

12 | Software development is becoming data-driven

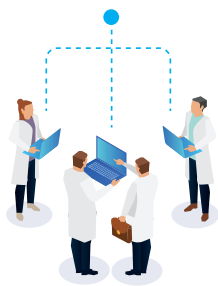
Portrait of the Software Engineering Research Group at TU Delft.

18 | Merging symbolic AI with machine learning

Jacopo Urbani works on knowledge graphs for reasoning over uncertain data.

19 | FAIR health data for research and innovation

Health-RI builds a national health data infrastructure.



22 | How to find funds

Masterclass on securing funding for ICT research.



PAUL KLINT

#LeaveMetaAlone

The word 'meta' is dear to my heart. What a shock that it is now misused in Facebook's cover-up operation.

Things I hate:

1. Vandalism
2. Irony
3. Lists

This self-referential humour seen on a wall in Paris gives us a head start in discussing the word 'meta'. It is mostly used to indicate a difference in level. Meta-X describes properties of X: a meta-joke like A rabbi, a priest and an imam walk into a bar. 'What!' says the bartender, 'Is this a joke?', a meta-language that describes another language, or a meta-program that analyses or generates other programs. I am interested in meta-environments: interactive development environments to describe what interactive development environments for programming languages or domain-specific languages should look like and how these should behave. Key properties of any meta-X: abstraction and self-reference.

Neal Stephenson created the concept of a Metaverse in 1992 as a virtual reality successor of the internet in which avatars interact with each other and enable humans to escape from their dystopian life. In 2003, Second Life created a similar concept.

I omit here a long discussion on how appropriate the use of the word 'meta' in Metaverse actually is and jump to today's issue right away. After years of illegally using privacy information, after years of propagating misinformation and causing social divide and political unrest, after years of preferring profit over socially responsible behaviour, Facebook has now finally found a solution for all these problems: rename Facebook as Meta. In doing so, it joins the long list of memorable company name changes, ranging from Blackwater after convictions for massacres in Iraq to Philip Morris because cigarettes cause lung cancer.

Facebook has 2.91 billion users, which is more than the number of adherents of Christianity (2.3 billion) or Islam and Hinduism combined (1.9 + 1.12 billion). More than the inhabitants of China and India combined (1.4 + 1.38 billion). The Programmer Formerly Known As Mr. Facebook will not change his behaviour, and this renaming scam will not help. Only governments and the international community have the power to enforce a fundamental change in the behaviour of Facebook, ahum, Meta.

In the meantime, please do not touch our beloved 'meta':
#LeaveMetaAlone!