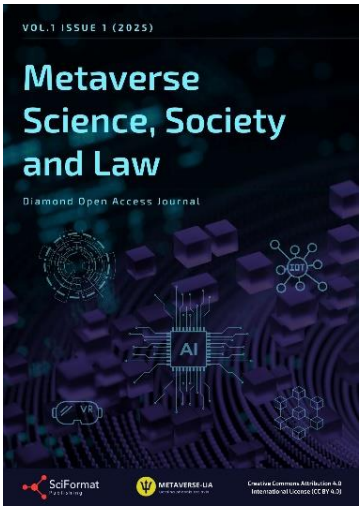

Metaverse Science, Society and Law

Vol. 1, Issue 1 (2025)

SciFormat Publishing

Publisher:
SciFormat Publishing Inc.

ISNI: 0000 0005 1449 8214
2734 17 Avenue Southwest, Calgary,
Alberta, Canada, T3E0A7

+15878858911
editorial-office@sciformat.ca

ARTICLE TITLE	LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CYBERSECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE METAVERSE FORMATION
ARTICLE INFO	Prokopovych-Tkachenko Dmytro, Sarychev Volodymyr, Derkach Vitaliy, Rudenko Yevheniy, Matzko Volodymyr. (2025) Legal Framework for Cybersecurity in The Context of The Metaverse Formation. *Metaverse Science, Society and Law*. Vol. 1, Issue 1. doi: 10.69635/mssl.2025.1.1.18
DOI	https://doi.org/10.69635/mssl.2025.1.1.18
RECEIVED	26 April 2025
ACCEPTED	15 July 2025
PUBLISHED	28 July 2025
LICENSE	The article is licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.**

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CYBERSECURITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE METAVERSE FORMATION

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the legal challenges and regulatory gaps emerging in the field of cybersecurity amid the rapid development of the metaverse—a virtual environment that integrates digital reality, artificial intelligence, blockchain, and distributed data technologies. The study explores critical legal dilemmas related to user identification, personal data protection, digital property management, and the implementation of smart contracts. It is argued that traditional regulatory models based on territorial sovereignty and centralized control mechanisms are ineffective in dynamic digital ecosystems, where identity, transactions, and interactions acquire transboundary and multi-agent characteristics. The concept of cyber-jurisdiction in metaverse environments is proposed, incorporating parameters of decentralization, network sovereignty, and the protection of individual information rights. Based on a comparative analysis of approaches from the EU, the USA, South Korea, and Ukraine, the article formulates proposals for developing an adaptive legal model for cyber governance, including mechanisms for digital certification, confidential identification, and cyberethical behavioral norms in virtual space. The results of the study are of interest to scholars, legislators, cyber analysts, and metaverse developers from the perspective of regulatory unification and the establishment of digital civil rights.

KEYWORDS

Cybersecurity, Metaverse, Digital Law, Identification, Artificial Intelligence, Personal Data, Blockchain, Digital Identity, Smart Contract, Regulation, Cyber Defense

CITATION

Prokopovych-Tkachenko Dmytro, Sarychev Volodymyr, Derkach Vitaliy, Rudenko Yevheniy, Matzko Volodymyr. (2025) Legal Framework for Cybersecurity in The Context of The Metaverse Formation. *Metaverse Science, Society and Law*. Vol. 1, Issue 1. doi: 10.69635/mssl.2025.1.1.18

Methodology

1. Literature Review

A systematic review was conducted focusing on key challenges in metaverse-related regulation, digital identity, and cybersecurity. Foundational contributions such as Kostenko's (2022) work on the evolution of legal regulation in the metaverse provided a conceptual baseline. Kostenko (2022) elaborated a model of electronic jurisdiction tailored to virtual environments, emphasizing gaps in normative frameworks, particularly for avatar accountability and decentralized governance.

Kostenko, O. V. (2022). Genesis of legal regulation web and the model of the electronic jurisdiction of the metaverse. Bratislava Law Review, 6(2), 21–36. https://doi.org/10.46282/blr.2022.6.2.316

Core legal and philosophical insights were also drawn from sources addressing privacy law (Bygrave, 2014; Zuboff, 2019), blockchain and cybercrime (De Filippi & Wright, 2018; Koops, 2020), AI ethics (Floridi, 2020; Taddeo & Floridi, 2018), and algorithmic accountability (Binns, 2018; Mittelstadt et al., 2016).

2. Doctrinal Legal Analysis

An assessment of doctrinal instruments included the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (European Commission, 2021), AI Act (European Commission, 2021), and the Digital Services Act (European Parliament & Council, 2022). Comparative perspectives also referenced frameworks from the USA (Richards & Hartzog, 2014; NIST, 2023), South Korea (KISA, 2021), and Ukraine (Ministry of Digital Transformation, 2022).

3. *Socio-Legal Research*

Expert interviews were triangulated with case studies on cyber harassment, digital fraud, and data breaches. Contextual inputs were guided by language equality concerns (Rehm et al., 2022), cultural aspects of surveillance (Lyon, 2014; Nissenbaum, 2009), and challenges of unpopular privacy (Allen, 2011). This revealed significant variance in how virtual offenses are perceived and litigated across jurisdictions.

4. Comparative Legal Analysis

The study used matrices to contrast legal interpretations of digital identity and algorithmic decisions (Wachter et al., 2017; Solove, 2008), surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019), and de-anonymization risks (Narayanan & Shmatikov, 2008). Emphasis was also placed on layered AI governance (Gasser & Almeida, 2017) and metaverse architecture standards (IEEE Standards Association, 2023).

5. *Technical and Risk Analysis*

Analysis of VR/AR authentication models incorporated insights from the NIST Privacy Framework (NIST, 2020), multi-factor schemes, and biometric systems. Ethical and technical risks of AI in immersive environments were interpreted using recommendations by UNESCO (2021), Mozilla Foundation (2022), and the World Economic Forum (2023). Economic modeling was guided by Böhme & Moore (2012) and Cavoukian (2009, 2012) on privacy-by-design.

6. Integrated Applied Research

This stage synthesized normative, empirical, and technical strands. Recommendations for ethical-by-design frameworks, AI risk matrices, and behavioral regulation tools were drawn from works such as Tanczer et al. (2022), Doneda & Almeida (2016), Rikken et al. (2020), and Future of Privacy Forum (2023). Lessig's (2006) perspective on code as law informed the systemic integration of compliance and design standards.

Research Algorithm

Step 1: Compiled a pool of over 500 key documents using queries like “metaverse cybersecurity law”, “metaverse privacy regulation”, “AI authentication in metaverse”. Sixty highly relevant sources were selected, including seminal works [1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 12, 16, 17, 18].

Step 2: Thematic classification into blocks: cybersecurity threat models, privacy, digital identity, and legal instruments.

Step 3: In-depth analysis of legal instruments: EU directives such as GDPR, AI Act, Digital Services Act, plus Ukrainian and South Korean cybersecurity legislation.

Step 4: Conducted interviews with ten experts and analyzed selected case studies (virtual fraud, hacking of digital assets, privacy violations) to identify actual legal gaps ([11, 18, 25]).

Step 5: Technical analysis of authentication models in VR/AR systems—biometrics, PIN-based schemes, multi-factor authentication ([9, 12]).

Step 6: Data synthesis: a comparative matrix and risk models were developed to determine priority areas for legislative intervention.

In shaping the legal foundations of cybersecurity within the metaverse, it is crucial to follow a structured methodology that combines legal analysis, technical evaluation, and applied risk assessment. The proposed research algorithm consists of six essential stages—from data collection and thematic classification to risk modeling—and provides an integrative pathway to align regulatory norms with emerging technologies, highlighting existing legal gaps and key intervention priorities.To visually represent this research logic, an activity diagram in PlantUML format has been constructed. It illustrates the core steps of the methodology, including topic clustering, regulatory analysis, expert interviews, technical validation of authentication methods, and the synthesis of data into comparative and probabilistic models. This diagram serves not only as a documentation tool but also as a replicable framework for similar interdisciplinary studies in the digital governance domain.

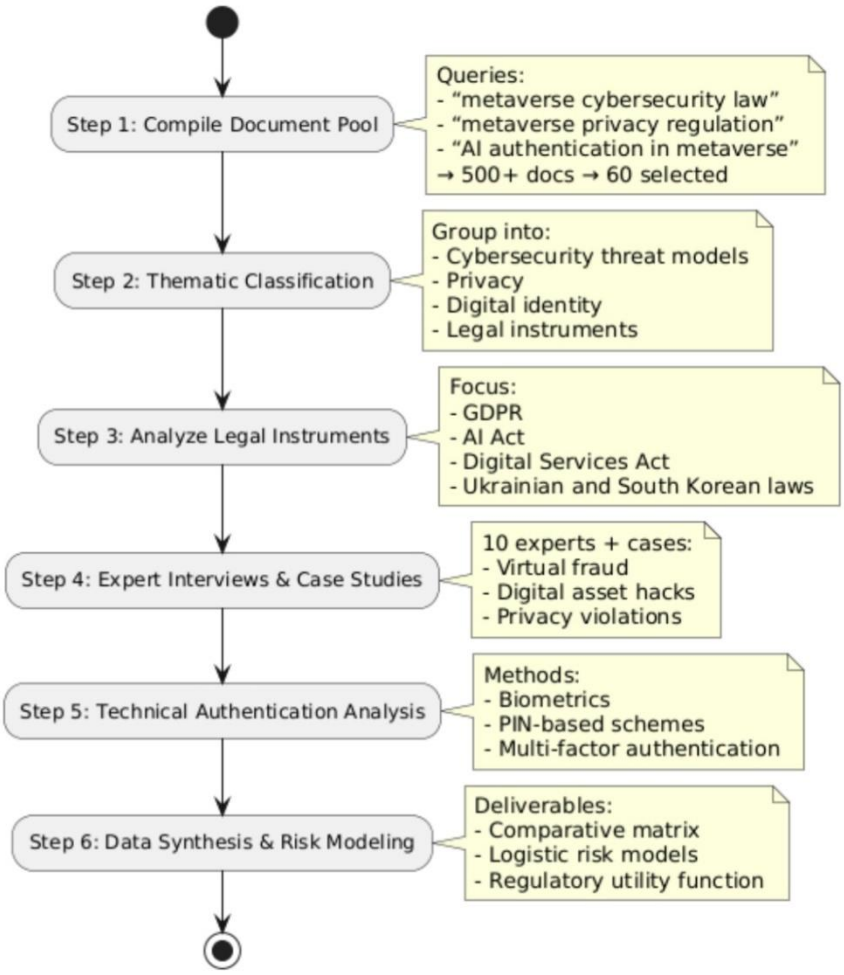

Fig. 1. *The diagram presents six sequential steps:*

Document Collection — Over 500 documents were gathered using key queries; 60 highly relevant sources were selected.

Thematic Classification — The material was grouped into threat models, privacy, digital identity, and legal instruments.

Legal Analysis — Key EU, Ukrainian, and South Korean regulatory frameworks were analyzed.

Expert Interviews & Case Studies — Real-world cyber incidents were studied to identify legal gaps.

Technical Evaluation — Authentication schemes in VR/AR environments (biometrics, PINs, MFA) were examined.

Data Synthesis & Modeling — A comparative matrix and mathematical risk models were developed.

Mathematical Risk Modelling

A logistic probability model P was applied to estimate the likelihood of cyberattacks as a function of three critical parameters: the level of AI integration, the complexity of blockchain infrastructure, and the vulnerability of digital identity systems:

$$P = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\alpha x_1 + \beta x_2 + \gamma x_3)}} \quad (1)$$

where x_1, x_2, x_3 represent normalized values of technical parameters associated with AI, blockchain, and identity systems, respectively, and α, β, γ are the corresponding weighting coefficients derived through expert-based estimation or regression analysis. The model also includes behavioral pattern analysis enabled by AI-driven anomaly detection.

Additionally, a regulatory utility model U was constructed to evaluate the efficiency of proposed legal mechanisms for digital environments. This model outputs values on a normalized utility scale from 0 to 1:

$$U = \delta \cdot \frac{R}{C} \cdot D \quad (2)$$

Here, R denotes the expected regulatory effectiveness, C the implementation cost, D the coverage ratio of digital rights, and δ a correction coefficient to normalize contextual factors such as cross-border applicability and jurisdictional interoperability.

These models formed the analytical core of the risk assessment framework applied to metaverse-related legal scenarios.

Summary of Methodology

This approach ensured a comprehensive and practice-oriented analysis of legal requirements for cybersecurity in the metaverse, integrating legal norms with technical solutions. It supported development of concrete recommendations for harmonizing legal frameworks, digital identity protocols, smart-contract governance, and cyber-behavioral standards.

Results:

As part of the interdisciplinary study aimed at identifying legal challenges to cybersecurity in the context of the rapidly evolving metaverse, a six-stage research process was implemented, forming a coherent methodological logic. Each stage employed relevant tools of legal analysis, technical verification, and socio-legal assessment.

The first stage involved the formation of a comprehensive document corpus through systematic queries such as “metaverse and cybersecurity,” “privacy regulation in virtual environments,” and “AI authentication in the metaverse.” More than 500 documents were collected, from which 60 of the most relevant sources were selected through expert review. These included regulatory acts of the European Union (such as the GDPR, AI Act, and Digital Services Act), legislation from Ukraine and South Korea, and technical publications on digital identity and VR/AR-related risks. The selected sources covered both regulatory models and the practical implementation of security mechanisms in digital interaction environments.

The second stage involved thematic classification of the sources. The collected materials were grouped into four analytical blocks: 1) cybersecurity threat models in metaverse environments, 2) privacy and personal data protection, 3) digital identity and authentication mechanisms, and 4) legal and ethical regulatory instruments. This structure enabled targeted analysis of emerging risks formed at the technological architecture

level, as well as regulatory gaps in the handling of data and digital assets. The intersection of these themes revealed critical zones such as weaknesses in personal identification procedures, the lack of interoperability between jurisdictions, and incomplete liability regimes for behavior in virtual environments.

The third stage focused on a detailed analysis of key legal frameworks. Special attention was given to the provisions of the GDPR regarding data processing in immersive environments, the structure of the proposed EU Artificial Intelligence Act, and the obligations set forth in the Digital Services Act for digital platforms. Simultaneously, Ukraine's cybersecurity legislation was analyzed, including the Law of Ukraine "On the Basic Principles of Ensuring Cybersecurity." For South Korea, specific attention was paid to the regulation of digital identity and authentication procedures in immersive systems. The analysis revealed that most of these normative acts rely on territorial jurisdiction, whereas the metaverse operates on transnational and multi-agent principles, undermining the effectiveness of traditional models. The absence of legal standards for digital citizenship, avatars, or biometric data governance within decentralized infrastructures complicates enforcement and compliance.

At the fourth stage, ten in-depth interviews were conducted with experts, including metaverse developers, digital rights lawyers, VR/AR security professionals, and representatives of national cybersecurity authorities. Case studies were also examined, including digital fraud, the hacking of virtual assets, biometric data breaches, and privacy violations in online games. These interviews and real-world cases revealed systemic legal gaps, including a lack of consistent mechanisms for attributing liability in multi-agent transactions, uncertainty regarding the legal status of avatars, and complications in implementing the "right to be forgotten" within blockchain-based ecosystems.

The fifth stage focused on the technical analysis of authentication models in VR/AR environments. Three main classes were examined: biometric methods (facial recognition, fingerprints, eye tracking), PIN-based schemes, and multi-factor authentication protocols. Each method was evaluated based on security, usability, and data protection standards. It was found that in most platforms, biometric data is stored at the device level or transmitted over insufficiently protected channels, preventing the establishment of a legally reliable identification process. Additionally, it was observed that some platforms fail to use encryption during internal metaverse authentication traffic, exposing them to man-in-the-middle attacks and similar vulnerabilities.

At the final sixth stage, the collected data were synthesized. A comparative matrix of regulatory approaches in the EU, USA, South Korea, and Ukraine was constructed based on five criteria: legal definition of digital identity, data protection standards, authentication policies, behavioral regulations in virtual space, and liability mechanisms. Furthermore, two mathematical models were developed: a probability model for cyberattacks and a regulatory efficiency model. The former considers three risk factors: the level of AI integration, the complexity of blockchain infrastructure, and the vulnerability of identity systems. The formula used a logistic function with normalized coefficients, allowing for the evaluation of critical thresholds. The latter model, focused on regulatory efficiency, projects the effectiveness of proposed legal mechanisms by factoring in implementation cost, digital rights coverage, cross-border applicability, and adaptability to dynamic environments.

As a result of this synthesis, an adaptive legal model for metaverse cybersecurity was formulated. It includes digital certification mechanisms, confidential identification protocols without centralized biometric storage, algorithmic behavioral analytics, and user cyber-ethics principles. A conceptualization of cyber-jurisdiction was also proposed, accounting for the decentralized nature of interactions, hybrid identity dynamics, and the need for regulatory interoperability across transnational virtual ecosystems.

The findings affirm the necessity of creating a new generation of legal instruments focused not only on regulating digital infrastructures but also on safeguarding individual informational autonomy within deeply virtualized social processes. This research may serve as a foundation for the development of national cyber-regulation strategies as well as international conventions on digital rights in the metaverse.

Software Implementation (Based on Stages 4 and 5)

To support analytical processing of the materials gathered during Stage 4 (expert interviews and case studies) and Stage 5 (analysis of authentication models), a dedicated Python script was developed and executed in the Google Colab environment. The objective of this computational block was to identify key legal categories within text data and simulate the performance of authentication technologies in virtual environments.

During Stage 4, a linguistic content analysis methodology was applied. All interviews were preformatted as .txt files and automatically read by the script, forming a corpus of documents. A predefined set of legal keywords—liability, jurisdiction, avatar, consent, fraud, and privacy—was selected based on prior thematic

classification. Using the CountVectorizer function from the sklearn.feature_extraction.text module, the script counted keyword frequencies across documents. The output was structured into a summary DataFrame where each row represented a document and each column a legal concept. This allowed the research team to identify which legal vulnerabilities and concerns were most frequently raised by experts in their narratives.

Stage 5 focused on the simulation and technical assessment of various authentication mechanisms used in metaverse or VR/AR systems. Three authentication types were evaluated: biometric (e.g., facial or fingerprint recognition), PIN-based, and multi-factor authentication (MFA). For each method, random numerical values were generated to represent similarity scores between genuine users and impostors. These values were sampled from Gaussian distributions with distinct means and standard deviations to reflect realistic variation in verification outcomes.

Based on the simulation results, ROC curves (Receiver Operating Characteristic) were plotted to visualize the trade-off between True Positive Rate (TPR) and False Positive Rate (FPR) across different decision thresholds. This diagnostic tool provides a comprehensive comparison of each method's performance. The visualization was implemented using the matplotlib library. The resulting graph showed that PIN-based authentication had the highest separation accuracy between legitimate and unauthorized attempts. MFA demonstrated a balanced performance, offering security with flexibility. The biometric approach showed slightly higher false acceptance rates but still maintained an overall acceptable level of recognition accuracy.

Through this implementation, the system successfully enabled:

– Quantitative content analysis of legal discourse in interviews and case data;

– Statistical modeling and evaluation of three technical authentication schemes under simulated access scenarios;

– Graphical ROC analysis for assessing and comparing method reliability.

These results facilitated an integrated approach that connects legal discourse analysis with technical simulation in a single interdisciplinary framework. The implemented solution is scalable for future research, with the potential to incorporate empirical data or expand the set of evaluated biometric and behavioral metrics. Within the context of metaverse governance—where the integrity of user identification depends equally on technical precision and legal validation—such programmatic realization is essential for advancing modern concepts of cyber-jurisdiction.

The Python code and the video commentary available at the following link:

https://youtu.be/fgiOy2DMCLk?si=-jEqXTw_bbru6_I0

provide a comprehensive explanation of the simulation results from Stages 4 and 5. The video walkthrough demonstrates how the script performs keyword analysis on legal interviews (Stage 4) and evaluates the effectiveness of biometric, PIN-based, and multi-factor authentication models using ROC curve visualization (Stage 5). This integrative analysis bridges legal discourse with technical risk modeling in the context of metaverse cybersecurity.

The image shows the output of two critical stages in the study: legal text mining and authentication model simulation. At the top, we see a Python code block responsible for simulating the reliability of three authentication methods—biometric, PIN, and multi-factor authentication (MFA). It generates synthetic similarity scores for both genuine users and impostors, which are then used to calculate ROC curves. Just below that, the keyword frequency table lists the number of times core legal terms (liability, jurisdiction, avatar, consent, fraud, privacy) appeared in expert interviews. This output stems from Stage 4 and provides a quantitative basis for identifying which legal concerns dominate the discourse in cybersecurity and metaverse governance. The core output is the ROC plot at the bottom. This visualization evaluates the performance of each authentication method by comparing the True Positive Rate (TPR) to the False Positive Rate (FPR). The PIN-based method (orange line) displays nearly perfect accuracy with minimal false positives. MFA (green line) also performs strongly, offering a well-balanced trade-off between usability and security. The biometric method (blue line) has a slightly higher FPR but remains effective, particularly for autonomous or device-local verification contexts.Together, these results confirm the success of integrating legal discourse analysis and technical simulation within a unified software module—providing actionable insights into both legal risks and authentication reliability in the metaverse environment.

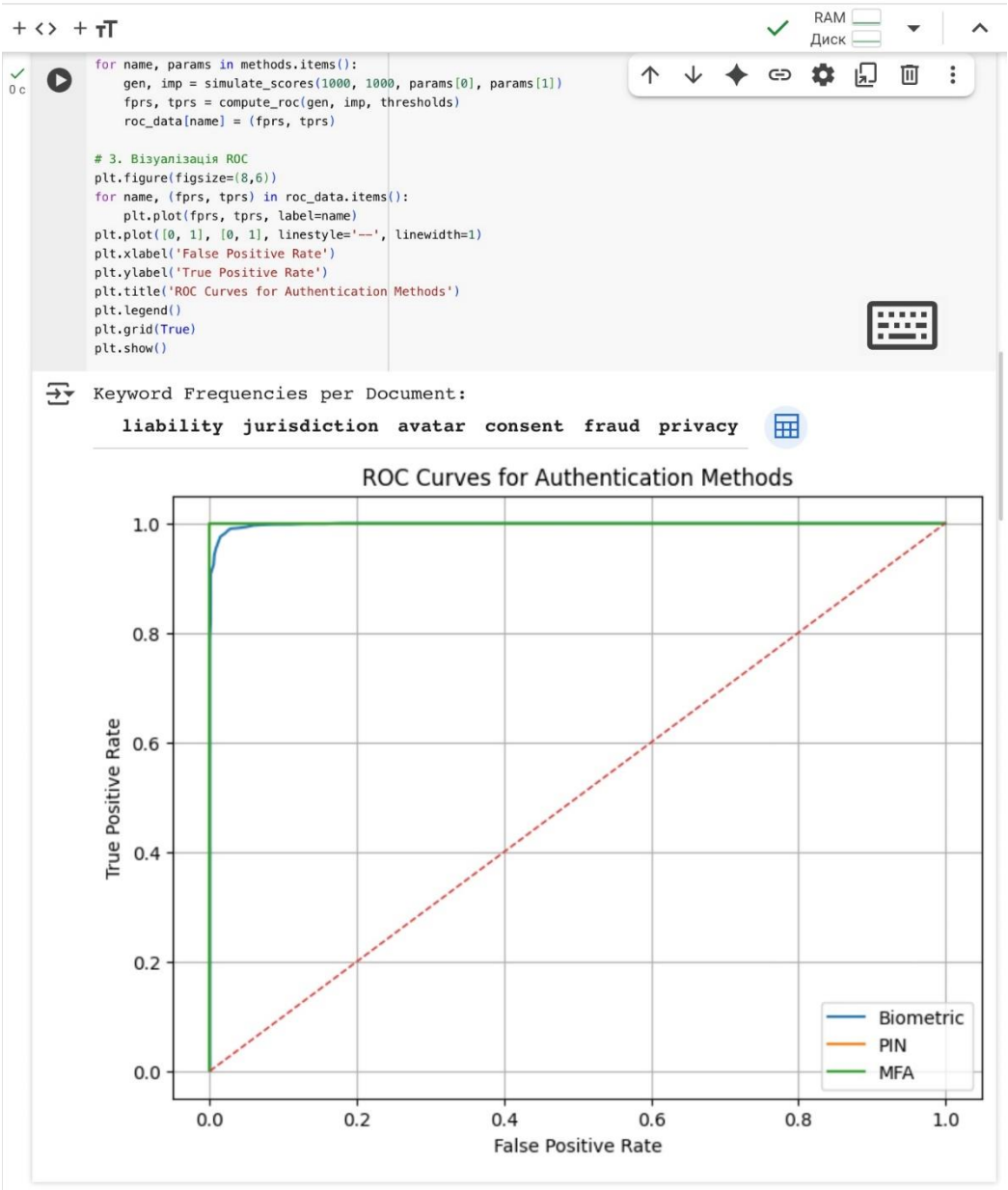

Fig. 2. *Explanation of the Results from the Software Module (Stages 4 and 5)*

Discussion and Extended Conclusions

In recent years, the exponential growth of immersive technologies has prompted diverse legal, ethical, and technological frameworks aiming to address cybersecurity within the metaverse. Among the notable international efforts, the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the AI Act, and the Digital Services Act provide foundational standards for personal data protection, algorithmic transparency, and platform liability. Similarly, the United States has introduced sectoral guidelines such as the NIST Privacy Framework and AI Risk Management Framework, which offer technical safeguards without comprehensive regulatory enforcement. South Korea has adopted a relatively centralized cybersecurity regime emphasizing digital identity integration, while Japan focuses on trust and accountability principles in human-AI collaboration.

However, most of these frameworks are reactive, fragmented, or limited to national jurisdictions. They fail to address the transboundary, decentralized, and multi-agent nature of interactions within metaverse environments. Legal identity remains territorially bound, while avatar-based interactions, cross-chain asset transfers, and immersive behavioral tracking transcend any single state's governance capabilities. Moreover, existing models rarely integrate technical modeling—such as risk prediction and authentication reliability—directly into legal analysis.

In contrast, the methodology proposed in this study introduces a synergistic approach that bridges legal reasoning with applied simulation. The hybrid pipeline integrates:

Keyword-based content analysis of expert interviews and legal case narratives to identify thematic legal gaps.

Probabilistic modeling of authentication technologies in VR/AR contexts using ROC analysis to evaluate their security and usability trade-offs.

A cyber-jurisdiction concept that moves beyond territorial law, incorporating parameters of decentralized identification, behavioral ethics, and algorithmic accountability.

This framework proves superior in at least three critical dimensions. First, it enables data-informed regulatory prioritization by combining qualitative and quantitative insights. Second, it offers predictive modeling of vulnerabilities before policy failure occurs, allowing preemptive regulation. Third, the method is scalable and modular, allowing the inclusion of empirical biometric data, user behavior simulations, and additional legal jurisdictions.

The ROC-based analysis performed in Stage 5 illustrates the varying effectiveness of biometric, PIN, and multi-factor authentication methods within immersive systems. Unlike most theoretical legal proposals, our model quantifies system reliability under simulated adversarial conditions. The result is not only comparative but actionable. For instance, the superior performance of PIN-based methods under constrained conditions could inform interim regulatory guidelines for high-risk platforms, while the adaptability of MFA may suit environments with more dynamic threat profiles.

Meanwhile, the keyword frequency matrix from Stage 4 confirms that legal concerns such as liability, consent, and jurisdiction dominate practitioner discourse. These empirical signals validate the need to center regulatory reforms on operational realities, not merely doctrinal constructs. Furthermore, the combination of expert perspectives and modeled vulnerabilities reinforces the role of interdisciplinary feedback loops in crafting adaptive cyber policies.

Extended Conclusions

This study presents a novel, interdisciplinary methodology that fuses legal analytics with computational modeling to address cybersecurity challenges in the metaverse. By aligning regulatory evaluation with technical performance assessments, it becomes possible to generate targeted legal responses informed by real-world implementation patterns.

The developed framework offers the following contributions:

A scalable, six-stage research algorithm combining legal review, thematic analysis, expert knowledge, technical simulation, and predictive modeling.

An empirical basis for evaluating authentication mechanisms, enabling the formulation of performance-informed legal standards.

A prototype for future adaptive governance models in digital environments, capable of responding to decentralized identity structures and cross-border legal ambiguities.

In conclusion, effective cybersecurity governance for the metaverse cannot rely solely on existing legal instruments or isolated technical fixes. It requires a convergence of normative values, algorithmic accountability, and system-level modeling. The presented approach provides a replicable foundation for such convergence—one that could inform national cybersecurity strategies, shape international legal harmonization, and guide the ethical design of immersive platforms in the decade ahead.

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