof. Matteo Zallio
University of Cambridge and Autodesk

Speaker Bio

Matteo Zallio, MArch, PhD, is on a mission to make emergent technologies accessible and inclusive for all. Matteo is an award-winning designer, researcher, and professor. He has a unique background in helping businesses to develop futuristic technologies that are inclusive and consider different aspects of human diversity such as ability, language, culture, gender, and age. He is a Senior researcher at Autodesk and Senior research associate at the University of Cambridge, chairman at the National Standards Authority of Ireland, previously Fulbright fellow at Stanford University and an A. Graves fellow at Technological University Dublin. Along his academic and business roles he is constantly involved as a mentor for businesses and start-ups, as member of scientific committees at international conferences, and in his free time you can find him advocating about Inclusive Design.

Plenary Title: The Metavethics - Ethical, integrity and Social Implications of the Metaverse

Forecasts predict that by 2026 a quarter of the population will spend at least an hour a day in the Metaverse or digital virtual environments. Currently several tech companies are trying to understand how to design an entirely new immersive world, but when considering attitudinal, behavioral and social aspects of human diversity it is logical to ask how the Metaverse could be truly designed by people, with people and for people?

There is no doubt that we are living in the immersive technology renaissance era, however how can we maximize this opportunity, by learning from what we have developed in the past with other technologies?

With the Metaverse we are at a different point in history than when we created the Internet.
We now have more knowledge of Inclusive Design, more understanding of DEI and ethics and integrity practices, and more accessibility standards and policies; therefore, businesses have no excuses for not designing a Metaverse and its technologies to be truly inclusive, accessible, and safe from the very start.

As the society is rapidly moving towards addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals for all human beings, safety, inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility are becoming fundamental pillars upon which develop the Metaverse and digital, virtual environments.

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With this plenary session Dr. Zallio will share cutting-edge research findings, case studies from businesses and initiate a conversation on a new discipline called the Metavethics (https://www.metavethics.com/), that deals with ethical and integrity implications of the Metaverse and digital, virtual environments.

Scientists, businesses and organizations are in urgent need to develop new knowledge, and tools to best address new challenges and maximize future opportunities to build digital, virtual environments that make people thrive.

The boundaries for what the Metaverse could be and what people could do with it and in it are just set by human's abilities of imagination and we can nurture this imagination by working together to design more sustainable, ethical Metaverse and digital, virtual environments.