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*Towards Designing Inclusive Social Virtual Reality Spaces to  
Combat New Forms of Online Harassment*

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**Abstract:** Abstract: Social Virtual Reality refers to 3D virtual spaces where multiple users can interact with one another through VR head-mounted displays. In recent years, the growing popularity of commercial social VR platforms such as AltspaceVR, VR Chat, RecRoom, and Meta Horizon Worlds is dramatically transforming how people meet, interact, play, and collaborate online and has led to the emerging metaverse paradigm. These platforms have drawn aspects from traditional multiplayer online games and 3D virtual worlds where users engage in various immersive experiences, interactive activities, and choices through avatar-based online representations. However, social VR also demonstrates specific nuances, including full/partial body tracked avatars, synchronous voice conversations, and simulated touching and grabbing features. These novel characteristics have led to greater instances of harassment and potentially more destructive consequences compared to traditional 3D virtual worlds/online gaming or single-user VR. In this talk, Dr. Guo Freeman will introduce her recent research on new forms of online harassment in social VR and how embodied harassment is becoming an emerging but understudied form of harassment in novel online social spaces. She will explain her ongoing work on leveraging innovative technologies, such as AI-based moderation, for proactively combating harassment in social VR. She will also highlight potential future directions for designing safer, inclusive, and more supportive social VR spaces to empower diverse communities, especially marginalized users such as women, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ individuals. }br;

Bio: Dr. Guo Freeman is an Assistant Professor of Human-Centered Computing in the School of Computing at Clemson University. Her research situates at the unique intersection of social computing, social VR, and entertainment computing. She brings a combination of profound theoretical foundation, nuanced empirical perspectives, and participatory technology design and prototype to investigate how interactive technologies such as multiplayer online games, esports, live streaming, social VR, social media, and AI shape interpersonal relationships and group behavior. Her research is also uniquely driven by her focus on marginalized technology users due to their gender, race, sexuality, age, and disability, including women, LGBTQ individuals, ethnic minorities, minors, and persons with disabilities. At Clemson, she leads the Gaming and Mediated Experience Lab (CUGAME). She has authored over 80 peer-reviewed publications and won multiple Best Paper Honorable Mentions (top 5

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