# Article information:

Meta doesn’t want to police the metaverse. Kids are paying the price. - The Washington Post  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2023/03/08/metaverse-horizon-worlds-kids-harassment/>

# Article summary:

1. Children are encountering hostility, bigotry, and sexually explicit content in Meta's virtual reality-powered social media game Horizon Worlds.

2. Meta's moderation strategy of empowering users to protect themselves could prove dangerous for young users ill-equipped to handle dicey situations they find in the metaverse.

3. Child-welfare activists and regulators are urging Meta to drop its plan to open up Horizon Worlds to younger users, between 13 and 17, due to concerns about the company's record of failure to protect children and teens.

# Article rating:

Appears moderately imbalanced: The article provides some useful information, but is missing several important points or pieces of evidence that would be required to present the discussed topics in a balanced and reliable way. You are encouraged to seek a more balanced perspective on the presented issues by exploring the provided research topics and looking at different information sources.

# Article analysis:

The Washington Post article titled "Meta doesn’t want to police the metaverse. Kids are paying the price" provides a critical analysis of Meta's approach to moderation in its virtual reality-powered social media game, Horizon Worlds. The article highlights concerns raised by parents and experts about the prevalence of bigotry, harassment, and sexually explicit content in the app, which is reportedly being used by children and teens despite Meta's age restrictions.

The article presents evidence from researchers at the Center for Countering Digital Hate who recorded incidents of minors being exposed to prejudiced comments, harassment, or sexually explicit content in Horizon Worlds. However, it does not provide information on how prevalent these incidents are compared to other virtual reality programs or online platforms.

The article also notes that Meta has argued that empowering users to control their own environments is the best way to protect people in virtual reality. This approach is contrasted with Meta's more aggressive moderation strategies on its social media networks, Facebook and Instagram. The article suggests that this moderation strategy could prove dangerous for children using Horizon Worlds.

The article includes quotes from child-welfare activists and regulators who have urged Meta to drop its plan to open up Horizon Worlds to younger users between 13 and 17. However, it does not present any counterarguments from those who support Meta's approach or believe that children can be protected through user empowerment tools.

The article also highlights concerns about the psychological effects of harassment and bullying in virtual reality on victims. It cites research suggesting that victims often experience similar psychological effects as they would in real-life attacks. However, it does not provide evidence for this claim or explore potential counterarguments.

Overall, the article provides a critical analysis of Meta's approach to moderation in Horizon Worlds but may be biased towards presenting negative aspects of the app without exploring potential benefits or counterarguments. It also raises important questions about how best to protect children using virtual reality apps while acknowledging that there are no easy answers.

# Topics for further research:

* Comparison of moderation strategies in virtual reality programs and online platforms
* Positive aspects of user empowerment tools in virtual reality apps
* Arguments in support of Meta's approach to moderation in Horizon Worlds
* Potential benefits of virtual reality-powered social media games for children and teens
* Counterarguments to concerns about psychological effects of harassment and bullying in virtual reality
* Best practices for protecting children using virtual reality apps

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