THE FIRST JOINT
WCRP-WWRP SYMPOSIUM ON
DATA ASSIMILATION AND REANALYSIS

Gather.town guidelines

**Joint WCRP-WWRP Symposium on
Data Assimilation and Reanalysis**

in collaboration with the ECMWF Annual Seminar 2021

13 - 17 September 2021 (virtual)

organized by

Gather.town

In order to provide an experience as close as possible to an in-person scientific conference, the steering group of the *WCRP-WWRP Symposium on Data Assimilation and Reanalysis* has decided to use **Gather.town** as the main platform for the joint meeting with the ECMWF Annual Seminar. From Gather.town you can access the oral sessions and poster sessions and Gather.town will also be used for the ice breaker and coffee breaks, so please familiarise yourself with the platform before the event.

Gather.town is a video-calling application that runs in your internet browser. It resembles an open, game-like environment in which one can roam freely (using the arrow keys) to explore and chat with other people. This means that you do not need to install anything on your PC, nor do you need to create a Gather.town account of any kind. As a matter of fact, Gather.town can even be used from any of your smart devices.

The best way to get to know Gather.town is to use it! The link provided to registered participants will take you to the event space. The virtual venue we have created allows us to interact with one another in a similar way as we would do in person. As you walk around the space, you might bump into people, known or unknown, and when in close proximity an audio/visual call will open automatically so you can stop for a chat.

The Gather.Town space will be **available throughout the week** where you can explore freely and interact with other participants. Feel free to use the space anytime to organise small meetings with other attendees.

Although Gather.town runs on any browser, the developers **strongly recommend** you to use either a **Chromium**-based browser or **Mozilla Firefox**. Popular Chromium-based browsers include:

- Google Chrome
- Microsoft Edge
- Opera
- Vivaldi
- Brave Browser
- Ungoogled Chromium

If your preferences go out to a different browser, things might probably work just fine. If you run into technical issues, however, it's good to realize that other browsers work more optimally with Gather.town.
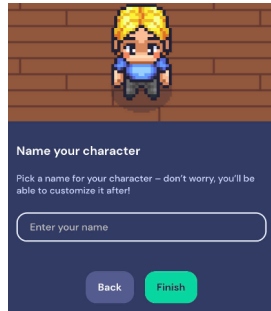
If you want to **leave** Gather.town do not forget to **close the browser tab**!

Lastly, if technical issues persist it may help to refresh your browser.

Using Gather.town

Getting started with Gather.town

When joining Gather.town via the provided link, you have to configure your avatar by setting various parameters. You can also go with the automatically generated avatar. Don't worry, you can change the settings later.

In the next window, you have to enter the name that appears above your avatar in the Gather.town space. Please enter your first and last name so you can be easily identified by other participants.

The next window allows you to setup your audio and video settings, i.e., the camera, microphone and speaker you would like to use during your visit to the symposium and annual seminar.
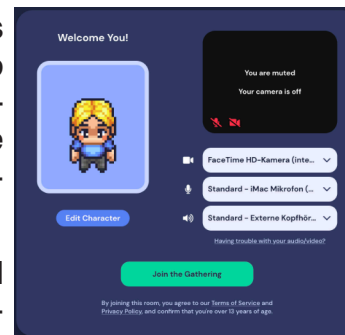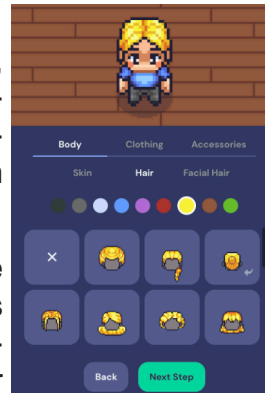
After pressing "Join the Gathering" you will land in the symposium Gather.town entrance hall.

Moving around

You can turn and walk around the space using your arrow keys or asdw-keys. You can move across most objects but not through other people.

In case you get stuck somewhere by other participants, you can use the "g" key to change into ghost mode and walk through people. However, in ghost mode you will not hear other nor will they hear you.

Besides this you can try holding the z key and see what happens!

The Gather.town space

Entrance hall

The entrance hall ist the hub of the virtual conference setting for the symposium and annual seminar. When joining the Gather.town space your avatar will appear (spawn) here.

From the entrance hall you can directly access all other rooms:The doorways to the conference rooms for the symposium can be found on the left (red, green, blue) and for the annual seminar on the top right. The posters sessions are accessible for Monday to Wednesday on the top and Thursday and Friday on the bottom of the hall.
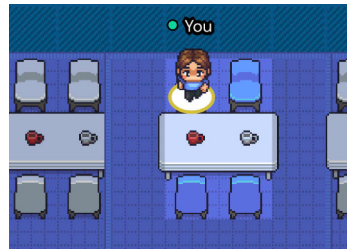
Private spaces

While you walk through the venue, you can talk to all participants you meet with an automatic video chat function. Thus, when you will hear a lot of chatter of the people close to your avatar.
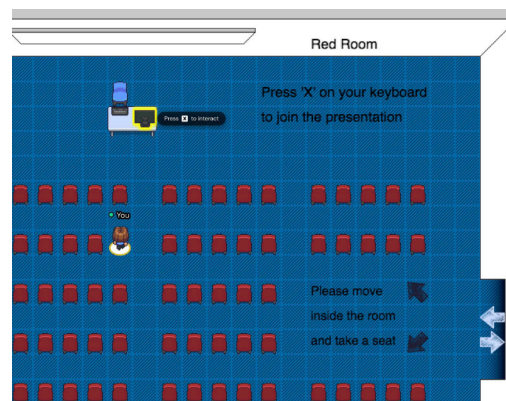
If you want to have a quiet conversation with your colleague(s), you are free to retreat to a so-called private space. In this setting, the sofas and tables as well as the area around it provide such private spaces.

If you are in a private space, the area is highlighted. Only people inside the private area can hear you and participate in the discussion. Please note that there are no access restrictions to these areas, i.e., every participant can join any private space as long as there are spots available in it. There are private space of different sizes from 2 to 25 people.

Oral sessions

To join an oral session, you have to walk into a conference room. Please move on to the left (right for the annual seminar room) when you enter the room such that you do not block the door.

Once you are in a room, please take a seat and press "x" on your keyboard. A page with a link appears. Click the link to join the Webex (or Zoom) session in a new tab. Note that the Webex sessions will start 5-10 minutes before the scheduled time.
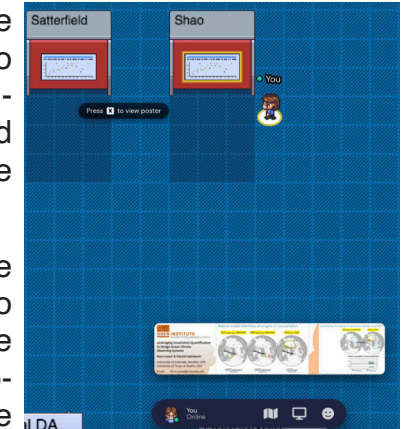
When you enter the oral session, your avatar will become inactive.

Once you exit the oral session, go back to the Gather.town tab and press "Re-enter" to resume your visit in the conference area.

Poster sessions

The poster sessions will take place in the poster halls. All posters will be available to view throughout the week. On the dedicated day, the poster presenters should be available at their poster during the poster session hours.

Each poster is designated with the name of the presenter. When you move close to a poster, a small preview of the respective poster near the bottom of the window appears. Further, each poster has a private space around it accommodating multiple visitors.

When you interact with the poster (by pressing the "x" key) you will get a full screen visualization. On the right, there are two icons (indicated by the black rectangle in the screenshot). The upper icon provides a pointer, the lower a zoom tool. The tools can be used by everyone. While the pointer clicks will be visible as read circles to everyone in the full screen mode, the zoom tool effects are only visible to the user and not to others. To close the poster view, please click on the "X" in the upper right corner (indicated by the red rectangle in the screenshot).

Good to know

If you get stuck somewhere you can reload Gather.town in the browser or hold the "g" key to move around in "ghost" mode which allows for walking through people and objects.

Further Gather.town functions

The status bar

On the bottom of the window, you can find the status bar.

Clicking the avatar icon allows you to edit your avatar.

Clicking your name and status, a submenu will pop up with the following options:

- Your name (edit) - Allows you to edit your screen name.

- Add status text

- User/Video Preferences

- Turn On/Off Quiet Mode - Quiet mode allows you to only listen to people directly next to you.

- Respawn - This will move you back to the entrance hall.

- Sign In (not needed)

Clicking the map icon opens a mini map of the current room.

Clicking the screen icon allows you to share your screen (may be used in private discussions).

Clicking the emoji icon allows you to choose a reaction which will appear above your avatar (for example to applaud a poster presenter).

The lower left sidebar

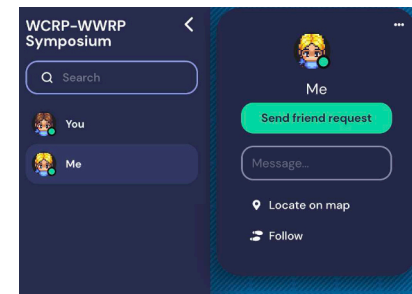On the bottom left of the window, you can find a sidebar containing five icons:

Clicking the top icon opens a bunch of further options - mostly for audio and video .

The second option changes to build mode (disabled).

The calendar icon (not used).

A click on the chat icon opens the chat window in the second sidebar. The "To" dropdown menu lets you choose the recipients of your message. You can write messages to a specific person, to all people nearby or to everybody. However, we would like to discourage the use of sending out messages to everybody. We would like to reserve this option to notify people of the start of sessions.

The lowest icon will open the list of participants. You can scroll through the list or search for participant names.

When clicking on a participant in the list a new window opens allowing to directly send a message. You can also locate the person which will make the direct path to the person visible to you. Another option is to follow the person. However, it would be considered unkind to follow someone without asking first. Just think about how it would look at an in-person conference.

Further information

Some objects are interactive objects (such as the computer screens in the entrance hall). These objects will glow yellow when you are near them. You can interact with them by using the "x" key.

Try using the "z" key!

If you experience any technical issues in Gather.town, refreshing the page will fix most problems. If that doesn't work, try muting and unmuting your mic and camera. It is best to check that your computer and browser allow camera and microphone access.