Journey to an Education Metaverse

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Version 1.3

Built On UMGC Developer's Certificate

o Augmented and Virtual Reality Design

o Courses in:

- o Interactive & Digital Design,
- o User Experience,
- o Game Design, and
- o VR & AR Design

o First offered in Spring, 2022

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Immersive Pilot Objective

- Over a current target of two years, investigate the value of adding immersive content to UMGC's educational offerings.

- If the recommendation is to do so, prepare a sustainable plan to implement this capability.

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Current Implementation

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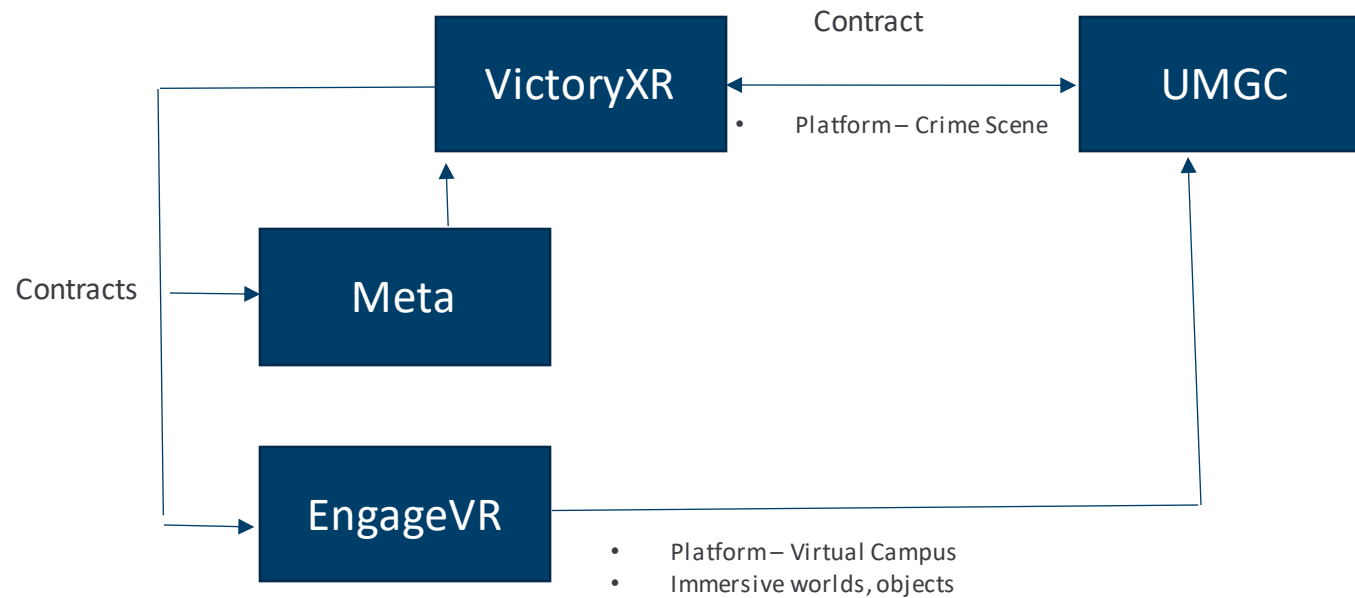
Current Plan

- Year 1 (July, 2022 – June, 2023)
  - Perform initial evaluations of the impact of immersive experiences and the creation of a virtual UMGC campus
  - Identify issues that need to be addressed if the decision is to move forward after the pilot
  - Explore operational, financial implications
  - Run as many pilot classes in a variety of different disciplines as is practical
- Year 2 (July, 2023 – June, 2024)
  - Test delivery modalities that were not accomplished in Year 1
    - Overseas students
    - Combined with a physical hybrid offering
    - Supporting a cohort as opposed to an individual class – perhaps complementing tutoring, other in-place support
    - 2D offerings
    - Utilizing 'free' platforms such as Altspace
  - Selectively add additional Program areas to Pilot
  - Solve for identified open issues
  - Prepare implementation plan if needed
- Year 3 (July, 2024 - …)
  - Start transition

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Pilot – Year 1

- Between 13 and 15 courses
  - Four to Five per semester, starting Fall, 2022
  - *Arts & Sciences* (SAS)-12, *Business* (BUS)-1, *Cybersecurity & Information Technology* (CIT)-1
- Headsets
  - Provided at no cost on loan to students
- One synchronous class/week - virtual hybrid
  - May change cadence of synchronous meetings for future courses
- All courses will focus on increased Engagement
- Several courses will use immersive simulations, e.g. Crime Scene Experience

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Student Feedback From SPCH 100

Students in SPCH 100 meet around a campfire as part of the course's virtual component. One student said they wished the class were longer.

- Scores were higher on all survey questions than other sections

- Success rate of 92%

- Student Feedback:
  - As a working student, raising a family, this option gave a student the option of attending in a virtual reality setting. Allowed her to connect with classmates.
  - A number said being an avatar reduced fear of speaking to faculty member and interacting with peers.
  - One student was agoraphobic, one suffered from PTSD; both had difficulty in 'real life' interacting with people but were comfortable in the classroom.

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Questions We Are Wrestling With

- 3D (headset) versus 2D (non-headset) access
  - When is 2D access good enough?
  - How to manage headset provisioning, costs
- Metaverse (virtual campus/worlds) versus Simulations
  - User licensing cost structure
  - Who to partner with, how to select
- Content design – what classes/experiences are candidates
  - How to document the immersive aspects of the class
- Overseas implementation and support
- Policy and compliance (including privacy and accessibility issues)
- Level of integration with the Learning Management System (LMS)
- How to use Immersive capabilities to strengthen academic, commercial partnerships

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