



New Materialist Informatics

22–25 March 2021

Digital Conference Guide

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Dear participants,

Due to COVID-19 the New Materialist Informatics 2021 takes place online. To give you the best experience possible we have put together some information and external resources about the tools we are using for the conference.

The conference takes place on two venues: [Gathertown](#) and [Zoom](#).

Gathertown

Our conference takes place in a virtual 2D world called [Gathertown](#). There you can move around in your digital avatar, explore the space, and interact with it and its objects as well as with other participants through chat, audio and/or video. The structure of the space mirrors that of the conference “in real life” in that you will find panel rooms, the lecture hall and demonstration rooms via which to connect to Zoom, and you will be able to socialize with other participants.

How does it work?

You can join via your browser with login details that are communicated to the registered participants. There is also [a desktop app available for Windows and Mac](#), but it is still in its beta-phase.

The first time you join you can set your name and pronouns and get an avatar assigned to you, which you can customize now or later. You can allow Gathertown to access your microphone and camera and turn them on if you want to. You can also turn them on or off while visiting the space.

With your avatar you can move around in the conference space using your arrow keys, for example to get from one room to another. You can interact with some objects there by getting closer to them – if interaction is possible you get a notification to press a specific key on your keyboard. If you want to talk to people via audio and/or video, get closer to them (works for individuals as well as groups). If you move away from them your audio/video will get disconnected from theirs. You can also reach people via chat and write a message to everyone, nearby people or a specific user.

You can participate in our conference events (except for the workshops) through Gathertown – here the respective Zoom Rooms for each event are embedded and will open in a different window, while audio and video in Gathertown are automatically disabled. Look out for the call symbol to connect to a Zoom Room: 

Keyboard Shortcuts

- Interact with Objects (if available) by pressing “X” on your keyboard.
- Make your Avatar dance by pressing “Z” on your keyboard.
- Ghost Mode: If you are 'blocked in' by other people, you can use ghost mode to pass through them by holding down the "G" key on your keyboard as you move. This allows you to pass through tiles that are occupied by other people. Consequently, this means you can use Ghost Mode to have multiple people 'stack up' on the same tile.
- Quiet Mode: Press Ctrl and U (Windows) or ⌘ and U (Mac) to activate or disable Quiet Mode. In this mode you will only be able to hear those directly next to you.

Main Features

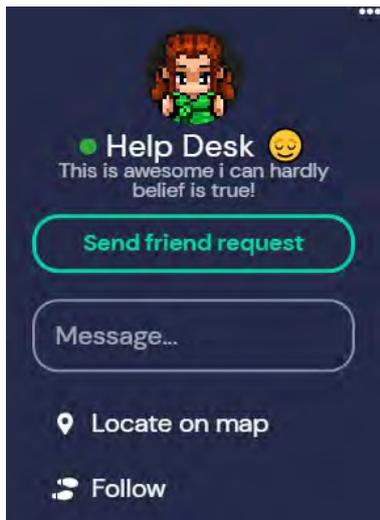
Your dashboard and main menu is on the left side of the screen. The most important functions here are: **Settings**, where you can set your device settings for camera and microphone, as well as function **respawn**, that will allow you to re-enter the world at the entrance point.

Actions

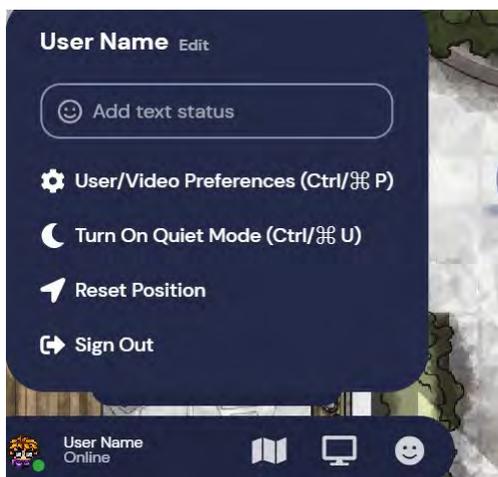
respawn

Chat function will allow you to chat to participants via text.

Participants list on the left hand-side menu will allow you to see participants in the space. Clicking on a participant's name will give you further functions to Send Friend Request, Chat, Follow (enables your avatar to automatically follow the selected participant while you are in the same room), Locate on Map.



Another menu at the very bottom of your screen has important functions too. Clicking on your user name there enables you to edit your user name, add status to be displayed in participants' list, reset our position to starting point, toggle preferences, turn on quiet mode and sign out.



The small map icon at the bottom allows you to see the map of the room that you are in, share screen and use reaction buttons.

What can you find on NMI Gathertown?

We customized our virtual world with offline conferences in mind to make moving around and orientating oneself not too complex. You can find a map of our world in the appendix of this Guide.

The first time joining our conference world your avatar will start at our **Entrance Point** (after that you will start where you left the world). There you can find our **Helpdesk** where you can get support and – our student assistants will be present at the Help Desk every day during the breaks. From the entry area you can navigate to the **Main Hall**, **Spa** and **Cafeteria**. You can take your lunch and coffee breaks in the **Cafeteria**, where you can socialize with other participants or participate in content related discussions on specific topics – you will see that there are designated discussion areas available. In the **Spa** space you will find interactive objects that encourage you to relax, dance, stretch and play. In the **Main Hall** you can get to our **exchange board** which you can use for introductions, sharing interesting stuff, 'search and find' et cetera. For all **events** except the workshops, we created rooms you can visit and participate in the events. These rooms are accessible through the **Main Hall** as well. There is our **Lecture Hall** in which the Opening and Closing, the Keynotes (KN) and the Roundtable (RT) take place. The Panels (PS) are hosted in our four **Panel Rooms** (A, B, C, D). The Demonstrations

(D) 2 and 3 are taking place in our **Demonstration Rooms** whereas Demo 1 happens in our **Library**. There you can also share your work with others and find out what other participants have published/created.

All around our world you will find **private spaces in seating areas**, where you can talk to the people who are together with you in the respective space whereas people outside those areas will not be able to connect to your audio/video.

Furthermore, you will find videos, pads and other resources and objects in our world – feel free to move around and explore!

Support

We offer two **Guided Tours** on Monday, 22 March, 1 pm and Tuesday, 23 March, 2 pm to introduce you to our conference world, show you around and explain the features but you can also explore the space alone or together with other participants. If you want to participate in our Guided Tour, please get to the **Starting Point** or navigate to the Guide (search for user “Guide” and in the participants list on the left side and click “Locate on map”). You can let your avatar follow the Guide automatically by clicking on “Follow”.

If you need support during the conference, we are available at our **Helpdesk** in Gathertown (user “Helpdesk”), during the breaks in the conference programme. You can go there and talk to us via audio and/or video or you can reach us via chat from everywhere (search for helpdesk in the participants list on the left side and write us a message or go to chat and write the message to helpdesk). Before and during the conference we are also reachable [via email](#).

Additional Resources

- [Gather.town](#) (official website where you can find more information about Gathertown and try it out for yourself)
- [Gather.town Help Center](#) (official website)
- [Gather 101](#) (official website, includes information about the avatar, audio and video calls, messaging et cetera)

Zoom

For the conference events we are using the video conference platform Zoom (University of Kassel Campus License). The URLs to the Zoom rooms for each event are embedded in Gathertown but can also be accessed independently if Gathertown is not accessible for you. For that, please see Conference Agenda in [ConfTool](#).

Please use the latest Zoom version to avoid technical issues. You can do that either by clicking on your Zoom Client Icon in the taskbar or by logging into your Zoom client and selecting “Look for updates” in the menu on the top left corner, where your profile is.

Support

If you need support regarding Zoom you can reach us [via email](#).

Additional Resources

- [Zoom](#) (official website)
- [Zoom Support](#) (official website)
- [Zoom @ University of Kassel](#) (the University of Kassel has created an overview of information about Zoom, including data privacy – sadly the information is only available in German)

Accessibility: Automated transcription and access copies

During this conference, **automated live captions (transcription)** will be enabled. To use it, please click on the "CC" button in the Zoom interface once you are in the Zoom room. Please be advised that for the purpose of automated transcription, the audio stream is routed to the third party provider Karlsruhe Information Technology Solutions - kites GmbH. The full privacy and personal rights of all participants are guaranteed by this company - for more information see here: <https://kites.lecture-translator.com/#/privacy>.

Apart from automated transcription, presenters were encouraged to upload **access copies and presentation files** to a server which the registered participants can access via a link provided to them. Please feel free to visit the appropriate panel folder and use the provided access copies (where available) for your personal requirements, however we kindly ask you to not distribute or quote the provided material without the authors' express permissions beyond the framework of this event.

Should you have any specific access needs, please do get in touch with us via NMI2021@uni-kassel.de and we will do our best to meet them.

Recording

We would like to provide the possibility for you to re-visit the events of this conference or catch up on the presentations that you missed. For this reason, the conference panel sessions and demonstrations might be recorded. However, we will not do so without your permission. During the panel session the host will ask participants if they consent to the session being recorded - if you do not agree to the recording, please message the meeting host privately via Zoom chat (in this way, you will remain anonymous to the rest of the panel attendees). Should there be any objections to recording, the panel recording will be stopped and discarded. The meeting host will make all this information available again at the beginning of the session. If you do not object to session recording in principle, you still have several options to not being recorded yourself, if desired. You may switch off your own video, alter your Zoom screen name, and in the Q&A section you can ask the Chair via private chat message to read your question out loud anonymously.

In the case of recorded panels, the videos will be uploaded to the Uni Kassel video platform after the conference and made available to registered conference participants via a private video link. The videos will be available for one month after which they will be deleted.

After the host has activated the recording, each participant will receive a pop-up window informing them about the recording and offering them the option to continue ("Continue" button) or end (i.e. leave) the meeting ("Cancel" button). It should be noted that the recording is already running here while the query is being made. If you want to participate in the meeting without being recorded, press "Continue" with the microphone and camera turned off. The participant names displayed on the video windows during the broadcast will not be recorded.

A recording in progress is displayed to each participant at the top left of the screen.

Participants who join later during the meeting are also informed that the meeting is being recorded and must agree or leave the meeting. However, this only happens the first time they join the meeting. If a participant leaves the meeting and then dials in again, the information is omitted.

Appendix – Conference World Map



Figure 1: Entrance



Figure 2: Main Hall

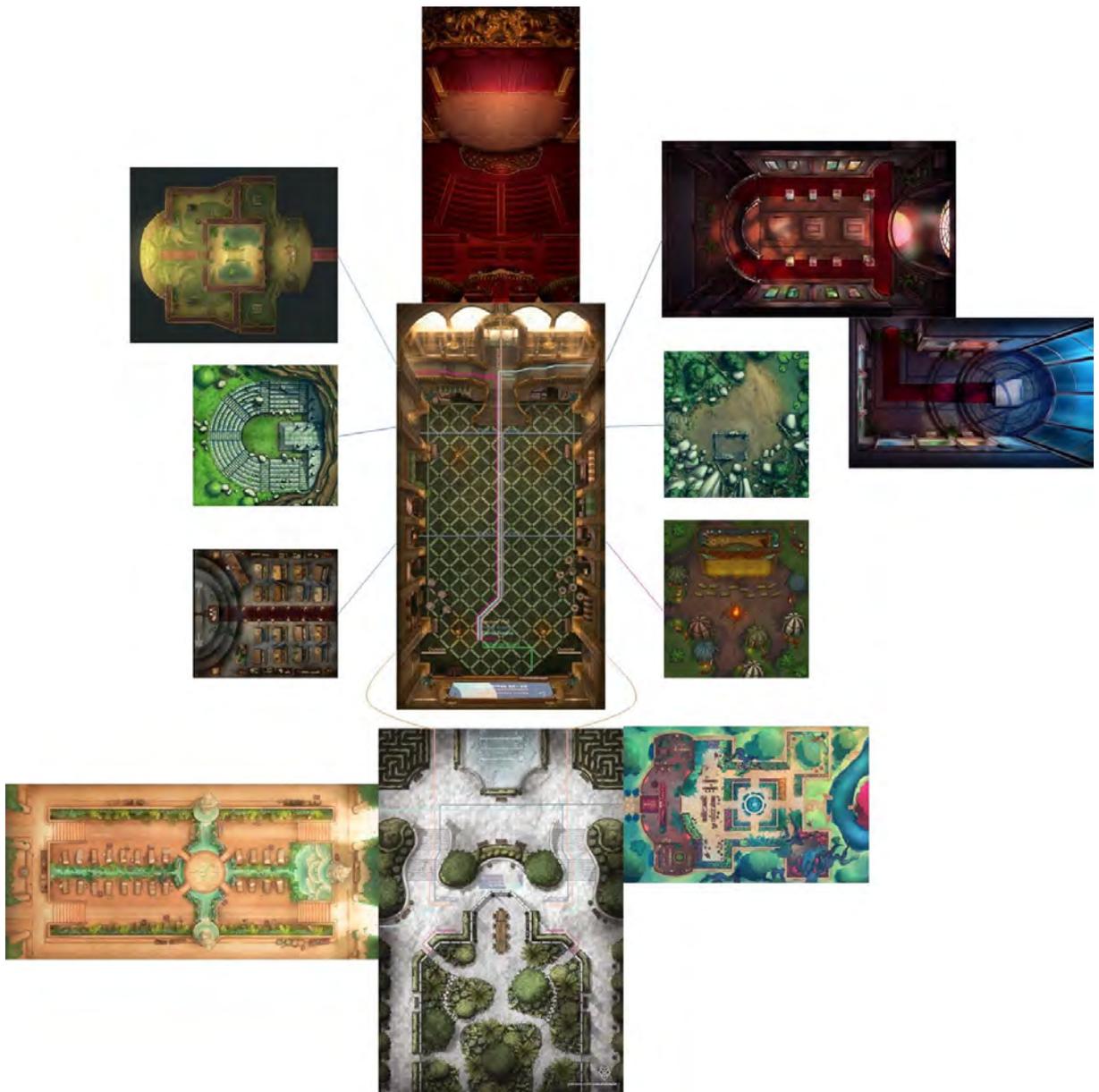


Figure 3: Map overview of different spaces