# Medicine Meets Virtual Reality 16: parallel, combinatorial, convergent: NextMed by Design - Volume 132 Studies in Health Technology and Informatics

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We humans are tribal, grouping ourselves by a multitude of criteria: physical, intellectual, political, emotional, etc. The Internet and its auxiliary technologies have enabled a novel dimension in tribal behavior during our recent past. This growing connectivity begs the question: will individuals and their communities come together to solve some very urgent global problems? At MMVR, we explore ways to harness information technology to solve healthcare problems - and in the industrialized nations we are making progress. In the developing world however, things are more challenging. Massive urban poverty fuels violence and misery. Will global networking bring a convergence of individual and tribal problem-solving? Recently, a barrel-shaped water carrier that rolls along the ground was presented, improving daily life for many people. Also the *One Laptop per Child project is a good example of how the industrialized nations can help the developing countries. They produce durable and simple laptops which are inexpensive to produce. At MMVR, we focus on cutting-edge medical technology, which is generally pretty expensive. While the benefits of innovation trickle downward, from the privileged few to the broader masses, we should expand this trickle into a flood. Can breakthrough applications in stimulation, visualization, robotics, and informatics engender tools as ingeniously as the water carrier or laptop? With some extra creativity, we can design better healthcare for the developing world too.*

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