Scenes is a platform for self-published, commentary-free first-person view location-tagged video clips with VR support. There is no search bar and no recommendation algorithm, nor are there user accounts; it is completely anonymized on both ends. The user can browse content only by manipulating a 3D globe, zooming in on and exploring any location at whim.

Scenes is meant to represent life as-is from another’s eyes, meaning no fourth-wall breaking scene to viewer communication is permitted. Videos are reviewed by well-paid humans prior to global deployment to ensure this crucial element and scan for circumventive tactics.

Scenes curates for experiences as immersive as possible. Advertisement-free, the product is the social value created rather than the users. By allowing people to virtually walk a mile in others’ shoes, the platform hopefully contributes to a more empathic world.

The platform attempts to connect people who will probably never meet on a level never attempted before. Preexisting platforms sow the seeds of polarization by amplifying clickbaiting, post-truth content, all because it grabs attention. This attention is core to the social media business model of today, where users are in fact treated as means-to-an-end.

The reason that this concept for a human-centered social media network might have inspired questions about funding in the reader is that we live in a world where it is very difficult to for a platform to treat users as ends-in-themselves.

The answer to those questions is that this platform would require a restructuring of societal values within its context in order to succeed, as the profit incentive as it exists today is ultimately too pervasive.

Insofar as the moderation scheme, the “no fourth-wall breaks” is a pretty hard-and-fast rule, so this would weed out all direct (spoken, written, gestured) commentary aimed at the user, whether it reflects some agenda or not. The notion of indirect commentary, however, would be allowed, in which the viewer comes to their own conclusion based on first-order details in the video.

Content moderators are well-paid, well-trained, and well-scheduled humans equipped to deal with the chaos of inflammatory possibilities.

Concept by Max Jardetzky for THINK 66, Winter 2021