Avatars at Work and Play: Collaboration and Interaction in Shared Virtual Environments (Computer Supported Cooperative Work)

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Avatars at Work and Play brings together contributions from leading social scientists and computer scientists who have conducted research on virtual environments used for collaboration and online gaming. They present a well-rounded and state-of-the-art overview of current applications of multi-user virtual environments, ranging from highly immersive virtual reality systems to internet-based virtual environments on personal computers. The volume is a follow-up to a previous essay collection, 'The Social Life of Avatars', which explored general issues in this field. This collection goes further, examining uses of shared virtual environments in practical settings such as scientific collaboration, distributed meetings, building models together, and others. It also covers online gaming in virtual environments, which has attracted hundreds of thousands of users and presents an opportunity for studying a myriad of social issues. Covering both 'work' and 'play', the volume brings together issues common to the two areas, including: What kind of avatar appearance is suitable for different kinds of interaction? How best to foster collaboration and promote usable shared virtual spaces? What kinds of activities work well in different types of virtual environments and systems?

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