VR eXplorer

Special: 2D Tools

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BEYOND REMOTE

Tools for a Hybrid Worklife

2021

the WHY

In 2020, a group of curious people met regularly to explore VR- and 3D-worlds with the emphasize on virtual meetings and events.
In 2021, the journey of the #VRExplorer team continues; now testing new tools.

Our approach is to test new possibilities for online meetings and collaboration. While the world got used to meet in 2D-tools like Zoom, Webex, MS Teams etc. during the pandemic, we think the next step will follow soon: To gather, communicate and collaborate in VR- and 3D-environments.

We are passionate explorers of new possibilities with the aim to share our knowledge - because #sharingiscaring.

Why 2D tools?

While we usually explore VR and 3D worlds, we don't exclude 2D solutions at all.

Why? Because the use of 3D tools often requires to install a client; mostly not allowed in the corporate environment due to security and data protection concerns.

For that, 2D tools are an easy alternative:
No extra equipment, mostly running on desktops via browser-entry, and easy in handling.

what to expect

Interested in taking your meetings and events beyond simple video conferencing?

Then this Guidebook is for you.

You will find an introductory overview of several **2D Tools** containing the following infos:

- Name of provider
- URL
- Main features (incl. infos from homepage)
- Pros and cons of tool
- What are use cases the tool could be applied for?
- Screenshots with short descriptions
- Facts

THE TOOLS

Overview of Various 3D and VR tools

2D
WORLDS

2D worlds are bridging the gap between video conferencing tools like Zoom, MS Teams, etc. and fully-fledged 3D/VR worlds. They are usually very easily accessible via browser and users do not have to sign in. Users are often displayed as little avatars and via an additional webcam feed as soon as they move closer to each other. The difference of 2D worlds usually lies in the graphic set-up and the number of possible participants.

The following pages contain the free versions of all tools only.

For infos regarding the premium versions please check the homepage of the respective tool.
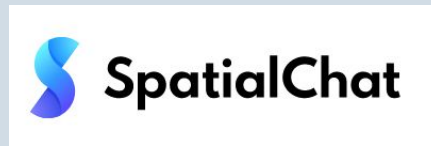
2D worlds tested in 2021:

Trember

Wonder.me

Spatialchat

WorkAdventure

2D WORLDS

Time of testing:
July - December 2021

TREMBER

Time of testing: July 2021

https://www.trember.com/

Features:

- Huge range of backgrounds, including photographs and abstract pictures
- Monochrome background available as whiteboard function
- External pictures can be imported as background as well
- Free-hand drawing on background
- Chat available including emojis and adding attachments
- Free positioning of video via drag & drop
- Easy integration of pictures and videos
- Screensharing possible
- 3 different audio options via templates:
  - All users can hear all users
  - Audio proximity mode for conversations in small groups
  - Stage view mode for presentations including raise hand option
- Room can be prepared for a meeting; will stay the same after leaving → can be used for synchronous/asynchronous work or a series of workshops

PROS

- Very easy to set up, enter and share rooms
- No registration needed, not even from the admin/host
- Video and audio quality ok

CONS

- Stage view mode didn't function properly in our test

Use Cases:

Socializing
Basic collaboration
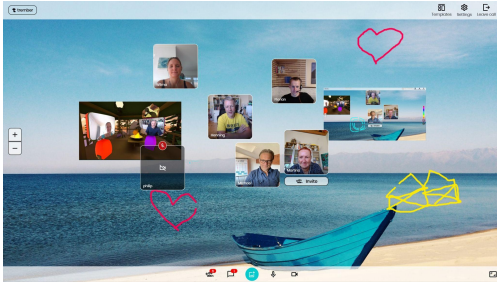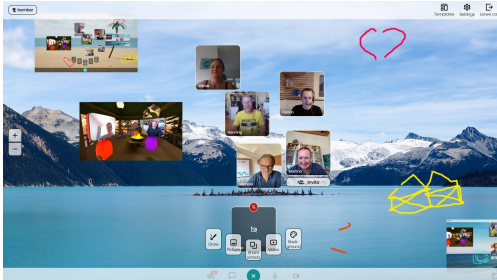Talking/Exchanging in small groups
Meetings
Workshops

Trember provides a range of different backgrounds

Tool menu within Trember

Pictures and videos can easily be embedded in the screen
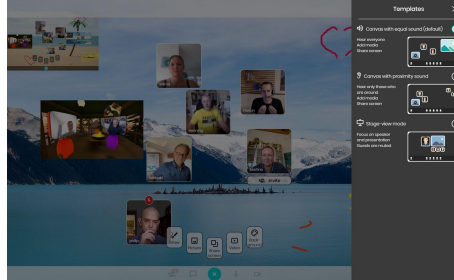
Different templates are offered with different audio options

Drawing is another creative opportunity in Trember

The stage-view mode for speaker presentations

TREMBER
Screenshots/Facts

- **System requirements:**
  All devices possible, but full functionality on desktop only
- **Access:**
  - Browser-based: Google Chrome and Firefox
  - No registration needed
- **Server location:**
  Germany
- **Conditions:**
  Up to 25 users per room
- **Administration:**
  One first user needed to open a room and share the link, will have some additional options as host
- **Company Location:**
  Berlin, Germany
- **Support/FAQ:**
  https://www.trember.com/faq

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WONDER.ME

Time of testing: August/ December 2021

https://wonder.me/

Features:

- Owner of space/host can set password for entry
- Range of backgrounds, including photographs and abstract pictures
- External pictures can be imported as background as well
- Screensharing possible
- Chat available, can be used for all participants, circles and private messages
- Icebreaker question can be added for users when entering the room
- User is shown via photo taken by laptop camera for navigating, when entering a circle the videostream starts
- Via broadcast mode the host can speak to all participants at once
- A space can host up to 500 users; a space can have 15 areas as meeting possibilities
- Meeting of two avatars opens a circle, a circle can include up to 14 people

PROS

- Easy to share link to invite others
- Easy to use and navigate
- Great tool for simple socializing or barcamp settings
- Protected via password

CONS

- No options for collaboration (only audio and broadcasting function available)
- Circles and areas can be a bit confusing

Use Cases:

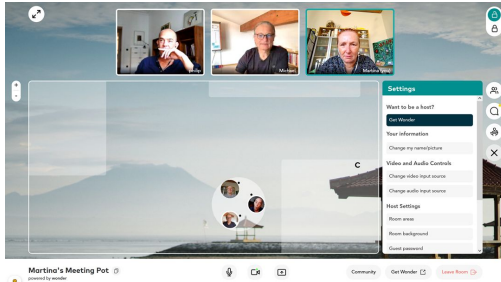Socializing
Talking/Exchanging in small groups
Meetings
Barcamps

Wonder provides a range of different backgrounds

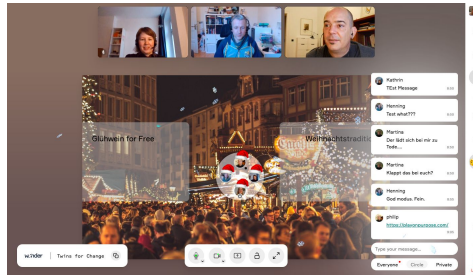Broadcast functionality with up to 7 speakers

Opening up a circle by meeting other avatars automatically starts the videostreaming and locks the audio to the circle

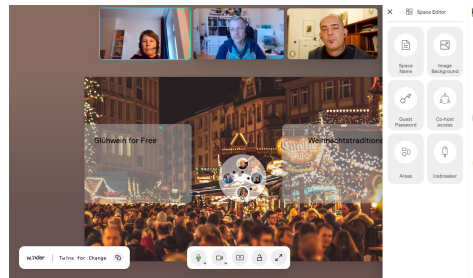Screensharing available via menu bar; circle can be locked to stay in private conversation

Different chat modi available for communication

Host menu with additional features

WONDER.ME
Screenshots/Facts

- **System requirements:**
  PC Desktop
- **Access:**
  - Browser-based: Google Chrome, Firefox or Microsoft Edge
  - No registration needed
- **Server location:**
  AWS servers located in Ireland
- **Conditions:**
  Up to 500 users in one space
- **Administration:**
  One user needs to register to open a room and share the link, will have some additional options as host
- **Company Location:**
  Berlin, Germany
- **Support/FAQ:**
  https://help.wonder.me/en/

SPATIALCHAT

Time of testing: October 2021

https://spatial.chat/

Features:

- Enormous gallery of backgrounds, including photographs, illustrations and abstract pictures
- External pictures can be imported as background as well
- Dynamic volume - users hear others according to their distance to them
- Via megaphone function a user can be heard all across the room; via broadcast the user will be seen and heard by all
- Chat available for room or direct conversations
- Approaching another user starts the video stream
- Easy integration of pictures, videos, gifs, text, Miro and Google docs
- Screensharing possible
- Search for a person by typing the name; clicking on the name will move the user directly to this person
- User can be shown via video, photo or initial
- Locking of space via password possible

PROS

- Easy to use and navigate
- Password protection possible
- Video quality ok, audio quality very good

CONS

- No options for collaboration, as whiteboards or notes are missing

Use Cases:

Socializing
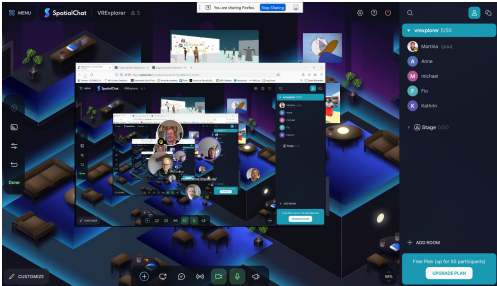Basic collaboration
Talking/Exchanging in small groups
Meetings
Networking
Speed Dating
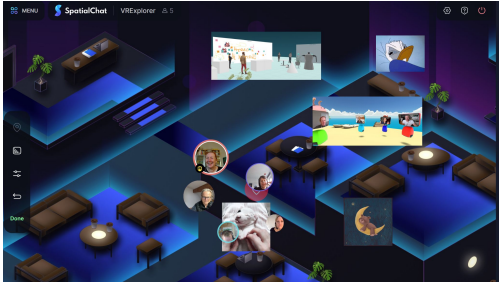
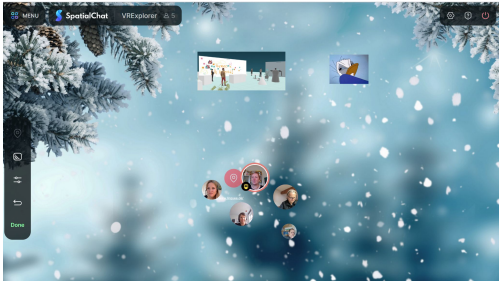Approaching other users starts the video streaming

Screensharing possible

Pictures, videos, gifs, text, Miro and Google docs can easily be added

Stage modus for speakers available; title and description can be added

Huge gallery of backgrounds available

Reactions available; chat for room and as direct conversation possible

SPATIALCHAT
Screenshots/Facts

- **System requirements:**
  Mobile devices possible, but full functionality on desktop only
- **Access:**
  - Browser-based: Google Chrome, Firefox, Microsoft Edge, Safari, Opera
  - No registration needed
- **Server location:**
  AWS servers located in Ireland
- **Conditions:**
  Up to 50 users per room
- **Administration:**
  One user needs to register to open a room and share the link, will have some additional options as host
- **Company Location:**
  Cyprus
- **Support/FAQ:**
  https://help.spatial.chat/hc/en-us

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Time of testing: November 2021

https://workadventu.re/

Features:

- Web-based collaborative workspace presented in the form of a 16-bit video game
- Different ready-to-go maps available for different amounts of users; set up of own maps possible as well via a documentation
- User acts as avatar moving in the environment
- Entering designated meeting rooms in a map automatically starts a video conference via Jitsi
- Additional features when using a meeting room: screensharing, room chat, emojis, create polls, share documents, show videos
- Chat for the whole map available
- Silent zones in maps possible to be not distracted by others
- Approaching another avatar starts the video stream

PROS

- Easy to use and navigate
- Automatic connection to Jitsi in meeting rooms
- Creating you own setting is possible
- Additional gamification elements (e.g. Yeti sensation)

CONS

- Only a maximum of four people can talk to each other at the same time
- Partly problems with video feed/ bandwidth during our test

Use Cases:

Socializing
Co-working
Basic collaboration
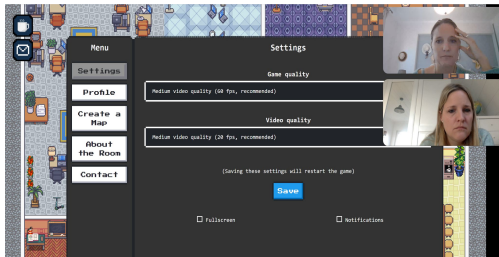Talking/Exchanging in small groups up to 4
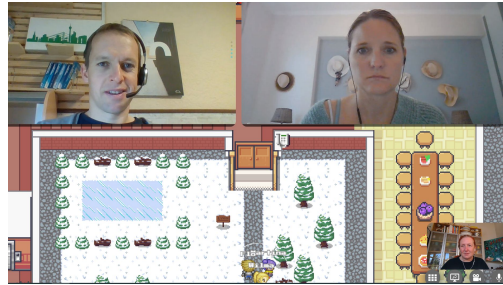Meetings

WORK ADVENTURE
Screenshots/Facts

Virtual office with different rooms for socializing and coworking
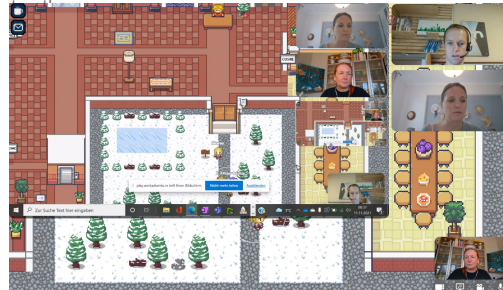

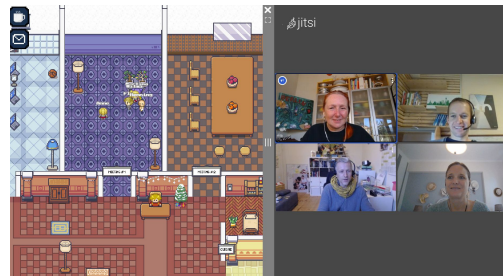Entry point for all avatars: the garden

Settings menu

Automatic voice and video connection when avatars move closer

Virtual co-working and ad-hoc meetings in the office rooms

Automatic connection to Jitsi Meetings in the designated meeting rooms with additional functionalities

- **System requirements:**
  Desktop Mac, Linux, Windows; mobile devices possible as well
- **Server location:**
  AWS servers located in Ireland, OVH data center France
- **Conditions:**
  Up to 25 users
- **Administration:**
  One user needs to register to open a room and share the link, will have some additional options as host
- **Company Location:**
  Paris, France
- **Support/FAQ:**
  https://workadventu.re/faq