Team B - Debate 1

Pros and cons of giving legal personalities to avatars

Position: Against

Argument 1 - Would require significant changes to existing legal frameworks

Implementing legal personalities for avatars would require significant changes to existing legal frameworks and systems, as well as overcoming technical challenges related to the complexity and variability of AI and VR technologies.

Giving avatars legal personalities could blur the line between the virtual and real worlds. This could lead to confusion and legal disputes over which laws apply.

Could raise questions regarding ownership and intellectual property rights of content and assets - physical ownership

How can we delimitate which responsibilities are human or not?

Argument 2 - Complexity of boundaries

In addition of requiring considerable changes within the legal framework, it is unclear where the boundaries would lie for avatars with legal personalities.

Would they be treated as individuals, groups, or companies?

Would they be subject to the same laws as human beings or a separate set of rules? Where does this place the border between the real world and the metaverse?

Argument 3 - Legal Loopholes

Who is responsible for the actions and behaviors of virtual entities, including any harm they may cause?

The granting of legal personalities to avatars could be misused for nefarious purposes and to evade legal responsibility.

As avatars are often conception's of one's ideal self, one can feel empowered and use it as a channel for activities or actions that they are uncomfortable or scared of doing in real life.

This projection creates a loophole in the legal system, enabling the user to avoid real-world consequences.

Argument 4 - Ethical considerations

Granting legal personalities to avatars raises significant ethical considerations, such as the implications for the concept of personhood, the nature of consciousness, and the value of human life.

Providing legal personality to entities that do not have consciousness or agency raises a question about the extent to which the ability of human reasoning impacts responsibility.

If consciousness of actions isn't a prerequisite of responsibility, then who is to stop us from consider sentencing babies or even animals?

Links

https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=edssjs&AN=edssjs.378BC044&site=eds-live&scope=site&authtype=sso&custid=s8440772

https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/frvir.2023.1025526/full

https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2021/06/your-avatar-you-however-you-see-yourself-and-you-should-control-your-experience-0

https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-11512779/Psychologists-reveal-AI-selfies-Instagram-secretly-reveal-YOU.html

https://sensoriumxr.com/articles/what-are-ai-avatars

https://www.humanetech.com/

Argument 1 - Privacy/Data Security

Creating avatars that are very similar to yourself on social platform can lead to privacy/data concerns (data such as physical appearance / proportions)

Cyber bullying

Security concerns for public figures

Parties portraying-pretending as avatars-personalities they are not will lead to unsafe and undependable digital environment

Lack of Clear Guidelines of what is Legally and Culturally Appropriate

Cultural Appropriation

Cultural Misinterpretation

Potential for Radicalization

Parties portraying-pretending as avatars-personalities they are not will lead to unsafe and undependable digital environment

Argument 2 - Stereotyping

Giving non-human avatars personalities based on cultural stereotypes can reinforce harmful biases and perpetuate negative attitudes towards certain groups of people.

For example, suggesting that an engineer is male and a school teacher is female.

Argument 3 -Intended/Unintended Effects

If the avatar personality is not well-designed, it could have unintended effects on the user, such as increasing anxiety or stress.

If avatar is too similar to human personality, the chances of getting manipulated by avatars would be higher. A human-like avatar may appear to act as a trusted friend ready with sage or calming advice but might also be used to manipulate users to make certain decision. Should an avatar be used to nudge a user for the user's benefit or the organisation building it?

When humanized, an avatar can also interfere with the relationship dynamics between human partners and cause attachment between avatar and human.

Argument 4 - Misinterpretation

Avatar personalities may be misinterpreted by humans, leading to misunderstandings and miscommunication.

Avatar personalities can lead to fabricated relationships (i.e. Replika) which are susceptible to being lost when a crash or update occurs to the software.