Πρόταση Διδακτορικής Διατριβής

*Αντικείμενο: Η υιοθέτηση της ψηφιακής μόδας μέσα από τη βιομηχανία των παιγνίων*

*Τίτλος: Adaptation of digital fashion through the industry of games:*

*conceptualization, used tools and outcomes.*

*Γλώσσα εκπόνησης: Αγγλική*

*Επιβλέπουσα καθηγήτρια: Ευρυδίκη Παπαχρήστου*

1. **State of the Art**

## The Gaming Industry

Games have been around for as long as humankind has. Video games on the other hand, depending on where someone sets the starting point, have been around for up to 70 years. Through games there have been depicted facts such as historic events, mythology, leadership, survival, entertainment and most importantly, character development. There have been board games, arcade games, strategic games, entertainment games, simulation games and numerous more. The frenzy around games had always existed since humans found their own way out in playing and therefore keeping themselves entertained. However, games have proved that there is not only the purpose of entertainment but also the sense of survival, the starting of a new life, the strategy for leading and the competition. Such feelings build senses that bring people together or tear them apart (through their game characters). Respectively to this paper, the main focus on the gaming map is the simulation and character-building games, where the user takes in to account the character as much as his/her/their own individuality. Video games represent ‘the behavior of systems’ and ‘make arguments about how social or cultural systems work in the world – or how they could work’ (Bogost [2008](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13642529.2014.973714), 136), (Spring, 2014).

Because of games their users have invented several activities and have been inspired to produce material that they will later offer to an audience. Such activities are streaming, gaming championships and even professional gaming, influence gaming, cosplay and the list goes on. Because the video games are a thumbnail of society, in times of past, present and future, using high technology, other industries have figured that out and have integrated the philosophy of games in their own processes. According to Rykała, 2020, such industries are:

Film and Television industry

Publishing industry

Toy industry

Sports Industry

Music industry

Fashion industry

In PwC’s Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2022-2026, where the annual analysis across 52 countries and territories took place, ’*’the gaming industry and esports revenue totaled US$215.6bn in 2021 and is forecast to grow at a 8.5% CAGR to US$323.5bn in 2026. Asia Pacific generated the lion’s share of revenues in 2021 with US$109.4bn, almost double North America, the second highest region. Gaming is now the third-largest data-consuming E&M content category, behind video and communications.’’* The strike of the COVID19 pandemic, played a huge role in the upsurge of gaming activity and this proved to attract new collaborations for future scenarios, such as virtual concerts, virtual runways, virtual lives.

## The Fashion Industry

Another old enough industry as the gaming, is that of fashion. Fashion industry has been considered both niche and norm. From luxurious products and services to mass production garments and accessories, it keeps expanding inside the societies of the countries by offering individuality build tools and materials and creating labour at the same time. The Global Fashion Industry Statistics counted that in 2021 fashion’s labour force reached 3.41bn and holded a GDP of 16,300 $(World Bank Open Data, 2022). Since its infancy, the industry has been rising while facing many threats from different environments and such facts are proved by the way that fashion industry is still playing a big role in everyday lives, sometimes more sometimes less, depending on the individual.

Through fashion, the person manages to build a wardrobe that will be his/her/their identity and will declare the desirable place in society. Societal individuality which grows stronger and stronger, makes people wanting to either differ, or belong to a smaller community with similar characteristics. The behaviors, style, and presence of an individual, are depicted through the dressing, the manners and whatever each one persona creates and decides that will hold and be for life or for how long it will last.

Currently, luxury fashion is growing rapidly, expanding its activities and offering services and products that do not shout avant-garde scarceness and uniqueness, but marry the cause of innovation and the future. The subject of luxury has shifted from being inaccessible with custom-made products, to having a higher degree of accessibility and effect on everyday lives, especially to that of Millennials and GenZ (Cabigiosu, 2020). Despite the hardships economic crisis over the years and the pandemic, luxury fashion faced them by diligently overcoming them and finding other paths to grow, expanding and reaching wider audiences.

## Fashion & gaming combined

The former chief digital officer of LVMH and now chief experience officer of cryptocurrency Ledger, Ian Rogers, once said: *“Why would I want a collection of stuff that nobody can see, when I can have a collection of stuff that everyone can see?” (I.Rogers, July 2022).* Technology has cleared the path for the constant growing fashion to offer its products, faster, simpler, cheaper and in larger amounts and wider variety than ever before. Starting from wrapping textiles around our bodies, moving on to tailors’ made-to-measure garments, fast forward to customization and mass customization, reaching out to fast fashion and easily accessible garments of all kinds and facing a covid-19 pandemic in the meantime, led to now; a present where humans find themselves dressed in real life with physical items of clothing and their avatars dressed in virtual in the Metaverse apps or game platforms like Fortnite, GTA, Sims4, League of Legends etc. According to an associate producer who worked on collaboration between the two industries, dressing the characters is a type of expression and immersion (Allaire, 2021). Designing garments especially for games like skins, brings aesthetics, protection, properties; all included in a layer of individuality.

The applications of technology in fashion in the context of gaming, can be found on customer service, customization, retail, gaming, runways, social media, digital production processes, sustainability, and the list is growing. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, many industries turned into more digital services, with the apparel industry to be one of the first wayfarer in the run. Luxury brands started offering virtual runways, digital fashion shows and a lot more. While consumers could not go out to shop, the virtual shopping had an offspring for the past three years. Online shopping and general online habits have been growing even before the pandemic, the pandemic accelerated and now the evolution has no return (Cutaia, 2022).

A scenario of a user or gamer, spending time and money on purchasing the character’s best outfit that will qualify its future and its role in the game, is kind of a look-alike simulation of human societies. Prisoners wear the prison uniforms; lawyers cannot attend a trial in their Crocs flip-flops and doctors differ from nurses in a hospital. A future scenario of a user creating a new character from scratch is not a future scenario anymore, but a present scenario. The anticipated scenario is the consideration of a user to hold a digital life and digital self in a virtual reality environment under the large umbrella of Web 3.0. Without making any retrospect on when and how Web 3.0, VR, AI and Metaverse came from science fiction to real life, the research will pinpoint only on one aspect of this futuristic and innovative category. Simply put, the question is *“How did luxury fashion brands manage to engage with games and why did they do it?”.*  Zooming out of the question, and looking around in magazines, billboards and general advertisements, the fashion industry holds a piece on every pie, either of sports, e-games, social media, influencers, actors and actresses, singers, performers even scientists and of people whose profession seeks of lesser attention. This is a way for the industry to collect different markets, but also shows its potential to reach out to all those different target groups by researching and offering what they need. In China, the industry has been moving rapidly and took the consumer experience one step further. Chinese retail giant Alibaba launched its first VR application which is called Taobao Life, and it is a 3D avatar- based world, where users create their own avatars and interact with each other. During a research based on digital applications in fashion and retail, the engagement of consumers through the gamified and personalized experiences was studied. The specific research, which took place after the COVID-19 pandemic, showed that in the practice of human interaction, such as the experience of Taobao Life, the users developed more and more a human sense, therefore their need of relatedness was satisfied (Lau & Ki, 2021). Moreover, the more they exchanged “*emotional support”* in the virtual world, the more their relatedness was fulfilled (Lau & Ki, 2021).

By creating influential content and by collaborating with specific personas of influence in each category, for example, gamer influencers or famous footballers and even game heroes such as Qiyana and Senna in League of Legends fashion brands are ensuring further partnerships respecting the creativity and storytelling, while making product placement. Louis Vuitton avoided simply making a product placement in League of Legends but created authentic and stylistic characters outfits (skins) for the game heroes, offering to users the chance to get involved and explore the brand virtually and purchasing one of its products (Gilliland, 2021). Another exclusive partnership was that of Moschino and the game SIMS, where the brand created a capsule collection for the game in 2019, as well as an equivalent that was available to purchase (Gilliland, 2021). One more thing that a game interface offers to its users, is the autonomy to behave however they see fit for their avatar and its life in the game. Such autonomy works critically in the decision making of the user and makes the individual more prominent to act (Andr. et al., 2018; Wertenbroch et al., 2020).

# Research objective

The collision of fashion industry and games is one of the many reasons why the digitalization of the industry happened. It is estimated to grow, attracting large audiences of the generations who hold medium to big spending power (Gilliland, 2021). It is undeniable and there is no turning back. It will only go forward or stop to where it is now. However, with future collaborations already being reported, it is proven that games have already become a cultural force as well as a highly preferred entertainment of Millennials and Gen-Z and are expected to bring fast growing shares in the fashion sales (Bain, 2023). Through this collision the fashion industry is becoming smarter and more innovative in targeting new markets, creating new channels and finding new ways to establish its products in everyday lives either real or digital ones.

The organizational impact of metaverse technologies, specifically on levels of employment require new skills- digital skills. The EU Pact4Skills[[1]](#footnote-2) was developed partially to respond to these new and emerging skills. New job positions are expected (more creative) that take and combine several individuals from different backgrounds to create something in common. However, how much sustainable and profitable such actions are and how much time, effort and resources do they require to provide a satisfactory result that will attract new markets? How is the result going to be meeting both industries’ requirements and at the same time the expectations of the consumers?

The main scope of this research will be the technologies used and the professions needed by both industries, fashion and gaming, in order to collaborate and communicate in product development. The paper aims to research the tools, methods, negotiations, and actors that the fashion industry is using to adapt the new technologies for collaborating with games and what the specifics of each aforementioned element are. Moreover, the interest will focus on the amount of time, human resources, cost, and knowledge needed for the creation of the final digital products, by researching different individuals who worked on the field. Targeting companies that have already developed such skills and individuals who have been active in the field, the paper aims to give a detailed description of different real-life scenarios and

1. how were they created?
2. by whom?
3. in what period’s length?
4. under what circumstances? (What was the main target of action)
5. under what costs?

Finally, the specific research aims to answer one final question, and that is of the expected future of such technology, as estimated by the different actors.

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1. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1517&langId=en> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)