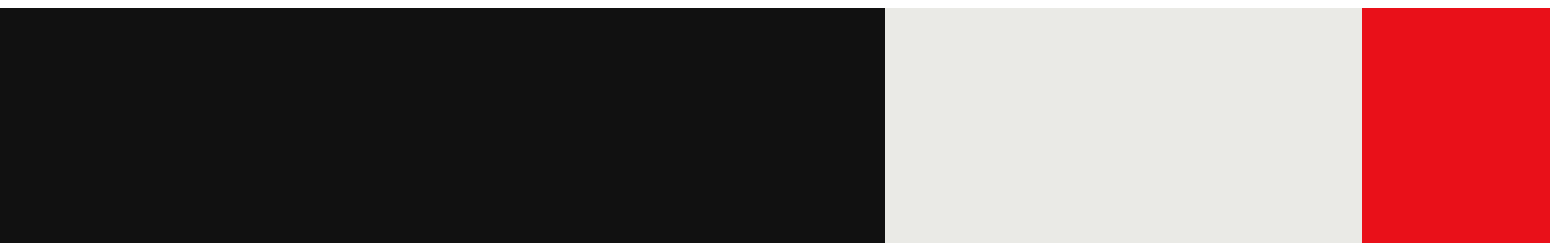



Fortnite is blowing Zuckerberg's metaverse vision out of the water

Article



The news: Meta launched its metaverse platform **Horizon Worlds** in Spain and France last week. But what would have been a celebratory occasion for Meta instead turned into embarrassment after a commemorative virtual selfie from CEO **Mark Zuckerberg** was widely mocked for its unappealing visuals.

What happened: The widely mocked photo, which included digital graphics of the Eiffel Tower and Spain's La Sagrada Familia church, prompted comparisons not just to other metaverse platforms like **Fortnite** or **Roblox**, but the broad world of video games.

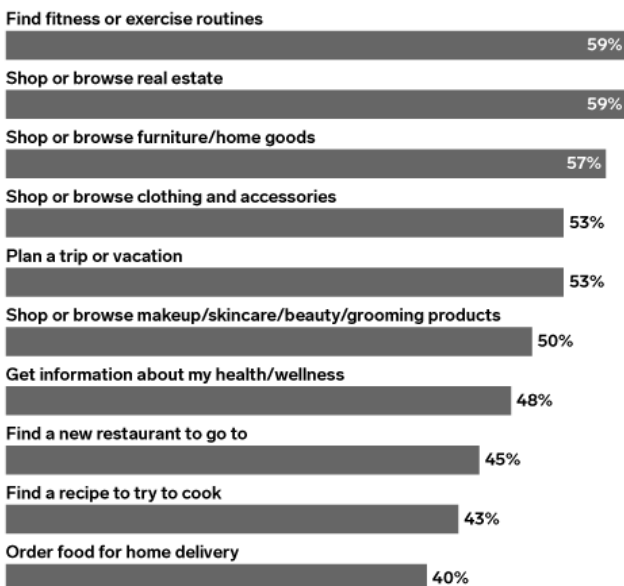
- The comparisons weren't unwarranted: The photo had a cheap, lifeless look that revealed a shocking lack of creative vision behind what Meta is betting on not just for the future of its business, but the future of the internet writ large.
- Rather than let the discourse quietly fade out, Zuckerberg posted an [updated photo](#) with improved visuals, calling the original post "pretty basic" and assuring viewers that major updates to Horizon Worlds' avatars and graphics were "coming soon."

Why it matters: At the center of the gaffe is a core question that Meta has yet to address about the value proposition of the metaverse. That question: What's the point?

- Consumers are confused about what the metaverse is and what purpose it will serve. A [survey](#) from Vox asking consumers what they think the metaverse will improve had a broad range of responses from "fitness routines" to "real estate shopping" to "food delivery."

Experiences that US Teens/Adults Expect to Be Significantly Better in a Virtual/Metaverse Environment, May 2022

% of respondents



Note: ages 13-60
Source: Vox Media and United Talent Agency (UTA), "Dissecting the Metaverse" conducted by The Circus, June 9, 2022

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- That range may seem like consumers are optimistic about the metaverse, but it also betrays a lack of a clear selling point. And in fact, consumers are *not* optimistic: **64%** of respondents in a PricewaterhouseCoopers survey said they are “**worried about the societal impacts**” the metaverse could have.
- As if the confusion wasn’t enough, Horizon Worlds is currently only accessible via Meta’s **Quest VR headsets**, which just got a **\$100 price increase**—though Meta plans to bring Horizon Worlds to other **non-wearable platforms** in time. Fortnite and Roblox, meanwhile, are available for free on mobile devices and other platforms.

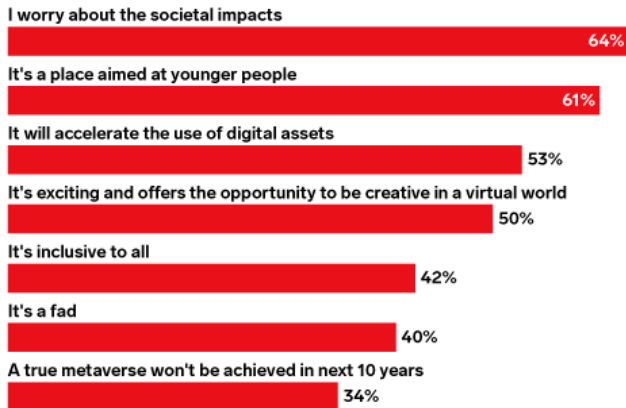
A side by side with Fortnite: While the fallout from Zuckerberg’s post raged on, Fortnite made headlines yet again thanks to a partnership with the **Dragon Ball** franchise, tightening its grip on the metaverse and pop culture.

- One of Fortnite’s strongest selling points is that it rarely uses the term “metaverse” to market itself. Instead, it’s simply Fortnite: the game and social space where iconic characters from popular media franchises come together to partake in any number of virtual activities.
- In other words, the game itself is the core selling point that Meta’s Horizon Worlds lacks. That popularity has also made Fortnite (and Roblox) the **preferred partners of brands** looking to get into the metaverse.
- Horizon Worlds has featured several high-profile **experiential marketing** campaigns like one with fast food chain **Wendy’s**. But Fortnite blows it out of the water thanks to partnerships with **Disney, Warner Bros., Coca-Cola**, musicians like Ariana Grande, and countless others that dictate moments in pop culture.

The big takeaway: Meta has spent too long selling the concept of the metaverse instead of a product. Fortnite’s success shows that if Meta can organize Horizon Worlds behind a unified vision and value proposition, players will be more likely to hop on board—and advertisers will be sure to follow.

Attitudes Toward the Metaverse According to US Adults, May 2022

% of respondents



Note: ages 21+

Source: PwC, "2022 US Metaverse Survey," July 26, 2022

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