

# NIH Using WorldViz VR For Social Interaction Research

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- In a newly released [WorldViz](#) webinar, Susan Persky, PhD., of The National Institutes of Health, explains how she uses covert measures in VR to trace social psychological behavior.

WorldViz is pleased to announce a newly released webinar with Susan Persky, PhD., of the National Institutes of Health, at which she shared some remarkable research that illustrated the benefits of virtual reality in social psychological research. Susan heads the Health Communication and Behavior Unit and NIH and she has pioneered the use of virtual reality for social psychology. Her work elegantly shows how virtual reality (VR) offers a high degree of experimental control alongside strong ecological validity, a capacity to manipulate any variable of interest, and an ability to trace the physical, nonverbal behavior of the user in a very fine-grained and automated manner. VR improves upon traditional behavioral measurement techniques (e.g., observation and coding) on several fronts as data collection is covert, continuous, passive, and occurs within a controlled context.

Here recent publication entitled "[Tracing physical behavior in virtual reality](#): A narrative review of applications to social psychology" reviews existing methods for tracing physical behavior in VR, such as gaze tracking and interpersonal distance measurement, and describes how researchers have applied these methods to understand important phenomena within the context of social psychology. To date, primary areas of application have included the assessment of social approach and avoidance, social evaluation and bias, and engagement. The limitations of



Image credit: Dr. Susan Persky



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behavioral tracing methods in VR, as well as future directions for their continued application and extension, are discussed.

This well considered review article equips viewers with a thorough understanding of behavioral tracing methods that can be implemented in VR, their benefits and drawbacks, the insight they may offer into social processes, and future avenues of work for applying emergent technologies to research questions in social psychology.

We invite you to watch the [webinar recording](#) or read the original article cited below.

Yaremych, H. E., & Persky, S. (2019). Tracing physical behavior in virtual reality: A narrative review of applications to social psychology. *Journal of experimental social psychology*, 85, 103845.

#### About WorldViz

Based in Santa Barbara, CA, WorldViz is an industry-leading provider of virtual reality solutions for the enterprise and public sectors. Its patented VR products and solutions are deployed across 1500+ Fortune 500 companies, academic institutions and government agencies. The company's VR solutions for academic research offer tools to create and conduct complex VR-based experiments. WorldViz systems are powered by Vizard, which enables researchers of any background to rapidly develop their own virtual environments and author complex interactions between environment, devices, and subjects. For more information, visit [www.worldviz.com](http://www.worldviz.com).

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