

Title: EUI Launches Metaverse Startup Competition 2023

Source: Daily News Egypt

Date: 19 September 2023

Egypt University of Informatics (EUI) has launched the “Metaverse for Startups” competition, under the slogan “Extended Reality for the Public Good,” as part of the “Workshop on Metaverse and Artificial Intelligence,” supported by Meta, the American University in Cairo, Meta Academy, and Simplon. The competition aims to showcase and support startups that use metaverse technology and solutions in various industries that align with the sustainable development goals.

The university hosted 10 selected startups out of 17 applicants that applied for the competition, and introduced them to a jury of experts from Meta, EUI, AUC Venture Lab, and Significa Ventures. The jury will evaluate the startups based on their innovation, impact, scalability, and sustainability. The competition also coincides with the presence of Abdel Moneim El-Sharkawy, President of the National Academy for Information Technology for Persons with Disabilities.

The “Workshop on Metaverse and Artificial Intelligence” also kicked off, with the participation of a group of international and local experts, representatives of the government and private sectors, the academic community, and Egyptian startups. The workshop aims to raise awareness about the importance of modern digital technologies to drive the economy, support digital transformation efforts, enhance innovation, and build youth capabilities. The workshop took place from 12-14 September.

The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology cooperated and participated in the workshop activities, as part of its keenness to keep pace with global trends towards developing emerging technologies and their uses, such as artificial intelligence and metaverse technologies. The ministry also seeks to build a base of distinguished cadres capable of competing in the international labor market and building effective partnerships with industry in this field.

The workshop covered a number of topics related to the nature of metaverse technology, the economic opportunities offered by emerging technologies and their success factors, as well as the regulatory frameworks required to ensure the safe and beneficial use of these technologies, ways to manage businesses and provide services, and how to preserve identity and personal data.

The workshop, held over 3 days, included several sessions aimed at exchanging experiences and knowledge about the policies and regulatory frameworks required for the metaverse in various fields, such as education, heritage, tourism, empowering people with special needs, music, and digital transformation.

The opening ceremony was attended by Reda Hegazy, Minister of Education; Soha El-Gendy, Minister of Immigration and Egyptian Expatriates' Affairs; Ghada Labib, Deputy Minister of Communications and Information Technology for Institutional Development; Kojo Boike, Vice President for Africa, the Middle East and Turkey for Public Policy at Meta; Reem Bahgat, President of EUI; Ahmed Dalal, President of the American University in Cairo; and Ahmed Hassan, Vice President of EUI.

The workshop included several sessions that discussed the economic, technical, political, and regulatory aspects of metaverse and AI, as well as the best practices for building and deploying next-generation technology. The speakers included Reem Bahgat, President of EUI, Hossam Othman, advisor to the Minister of Communications and Information Technology for technological innovation, electronics industry, and training, Ahmed Tantawi, supervisor of the Innovation Center, Abdel Moneim El-Sharkawi, President of the National Academy for Information Technology for Persons with Disabilities, Amani Issa, Head of the Business Development Sector at EUI, Suzan Al-Aqrabawi, Advisor to the Minister for Data Governance, Ahmed Saeed, Advisor to the Minister for Economic and Statistical Affairs, Kojo Boike, Director of Public Policy for Africa at Meta, and Ahmed Dalal, President of AUC.

Kojo Boike highlighted that Meta and other companies plan to co-create the metaverse, a shared virtual environment where people can interact with each other and digital content. He said that more than 3.8 billion people use Meta platforms every month, and that Meta established the Metaverse Academy to accelerate the development of metaverse technology and shape the ecosystem. He also stressed that safety and integrity are at the core of the development process.

Reem Bahgat confirmed that EUI is one of the first universities specialized in communications and digital technologies and the fields affected by them. She said that the university offers specialized programs for education to meet the labor market's need for specialists in the latest fields of information and communications technology. She also announced that EUI is hosting 10 finalists for the first round of the "XR for Good Metaverse Startup 2023 Competition" on campus, and that the winning startup will receive a prize of \$10,000.

Ahmed Dalal expressed his pleasure at participating in this event, stressing that AUC pays excellent attention to metaverse technologies. He said that they represent a radical shift in the way companies and individuals interact with each other while providing a new opportunity.