Isn’t All Reality Really Virtual?

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Abstract
Arguably, the concept that is referred to today as “virtual reality” is as old as humanity itself. Humans seem particularly predisposed to psychological travel between physical and virtual reality and have invented many ingenious ways technologies to do so. The latest advance is immersive VR technology, which allows face-to-face social interaction in three-dimensional settings via digital avatars. Blascovich will discuss conceptual and metaphysical issues with a focus on a structural model of social influence within virtual environments and illustrative experiments.

Bio
Jim Blascovich is Distinguished Professor of Psychological and Brain Sciences and Director of the Research Center for Virtual Environments at UCSB. He was recently a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. Jim is a past President of both the Society for Personality and Social Psychology and the Society of Experimental Social Psychology. He has served on several National Research Council panels and numerous editorial boards. His research has been continuously funded by the National Science Foundation for more than 20 years and also by the National Institutes of Health, the Army Research Laboratory, and other agencies. He has over 150 publications with 4 books including the recent Infinite Reality: Avatars, New Worlds, Eternal Life, and the Dawn of the Virtual Revolution (infinitereality.org).