

IS VR DEAD?

Edition 16

Confusing Times for the
Embattled Technology

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“The assumption that the Metaverse is primarily an AR/VR thing isn’t crazy. In my book [Snow Crash, published in 1992] it’s all VR. And I worked for an AR company [Magic Leap]--one of several that are putting billions of dollars into building headsets. But I didn’t see video games coming when I wrote Snow Crash... Thanks to games, billions of people are now comfortable navigating 3D environments on flat 2D screens. The UIs that they’ve mastered [keyboard and mouse for navigation and camera] are not what most science fiction writers would have predicted. But that’s how path dependency in tech works. We fluently navigate and interact with extremely rich 3D environments using keyboards that were designed for mechanical typewriters. It’s steampunk made real. A Metaverse that left behind those users and the devs who build those experiences would be getting off on the wrong foot... My expectation is that a lot of Metaverse content will be built for screens (where the market is) while keeping options open for the future growth of affordable headsets”

- Neal Stephenson, 2022, who coined the term
“Metaverse”

Does Zuck get to define the Metaverse?

This topic is confused with the very idea or experience of VR/AR/XR. It's not a device driven definition. There are many ways to access the Metaverse, but it stops there. Think Mobile Phones. These devices have expanded the definition of mobile Internet. Who uses it, for what, and how often. But the mobile internet is not a smartphone, nor does the mobile Internet need a touchscreen. The Metaverse does not have to be relegated to Avatars in a conference room in a zoom meeting.

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Enough About VR!

The XR device category will be the next big opportunity – able to one-day replace smartphones as the dominant computing platform globally, with billions of daily users.

XR is an acronym for “eXtended Reality,” an umbrella term for a whole group of technologies, designed around immersive ways users can interact with digital content. And by ‘immersive,’ we mean the space in which your interaction with the net takes place. In the early days of the Internet, it was the age of monitors – stationary screens you sat in front of to explore the web. As smartphones became abundant, suddenly the web could follow us, but it was still a two dimensional experience. XR aims to bring the third dimension to the web, and that three-dimensional web to – or more accurately, *around* – you. What we’re surfing with today could barely be distinguished from science fiction even just a few decades ago.

Source: *Metavrse*

AR is even farther from finding the Zeitgeist than VR and MR—and thus also farther behind schedule.

The critical factors are price, adoption, application, socialization, tokenization, and gamification.

There has been no magic formula yet and billions of dollars have been invested.

Virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MR) are three distinct interactive technologies with a few similarities.

Virtual Reality describes technology designed to make you feel fully immersed in a digital space. The ultimate goal is to make a user feel as if they've fully crossed over into a digital realm. We've been trying to make virtual worlds for decades, going back as far as the sixties.

Through blocking out the real world and replacing it with a virtual environment, the use of head-mounted displays or specialized rooms with multiple screens, VR is the most immersive and typically used for gaming and entertainment, but is also used in training and simulations.

Augmented reality (AR) is a combination of the real world and virtual elements. It is achieved through the use of devices that display digital content on top of the physical world. This technology is used to enhance real-world objects with digital content, such as 3D models, animations and videos. We already have AR embedded in many common apps, like Snapchat and Pokémon Go, and it's also common in workplace training tools.

Mixed reality (MR) is a combination of both virtual and augmented reality. It is achieved by combining real world objects with virtual elements, allowing users to interact with digital content. Mixed Reality is just what it sounds like – it's any technology that mixes elements of different XR tech together. In other words, it provides the ability to mash the real world together with imaginary places, layering the virtual overtop your living reality. Virtual try-on software, it takes the virtual exploration of a real-world facsimile – in this case, let's say a couch – and overlays it onto your real-life living room, to get a better idea of how it might look there if you decided to buy it.

Source: *Metavrse*

Overall, each of these technologies offers its own unique benefits, and all have the potential to change the way we interact with the world.

And Now a Retreat

Is the proverbial can being kicked down the road?
With companies like Mojo Vision pulling out of AR contact lenses, how does this affect the viability of an AR future ?

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With Microsoft laying off their entire divisions of AltSpace VR and HoloLens, what does this mean for the viability of this technology? Microsoft announced 10,000 in layoffs as part of a broad cost-cutting measure. According to Bloomberg, the HoloLens division was disproportionately affected. Snap and Google have spent billions just on XR-related acquisitions.

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The Future is Now! But Not Really

In 2023, it's difficult to say that a critical mass of consumers or businesses believe there's a "killer" AR/VR/MR experience in market today.

One of the best hopes is Apple.

Current rumors around the Apple VR/AR headset point to a March 2023 reveal with orders not shipping until Fall 2023. This is based on Bloomberg's Mark Gurman's latest reporting that the headset will come in Spring 2023 and is possibly holding back the development of other Apple products.

A report from The Information claims that Apple's VR headset will be as high as \$3,000. Gaming VR headsets rarely cost more than \$1,000, though the Microsoft HoloLens 2 does cost a whopping \$3,500.

Mark Gurman claims that the headset could cost upwards of \$2,000. That price tag is supposed to account for the headset's hardware, which could include the Apple M1 Pro chip, an extended development time and the usual increased markup applied to other Apple products.

However, Ming-Chi Kuo has now reported that the final price should be between \$2,000 and \$2,500. This has since been refuted by a Bloomberg report, claiming that the headset would indeed be priced at \$3,000.

Source: Tomsguide.com

The price point will remain a barrier.

In summary, VR is not dead, but has spawned all these other devices and experiences in the Metaverse. The ultimate decider will be the consumer, en masse. And the evidence shows generally, that people just don't care. I am going to take a hike.

Additional Sources:

[Beyond AR vs. VR: What is the Difference between AR vs. MR vs ...](#)

[What's the Difference Between AR, VR, and MR? | The Franklin ...](#)

[VR vs AR vs MR: Differences and Real-Life Applications](#)

[Why VR/AR Gets Farther Away as It Comes Into Focus](#)

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