**Two human beans who believe in VR and the power of friendship™**

(insert ROVR profiles, which will show our profile tags, quick bio, etc.)

**We’re kinda misfits.**

Serious talk:

**Why did we make ROVR? Because loneliness is universal.**

Six out of ten US adults, and eight out of ten Gen Z, say they feel lonely most days of the week (source). Even if you’re not American, this probably means that you feel lonely pretty often.

Science says loneliness comes from three things: 1) **lack of close relationships** (like friendships, romantic partners, or family), 2) **lack of** **fulfilling social interactions**, and 3) **lack of** **belonging**, which comes from identity and community.

**Our sob stories**

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Anthony moved a lot as a kid **(RIP early friendships).** He’s also spent a long time in the closet as a gay guy **(lack of belonging)**, and between different cultures **(lack of belonging).**

Kyle has always been quirky **(lack of belonging)**. A few years ago, he moved far away from home for a job and became very socially isolated **(lack of fulfilling social interactions)**.

Like you, we know what it’s like to be lonely.

In 2018, Kyle bought a VR headset. This helped him keep in touch with his old friends and make new ones from all around the world. Then in 2020, Kyle brought Anthony to VR.

Since then we’ve spent 3000 hours with people in VR (mostly VRChat). We’ve made 18 good friends, who’d we’d invite to our hypothetical weddings. We’ve even experienced a few romantic relationships.

VR has really changed our lives, y’know.

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**How VR fights loneliness.**

VR lets you feel the presence of other people across any distance. It’s quality social interaction, better than what messaging, audio, Zoom, or even video games can provide.

A VR social network could help you increase the time you spend with other people. It could help you make new friends who share your passions, quirks, or background from anywhere in the world. It could help strengthen your existing friendships (and even find love).

Imagine a place™ you could belong, be real, be known, and be yourself.

That’s the kind of social network we want to make.

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Our Principles.

Product Roadmap.

We’ve thought long and hard about our principles. We believe these will make ROVR a better and more human kind of Social Network.

1. **“Experience” over “Content”.** VR lets you interact with real people in real-time, in a pretty real way. Why binge other people’s photos, posts, and videos when you can spend quality time with interesting people and friends instead?ROVR encourages the best parts of Social VR: meeting cool people from all over the world, hanging out with your friends, and exploring new things together.
2. **“Happiness” over “Retention”**. “User retention” is what every social media site considers success. The more time and attention you give them, the more money they make through ads, micro-transactions, or premium features. But ROVR is not here to waste your time. We won’t use addictive measures like push notifications, or casino-like design. Your happiness (however you define that) is our priority. And we think that has something to do with fulfilling social interactions, friendships, and community.
3. **No Tracking, No Targeted Ads**. You are not a product. You are a person, and privacy is your right. We respect that. You can look at your data rights on ROVR here.
4. **Open Algorithm**. Social algorithms dictate what you see online, who you meet, how “popular” you are, and generally stress people out. ROVR’s algorithm will be fully transparent and understandable. This holds us accountable to your needs and rights, and helps us better serve you.
5. **Open Source**. This proves everything else above: an open-source code keeps us transparent, accountable, and secure. It means other developers can see what we’re doing, suggest changes, copy parts of our code for their own use, and integrate their own VR apps and games into ROVR. Open source means we’re against big corporations owning VR: we want VR to be led by, and made by, the people who care most about it.

These principles will guide us as we build the social network – and social infrastructure – of VR. We came to these five principles after spending 3000 hours with people in VR, learning from the experts (including the works of Phillip Rosedale, Shosana Zuboff, Jaron Lanier, Nicholas Carr, and yup, The Social Dilemma documentary), and generally just being internet people.

We’re still learning. We’ll further develop these principles as we talk with our users and the early VR community.

Thanks for reading. If you want to get more involved or tell us what you think about all this, contact us (we’re pretty friendly).

About Us.

Product Roadmap.

**Product Roadmap**

What should a VR Social Network look like? We think it should help people:

* Spend time socializing in VR
* Strengthen existing friendships
* Make new friends
* Find and build community

Here’s our plan to make these things happen.

**Closed Beta: Imagine a Profile**

Your ROVR profile is a way to:

* Easily let people know about your interests, backgrounds, passions, communities etc.
* Start chatting about things you share in common
* Get to know your friends better
* Give strangers a quick vibe check
* Direct people to your other accounts and usernames (i.e. Twitter, Discord, Steam, VRChat)

Your ROVR profile combines your virtual and IRL identity. You can select general tags, and then input up to custom tags of anything that makes you, you (SFW).

Currently, your ROVR profile is public. We’ll be adding visibility settings soon, so you can distinguish between what anyone can see versus what your friends can see.

ROVR profiles are in closed beta. Join the waitlist or ask around for an invite code.

**Coming Soon: The Guest List**

VR lets you meet really interesting and friendly people from all over the world. But, sometimes it’s to do that. Public servers are chaotic. There are trolls, intimidating and loud groups, or worse, screaming children everywhere.

And, since most of your IRL friends don’t have VR yet, it’s hard to meet people through mutual friends.

That’s why we're building the ROVR Guest List. Your Guest List wil introduce you to few people who share profile tags and/or mutual friends in common with you. If you both wave at each other, you can add them as a friend on ROVR, message each other, and hang out in VR easily.

VR is a brave new world: it’s dangerous to go alone™.

We’ll share more about our social algorithm soon, too. It will be open and understandable.

**Coming Soon: Messaging, Events, Community, and More**

We plan to launch the Guest List along with Messaging. Messaging will be encrypted end-to-end, so you can send memes with ease.

After that we're launching Events, which lets you create and join VR and crossplay events across any VR app/game. This will work for both planned events (like birthdays), recurring events (like watch parties), LFG (for gaming), and spontaneous hangouts. Moot.gg did this pretty well for awhile for gamers, but then it was bought and destroyed by the corpos™.

Finally, we'll build out Community Groups. This is a tough one. We want it to be more personal and less hive-mind-y than Reddit. Also, we want it to less spammy and chaotic than large Discord servers. The goal should be hanging out and spending time in VR with people, not lurking in threads or chats.

Any recommendations?

**Does VR need a social feed?**

We don’t like social feeds (newsfeeds, photos feeds, etc.) because they waste your time and generally make you feel worse: they make the internet a popularity contest. It’s not fulfilling social interaction. But people do want to stay in the know of what’s happening with their friends. We’re not sure: what should a social feed for Social VR look like? Let us know.

If you’ve read this far, thanks <3 As you can tell, we’ve thought a lot about these things. If you want to help us build and plan out ROVR, contact us. We’ll also set up a Discord soon.

If you’re a creator - a game dev, designer, streamer, a Youtuber, or any kind of influencer - fill out this form to join our Partners page. It’s pretty chill. You don’t have to do much, but you’ll also get access to the Partners channel in our Discord. Also, we’ll send you a beta key. Thanks for making VR an awesome and creative place.

Unlike other social media sites, ROVR is not here to waste your time, turn life into a popularity contest, or make people more toxic.

We’ve thought long and hard about our principles. We believe these will make ROVR a better and more human kind of Social Network.

* **“Experience”, not “Content”.** VR lets you interact with real people in real-time, in a pretty real way. Why binge other people’s photos, posts, and videos when you can spend quality time with interesting people and friends instead?ROVR encourages the best parts of Social VR: meeting cool people from all over the world and exploring new things with your friends.
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* **No Tracking, No Targeted Ads**. You are not a product. You are a person, and privacy is your right. We respect that. You can look at your data rights on ROVR here.
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* **Open Source**. This proves everything else above: an open-source code keeps us transparent, accountable, and secure. It means other developers can see what we’re doing, suggest changes, copy parts of our code for their own use, and integrate their own VR apps and games into ROVR. Open source means we’re against any one corporation owning VR: we want VR to be led by, and made by, the people who care most about it. Not big corporations.

We came to these principles after spending thousands of hours talking to people in VR, learning from the experts (Surveillance Capitalism, Ten Reasons to Delete Your Social Media, The Shallows, and, yes, The Social Dilemma), and getting tired of most social media sites as general internet people.

Of course, we’re still learning. We’ll add more principles as we talk with the VR community, and clarify our thinking on these principles as we build and grow ROVR. Check out our Product Roadmap.

Thanks for reading. If you want to get more involved, or tell us your thoughts, contact us. We’re pretty friendly.

We’re two friends who love VR. We’ve spent thousands of thousands in Social VR, mostly VRChat. Along the way we’ve met people from all over the world, made great friends, and even fallen in love a few times (with other people). Now we want to help people make great memories and communities in VR. We believe in the power of friendship™.

We want to make sure VR stays open and welcoming, not dominated by any one corporation. **About us.**

The internet has a lot of problems. A lot of those problems are because of social media platforms. So, we want to build a better social network: one that is non-addictive, non-toxic, non-stressful. A human social network. Maybe even a humanist one.

It’s really not rocket science. Twitter could be made by 5 good developers: instead, it employs 500.

All a social network really does is connect people. It’s social infrastructure, and should be treated like that.

FAQ

**How will you make money?**

How can we sustain ROVR, support an open, human, and connected Metaverse, help our users, and still make money ethically? For ROVR, we think this is a combination of **customization** (like Steam profiles)and **nice-to-have features** (like Discord Nitro), **community boosts** (like Reddit), and **transaction fees** for future marketplaces (like Gumroad).

***Can you actually pull this off?***

* Check out our About Us page and decide for yourself.

***Why not decentralized?***

* A lot of key functions fall apart if you don’t have centralization
* Like matchmaking, user-created events, and community groups where everyone can join
* Centralization, at it’s best, is a kind of public commons… a way for people to interact with people and ideas they usually wouldn’t interact with. It’s the front page of reddit.
  + Reddit is centralized… Discord is centralized...
* At its worst, its monopoly.
* So, we are FOR a decentralized Metaverse… and the only way to do that is with a centralized Social Network. We’re fighting against Facebook here ok.

***Why not anonymous?***

* *Not enforcing real names.*
* *Needs to have “skin in the game” to encourage prosocial behaviour.*

***How do you make money?***

* Good vs bad models
* Customized things… like Steam Profiles, etc.
* Extra features that aren’t mandatory… like Discord
* It’s okay if we don’t become a “Unicorn” or whatever. The goal really isn’t money. It’s more important than that: it’s human connection, community, identity, relationships. The most important things in your life.

***Why aren’t you a non-profit?***

“You Are Not a Product”

* NOT have a feed
* NOT have push notifications. These interrupt you, increase anxiety, and addictiveness, too.
* **Be asynchronous?** You can check on your friends from time to time, when you feel like it, not when some app tells you to. If you need to get in touch with someone more real time, then you can use any chat app, there are billions available out there
* **NO POPULARITY CONTESTS (NO STATUS GAMES).** NOT have any mindless actions. “Like” buttons for instance, require extreme low effort, causing people to actually interact less with friends, also leading to social approval bias and anxieties
* **NO WINNERS TAKE ALL EFFECTS.** NOT promote popular content, causing it to be even more popular. This got us memes and viral content, but it also leads to extreme views being more spread, as those get stronger reaction from people naturally, they will be shared more and more
* **LIMITED SHARING. Have conscious shares.** Sharing a content shouldn’t be a simple click (no mindless actions), otherwise it leads to people sharing too much others’ content instead of their own ideas, and you end up reading not about your friends, but just news and memes

*Be fun! Fun to use, play around, talk to your friends, after all this is what you are there for*

**Product Roadmap**

What will a VR Social Network need to help people socialize in VR, strengthen old friendships and make new ones, and build community? We invite you to help us think about this. Based on what we know now, here’s our plan.

**Imagine a Profile**

We're launching with ROVR profiles.

Your ROVR profile is a way to:

* Easily let people know about your interests, backgrounds, passions, communities etc.
* Start chatting about things you share in common
* Get to know your friends better
* Give strangers a quick vibe check
* Direct people to your other accounts and usernames (i.e. Twitter, Discord, Steam, VRChat)

The goal is to showcase your quirks, but make you relatable to friends and people you meet in VR. Your custom profile tags will showcase what is unique about you, while the general tags you select help people get to know you, find things to talk about, or hang out in VR.

* It’s hard to keep track of all the people you meet across different VR apps, games, or on the internet
* Existing social media profiles don’t tell you enough
* Writing a good bio is way too hard (just select tags instead)
* It can be too intense to ask for someone’s contact info or IRL profiles right away. So, send them your ROVR profile instead!

Right now, your ROVR profile is public. We’ll be adding visibility settings soon, so you can distinguish between what anyone can see versus what your friends can see.

Your ROVR profile combines your virtual and IRL identity.

**The Guest List**

VR lets you meet really interesting and friendly people from all over the world. But, sometimes it’s to do that. Public servers are chaotic. There are trolls, intimidating and loud groups, or worse, screaming children everywhere.

Meanwhile, private servers are way too exclusive. And since most of your IRL friends won’t have VR yet, it’s hard to meet people through mutual friends.

So what do you?

That’s why we're building the ROVR Guest List. Your Guest List wil introduce you to few people who share profile tags and/or mutual friends in common with you. If you both wave at each other, you can add them as a friend on ROVR, message each other, and hang out in VR easily.

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**Two human beans who believe in VR and the power of friendship™**

(insert ROVR profiles)

**We’re kinda misfits.**

Serious talk:

**Loneliness is universal.**

Six out of ten US adults, and eight out of ten Gen Z, say they feel lonely most days of the week (source). Even if you’re not American, this probably means that you -- yes, you -- feel lonely. Often.

Science says loneliness comes from three things: 1) **lack of close relationships** (like friendships, romantic partners, or family), 2) **lack of** **fulfilling social interactions**, and 3) **lack of** **belonging**, which comes from identity and community.

**Our sob stories**

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Anthony moved a lot as a kid **(RIP early friendships).** He’s also spent a long time in the closet as a gay guy **(lack of belonging)**, and is part of a few different cultures **(lack of belonging).**

Kyle has always been quirky **(lack of belonging)**. A few years ago, he moved far away from home for a job and became very socially isolated **(lack of fulfilling social interactions)**.

We, like you, know what it’s like to be lonely.

In 2018, Kyle bought a VR headset. This helped him keep in touch with his old friends and make new ones from all around the world. Then in 2020, Kyle brought Anthony to VR.

We’ve spent 3000 hours with people in VR (mostly VRChat). We’ve made 18 good friends (as in, people we’d invite to our hypothetical weddings). We’ve even experienced a few romantic relationships.

VR has really changed our lives, y’know.

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**How VR fights loneliness.**

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Imagine a place™ you could belong, be real, be known, and be yourself.

That’s the kind of social network we want to make.

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It’s not rocket science @Elon Musk.

~~The thing is, we might have these things, but we aren’t experiencing them, whether due to having no time from work, school, or feeling stress, depressed, anxious, unwanted, and unloveable.~~

~~Vivek Murthy, former American US Surgeon General, wrote a book about loneliness and made it his central aim during his time in office. The National Health ministry in the UK has defined loneliness as an “epidemic”, and budgeted billions to fighting it (they’re losing).~~

~~And all this was~~ *~~before~~* ~~the COVID pandemic.~~

~~People, we are facing a crisis in loneliness.~~

**Most social networking sites are part of the problem.**

Anthony is working on an essay on this.

In short, you can probably sense that popularity contests on Instagram, echo chambers on Facebook and Twitter, binging content on TikTok and Youtube, and spending more time watching Twitch streamers and Youtubers might distract you from life, make you happy in the short term… but in the long term is makes you lonelier and makes society more toxic.

ROVR is here to be part of the solution™.

Further reading:

The Social Dilemma, .

The Shallows, .

Ten Reasons to Delete Your Social Media, Jaron Lanier.

Surveillance Capitalism, Zuboff.

**We love VR.**

(ROVR profiles attached)

**Serious talk:**

**ROVR is made by and for VR users: the people, game devs, artists, community managers and content creators that make VR a special place today.**

**Our vision for VR is an archipelago of unique cultures and experiences connected by their shared humanity. We believe that encouraging friendships and community between people all over the world are the way to get there.**

**Our vision for VR is a true global village: a humanity connected by everyday friendship and community, beyond borders, and beyond the divisions of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and prejudice.**

**Our plan is to build out open, scalable, and user-aligned social infrastructure for VR.**

**Our mission is to make VR more human, more open, and more connected. This is very important as large corporations (especially You Know Who™) pour billions of dollars into monopolizing VR.**

**We love VR. We’ve spent thousands of hours in VRChat and other Social VR apps. We’ve made good friends, met many interesting people from around the world, and even fallen in love a few times (with other people).  
  
With VR, we can create a space that is more human, more creative, and more social than any other technology in history. We can break free of the limits of text, audio, and video. We can overcome internet toxicity and popularity contests: we can be who we want to be, we can do what we want to do, we can spend quality time with the people we care about.**

**We can be more human.**

**That’s the potential we see in VR. And that’s the point of ROVR: to give you the social tools to grow and strengthen your friendships and your community. Not just in VR, or over the internet, but in general. IRL, if you will.**

**VR lets you have more fulfilling interactions and relationships across any distance.**

**We can strengthen bonds with people we know, and make friends with people we don’t know (yet).**

*What if you could spend more time socializing, instead of reading, watching, or grinding internet content?*

*What if you could make close friends, build a community, even fall in love, across any distance?*

*What if the internet could bring different groups of people together, instead of making them enemies?*

**We think every VR user -- which will soon be everyone -- should experience strong friendships and community.**

Our vision for VR: a place where you can be yourself, BE AND DO ANYTHING, and meet amazing people who’ll **accept you for you who you are.**

And that’s why we’re making ROVR.

We want to make VR m**ore friendly, more fun, and more free.**

**WE DONT WANT VR TO TAKE OVER YOUR LIFE.**

USER/PEOPLE FACING

**Ethos** - Our abilities/credibility… character, our story, who we are… (Vision)

* We’ve spent 3000 hours in VR, most of that in Social VR, and most of that in VRChat. We’ve made about 18 close friends (who we’d invite to our IRL weddings). We’ve even experienced a few romantic relationships (with other people).
* Kyle is a star developer and die-hard open-source guy who has seen more anime than 99.9% of the general population.
* Anthony has worked in data, design, and growth for business and government. He struggles with the fact that he graduated from the Harvard Business School of Canada. Also he’s a Philosophy Major™ and has a few sci-fi/fantasy novels he’s working on.
* Yep, we’re pretty weird c:

**Pathos** - Why we care, and who we are (Vision)

* Everyone should have the chance to join a **community** -- a group of friends, a team, a collection of people -- that cares about them.
* Everyone should have strong **friendships**, and the ways to contact and enrich those friendships over in the internet in a Real Way.
* Everyone should feel accepted for who they are. (**Inclusive**)

**Logos** - Functionality, logic, roadmap, gameplan (The Plan)

* Matchmaking (for friends, business connections, etc.)
* Events:
* Community Groups:
* Social Feed? >> replacing that with actual social interaction in VR. But maybe we can consider some of these elements.

PARTNER/INVESTOR FACING

**Ethos** - Our character, our story, who we are… (Vision)

**Pathos** - Why we care, and who we are (Vision)

**Logos** - Functionality, logic, roadmap, gameplan ()

We’ve spent thousands of hours in VR (mostly VRChat) and fallen in love a few times with people from all over the world. We’ve even met some of those people IRL. So, we know finding love in VR is possible (and friendship, and hookups).

We wanted to make a dating site the right way, which we think means:

* **Open-source**, so we’re transparent about how the site works, and you can keep us accountable. Developers can even help suggest fixes.
* **No tracking and no ads,** because no one should have the right to invade your privacy or sell your data. Unfortunately, most dating apps do that.
* **No paywalls on premium features** that profit off your insecurities and fears. VRLFP will stay free. If you want to support us, head over to our Patreon. You’ll get a *supporter badge* on your profile.
* **No bots,** which a lot of dating sites use, apparently.

**Happy Matching ❤**

*Most of our users play VRChat, but we're not going to stop you from meeting up in other VR games or IRL. Send us a success story if you’ve made a new friend, lover, or something in between from VRLFP.*

*VR combines the* ***best parts about the internet*** *(it lets you meet people from around the world) and* ***the best parts of******IRL*** *(it feels like face to face interaction).*

*We’re really tired of other dating apps and sites that are toxic, addictive, money-grabbing, and filled with the people you went to High School with.*

**WE HATE DATING APPS**

We got tired of Tinder, Bumble, Hinge, Grindr, Match, OkCupid… the list goes on.

* They “gamify” dating, and use addictive mechanisms to keep you hooked and unhappy.
* They waste your time through endless awkward messaging.
* The bios are usually boring, since everyone’s afraid to seem weird.
* Their matchmaking algorithms don’t really work. Or worse, they treat people like Chess players through an ELO system, turning online dating into a winners-take-all. (We’re still working on an algorithm ourselves, but it probably has something to do with sharing things in common. Stay tuned.)
* You probably shouldn’t meet up IRL right now because of COVID.

**DATING AND TECH**

The tech behind dating apps is really not that impressive. A few developers could have made Hinge, Tinder, Bumble, etc. So why are these companies so huge? Why aren’t they transparent about their algorithms? And why are they so full of ads, why do they steal user data, and why are there so many damn paywalls?

Because these are public corporations. They’re just here to make money. But, to be cheesy for a moment, **we think love and dating are too important to monetize.**

Online dating shouldn’t feel like shopping, or a part-time job. We shouldn’t treat people like products to swipe through, compare, and select. Instead it should feel natural.

**WHY VR DATING IS VERY HUMAN**

By not requiring IRL pictures, VR lets you understand someone as a person beyond just their looks. Skip the awkward messaging and talk in VR, get to know each other’s personality. Meet very different and interesting people around the world than you could in your town, city, school, or workplace IRL.

**WHY VRLFP IS FREE**

When a dating app tells you to buy premium, they are profiting off of your insecurities and fears of being alone. No thanks. VRLFP is open-source, and totally free. If you’d like to contribute, visit our Patreon.

# 

## **The team (maybe we should go into Stealth and not mention anyone)**

* [**Kyle Farwell**](https://vrlfp.net/user/kfarwell)
* **Anthony Tan**