

UN Virtual Worlds Day 2026

Geneva, 11-12 May 2026



The Trust Gap: AI Bias & Avoiding Prejudice

Pilar Orero ·

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona



AI Is Data-Driven and Data Is Biased

Artificial intelligence does not exist in a vacuum. It is trained on data produced by social institutions: cities, governments, law enforcement, the criminal justice system, and the media, all of which carry embedded historical inequities.

⚠️ A lack of trust can prevent even the most egalitarian individual from behaving in a fully egalitarian way and AI systems are no different.

Why Bias Exists and Why It Persists

Bias enables people and systems to navigate complex environments by **speeding up decision-making** in uncertain situations. Understanding its function is the first step to addressing it.

Social Connection & Familiarity

We trust what feels familiar. AI systems trained on biased social patterns replicate those preferences at scale.

Reduces Uncertainty

Shortcuts reduce cognitive load but they also shortcut fairness, compressing nuance into flawed generalizations.

Leveraging Social Proof

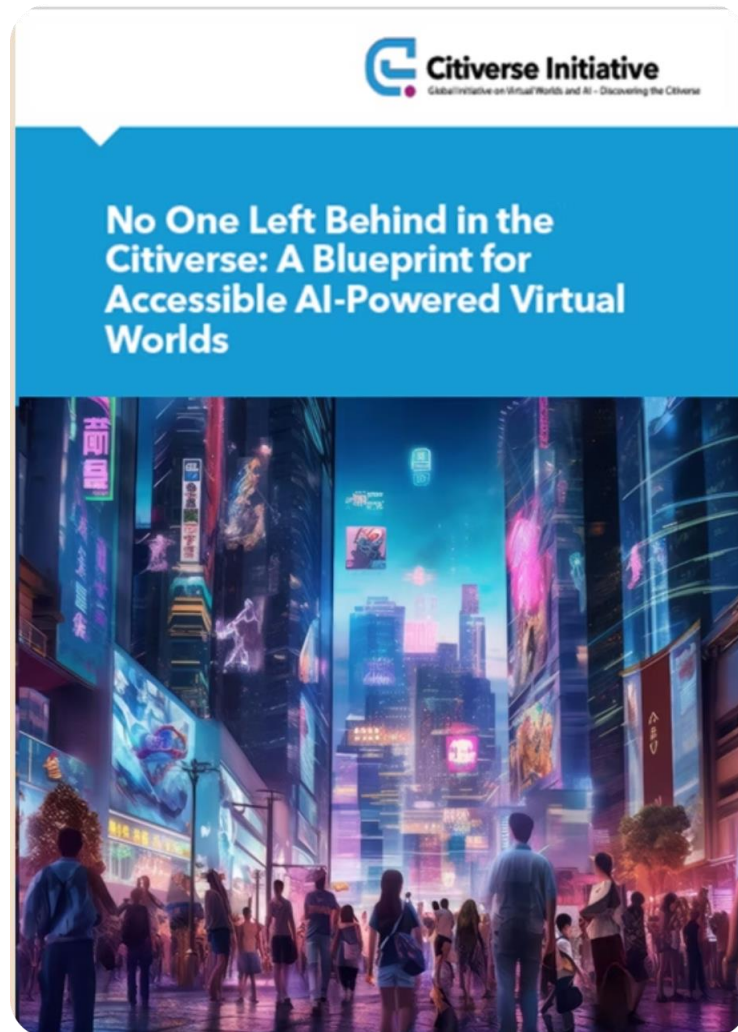
Systems defer to majority patterns, systematically marginalizing minority or underrepresented groups in the process.



ALFIE has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement N° 101177912.

Discovering the AI-enabled Citiverse: Digital Inclusion in Action

Track 3 of the Global Initiative on AI & Virtual Worlds - Discovering the Citiverse focuses on Digital Inclusion and Accessibility ensuring no one is left behind as immersive AI-powered environments reshape civic life. The Citiverse Initiative was launched by ITU, UNICC, Digital Dubai and is now supported by 70+ partners.



Key Deliverables

No One Left Behind in the Citiverse

A blueprint for accessible AI-powered virtual worlds.

Human-Centred Governance

Approaches for AI-enabled digital ecosystems.

Technical Reports

1. Technical Report on Framework for Accessible Interactions in Immersive Environments and Virtual Worlds
2. Technical Report on Tools for Accessible Interactions in Immersive Environments and Virtual Worlds

See: www.itu.int/metaverse/virtual-worlds/



Thank You

Pilar Orero · UN Virtual Worlds Day 2026 · 11–12 May 2026

Building trust in AI begins with confronting bias in our data, our systems, and ourselves.