Field Experiments and Experiments with Non-Standard Subjects

November 18-19, 2021

Gather.Town User Guide

Introduction

Gather.Town is a virtual space that enables attendees to interact effectively online, combining video-calling with a 2D map, and letting attendees walk around and talk to other attendees next to them. You have an avatar that moves around a simple map space. As you get close to other avatars, your video will pop up and you will be able to chat with people nearby.

Before joining Gather.Town, please mute yourself in any other meeting tool or leave the other meeting to avoid sound interference. Note that you do not need to download and/or install any software - Gather.Town is fully browser-based. You can access the online venue at any time by clicking on the meeting link and leave the gathering at any time by simply closing your browser or browser tab.

When entering Gather.Town, please enter your full name and choose an avatar to your liking. The avatar can be adjusted to your preferences and - since your name will be shown in Gather.Town - the depiction of your avatar has no effect on people recognizing you. When you enter the virtual venue, please make sure to grant Gather.Town access to your microphone and video device.

You can walk around Gather.Town using the arrow keys on your keyboard (like in a simple Arcade game) or by double-clicking on a spot on the map you want to go to. Your microphone and video will automatically start sharing if you move in close proximity of another attendee's avatar. Thus, by moving your avatar around you can have spontaneous conversations with those around you. If you do not want to participate in conversations, you can press "g" and keep it pressed to "become a ghost". In this case, you will not be involved in any conversations while moving around, and you will be able to pass through others - the latter functionality is very useful in crowded spaces.

The Workshop Space

The map space for the workshop will consist of several rooms: a foyer, a lounge, an auditorium (where all the presentations will take place), and several break-out rooms. When entering the auditorium, please use one of the chairs – then, you are automatically muted to not disturb others.

Private spaces. All over Gather.Town there are areas which are designated as "private spaces". Everyone who is in such a "private space" can engage in a conversation, that will not be heard by people outside this "private space". However, once a colleague enters he:she:they will become part of the conversation. Such "private spaces" are ideal for the coffee break or the after-conference beer.

Interactive objects. There are several interactive objects in a Gather.town space. To interact with such an object, simply approach it press "x" on your keyboard when prompted. The object (e.g., the workshop program as a PDF file) will then appear in full screen. To stop interacting with the object, click on the close icon at the top right of the window and walk outside of the interaction zone.

Quiet mode. In Quiet Mode, you will only send and receive audio and video from others if they are immediately next to you (including diagonals). This will greatly reduce the number of videos you will see and interactions you will have. You can toggle this on and off from the User Control Menu found by clicking on your name on the blue bar at the bottom of your screen or by using the mapped hotkey (Ctrl/⌘ + u). When you are in quiet mode, your status indicator will turn red both on your icon and on your name over your avatar's head.

Looking for a colleague? If you are looking for a specific workshop participant, you can either "follow" him:her or "locate him:her on the map". For either of these two options, look up the participant in the participant list on the left and click on his:her name. Click on "Follow" and your avatar will automatically walk to that person's location (without having to guide it); alternatively, choose "locate on map" and you'll see a colored brick road to follow to reach this person. Once you have reached the person, click on his:her name again and click on "stop following" or "stop locating".

Chat. There are three levels for chatting with other participants: Everyone, Nearby and Private. To select the chat level, go in the chat panel and click on the arrow next to "To" (a drop-down list will appear). To ask questions on a presentation, please use the "everyone" chat or forward your question to the chair via the private chat.

- » <u>"Nearby" chat</u>: Messages sent here are only seen by the people you are currently connected to. They will appear in pink in your chat panel. Users will have different local chat histories, based on who they were chatting with. New users joining a space do not see the local chat histories.

- » <u>"Everyone" chat</u>: Messages here are sent to everyone in the room. They will appear in green in your chat panel. New users joining a space do not see the global chat history.

- » <u>Private chat</u>: To chat privately with another attendee, go to the participant list on the left and click on his:her name. These messages are only seen by you and your collocutor. Once sent, they will appear in yellow in your chat panel.

Relevant information for presenters

Podium. The podium feature enables you to address the entire room at the same time. Note that this feature is reserved for speakers and session chairs. In order to present, please go to the podium (at the top of the auditorium) and place your avatar on the orange spot. When standing on the spot, your audio and video will be automatically broadcasted to the entire room.

Screenshare. To share your screen, click on the screen symbol at the bottom of your screen. If you want this shared screen to be full screen, just double-click on it. Whoever you are connected to on video will see your screenshare. This is either the avatars close to you or everyone in the room if you are standing at a podium. Depending on your settings, you might be asked to grant access to Gather.Town before being able to share.

Settings

Technical issues: Refreshing the page will fix most issues. If that doesn't work, try muting and unmuting your mic and camera in Gather.Town. Make sure that your browser has permitted camera and microphone access (see below) and that your camera isn't open in another app.

Video and audio settings. If you encounter problems with your sound or video, click on your name in the menu bar and then on "User/Video Preferences". You will then be able to select a different input. Since the settings depend on your devices and computer settings, we would like to refer to the nice and short introduction available here. More details on the browser settings and necessary permissions can be found here and - in case of trouble-shooting - here.

Auto-muting and auto camera-disable. Note that Gather.Town's auto-muting will trigger whenever you are not on the Gather.Town tab in your browser and/or not connected to at least one unmuted person. When you return to your Gather.Town browser tab or if you are connected to at least one unmuted participant, you will automatically be unmuted and your camera will turn back on.

Further information. For further information on the functions in Gather.Town, please refer to the two official help documents: Gather 101 and Gather 102. We also recommend using the walkthrough on the Gather.Town website where you can familiarize yourself with the environment and Gather.Town's functionalities.

If you have any further questions, please contact us at eaye2021@uibk.ac.at.