


Chapter 6

Ethical Considerations in the Metaverse and Augmented Retail Reality Era

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ABSTRACT

Retail is changing as a result of the convergence of blockchain, virtual reality, and augmented reality technology. Since this is a dynamic setting, it is essential to address any ethical issues that come up. This study aims to provide practical guidance for the responsible adoption of VR, AR, and blockchain technologies in retail by synthesising case studies and existing ethical frameworks. It will also thoroughly examine the ethical challenges arising from the integration of these technologies, with a focus on consumer privacy and data security. The study employed a multifaceted approach, including a thorough review of the literature, a critical analysis of the state-of-the-art ethical frameworks, and an examination of real case studies. There are certain ethical issues with virtual and augmented reality that are discussed, along with some possible answers. The results highlight the importance of user education, strict data protection protocols, and international regulatory cooperation as crucial elements for tackling ethical dilemmas in the context of augmented retail reality.

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INTRODUCTION

According to some, the metaverse is a new version of the internet that combines blockchain technology, virtual reality headsets, and avatars to create a seamless merging of the real and virtual worlds (Lee et al., 2021a; The Verge, 2021). According to Damar (2021), the metaverse is a “3D virtual shared environment where all activities may be carried out with the help of augmented and virtual reality technologies.” It is also referred to as “the layer between you and reality.” With the use of VR headsets, haptic gloves, AR, and Extended Reality (XR), which allows users to fully experience the high levels of engagement and immersive experience, the technology to enable the establishment of the metaverse is rapidly growing.

The retail industry has entered a transformational period as a result of the convergence of blockchain, virtual reality, and augmented reality in recent years. The result of this combination is a dynamic and engaging shopping experience that is revolutionising the way customers engage with goods and services (Kour & Rani, 2023). Examining the ethical implications of these new technologies is more important than ever as the retail industry changes due to technology breakthroughs.

The ethical issues raised by the combination of blockchain technology, augmented reality, and virtual reality in retail are covered in detail in this chapter. The way these technologies interact presents new issues that need to be carefully considered, especially when it comes to data security, consumer privacy, and general ethics. The aim is not only to identify and comprehend these moral dilemmas, but also to offer guidance for the conscientious integration of modern technologies in the retail sector.

Given the speed at which blockchain, augmented reality, and virtual reality are being incorporated into retail, this study is essential. It is critical to examine and resolve the ethical issues raised by retailers’ increased use of these cutting-edge technology. In response to the growing ethical concerns about consumer privacy, data security, and general ethical behaviour in the use of immersive and data-driven technology, the study addresses these issues. The research seeks to establish responsible practises, build consumer trust, ensure legal compliance, and support the retail industry’s sustainable growth in the augmented reality era by comprehending and proactively addressing these ethical problems. It can be said that this study is a useful tool for academics, politicians, and retailers managing the changing environment at the intersection of retail ethics and technology.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses an mixed approach to thoroughly examine the moral dilemmas raised by the combination of blockchain, augmented reality, and virtual reality technologies

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