

## **The Veil of Virtuality: Anonymity and Trust in the Metaverse's New Frontier**

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**Abstract :** Utilizing a preregistered randomized experiment, this study explores the effects of anonymity and curated identity on trust within the Metaverse. Participants were randomly assigned to different conditions of anonymity and identity curation and engaged in a series of tasks designed to mirror the complexities of trust in real-world social interactions. Trust was measured using the classical trust game, allowing for a nuanced understanding of how these factors interact and influence trust. The findings reveal that higher levels of anonymity negatively impact trust, while identity curation can moderate this effect. Mechanism analysis uncovers how anonymity influences perceived reciprocity and group cohesion, and how curation can moderate these relationships. The results demonstrate a nuanced interaction between anonymity and trust, with variations across different curation levels. These insights provide a multifaceted understanding of trust within virtual environments, contributing valuable knowledge to the design, policy-making, and ethical considerations of the Metaverse

**Keywords :** metaverse, anonymity, curated identity, social behavior, trust

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