IE-2022:1 EDITORIAL

New approaches in the social sciences, mostly following the development of new technologies, are seizing more and more attention within leading scientific periodicals. As an example of this line of inquiry: What social and economic consequences can we expect of the metaverse, which promises to bring a new level of social connectedness, mobility, and collaboration to the world of virtual work? The metaverse draws on a vast ensemble of different technologies, including virtual reality platforms, gaming, machine learning, blockchain, 3-D graphics, digital currencies, sensors, etc. How can the metaverse, AI, and machine learning facilitate the achievement of the UN universal sustainable development goals?

"The metaverse is poised to reshape the world of work in at least four major ways: new immersive forms of team collaboration; the emergence of new digital, AI-enabled colleagues; the acceleration of learning and skills acquisition through virtualization and gamified technologies; and the eventual rise of a metaverse economy with completely new enterprises and work roles… While still in its early stages, the emergent metaverse provides an opportunity for enterprises to reset the balance in hybrid and remote work, to recapture the spontaneity, interactivity, and fun of team-based working and learning, while maintaining the flexibility, productivity, and convenience of working from home" (M. Purdy, in: *Harvard Business Review*, April 5, 2022).

All of these and other new approaches are especially welcome in this and future issues of *Intellectual Economics*. A similarly important field involves determining and evaluating the criteria for the most efficient blockchain-based secure authentication method, and suggests solutions to other similar problems.

Below is the traditional short presentation of the contents of the current issue of *Intellectual Economics* (IE-2022:1). The prevailing financial constructs and processes are researched in the article of D. Th. Phan et al. (Hungary); and R. Vorobei explores the determinants of stock price indices in Ukrainian agro-industrial companies. P. Pavon et al. (Spain) analyze comparable data on efficiency aspects of software piracy in the OECD Countries.

Another group of articles is dedicated to the environmental, social, and governance problems of corporate management and leadership: I. Zumene et al., from Latvia, on policy integration and implementation from the corporation perspective; and S. Angelis and P. Polycronidou, from Greece, on leadership and motivation in the Greek pharmaceutical industry. Interesting changes in the misery index of the Visegrad States in 2009 and 2020 (partly during the COVID-19 pandemic) are reviewed by J. Masarova et al. (Slovakia). V. Andriulis et al. (Lithuania) conclude that the aging population is a significant factor negatively affecting productivity measured by GDP per person but not by TFP, and stress its importance while identifying the factors that can reduce its negative impact.

The digital transformation of educational systems and the impact of ICT under the pandemic surge are detailed by an international group of researchers from the US and Russia (W. Strielkowski et al.). One article is dedicated to perspectives on the implementation of machine learning (O. Zyma et al., Ukraine), and another to Facebook (Nguyen Thi Loc et al., Vietnam), the latter being applied in developing the tourism industry.

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