

# Mastercard's NFT- and metaverse-related trademark filings highlight virtual ambitions

Article

**The news:** Mastercard filed 15 trademark applications for its brand name, its “Priceless” slogan, and its circles logo that point to nonfungible token (NFTs) and metaverse ambitions.

Applications [filed](#) to the US Patent and Trademark Office earlier this month outlined plans to process virtual cards, hold entertainment and educational services in the metaverse, and create an online marketplace for digital assets authenticated by NFTs, among other things.

**Key context:** The [metaverse](#) is a mixed-reality realm that parallels the physical world and lets participants collaborate and transact in virtual spaces using AR/VR headsets and controllers.

- Developers have explored virtual and augmented reality tech for decades, but the company previously known as Facebook thrust the virtual realm into the public discourse when it rebranded as **Meta** in October. Since then, many financial institutions, including **American Express** and **JPMorgan**, have [jumped](#) into the space.
- NFTs can act as a [bridge](#) to the metaverse—they certify ownership of assets that exist in the virtual realm, like digital art and collectibles.

This isn't Mastercard's first foray into the NTF space, either: It [started](#) letting people purchase NFTs using Mastercard cards on **Coinbase's** new NFT marketplace in January.

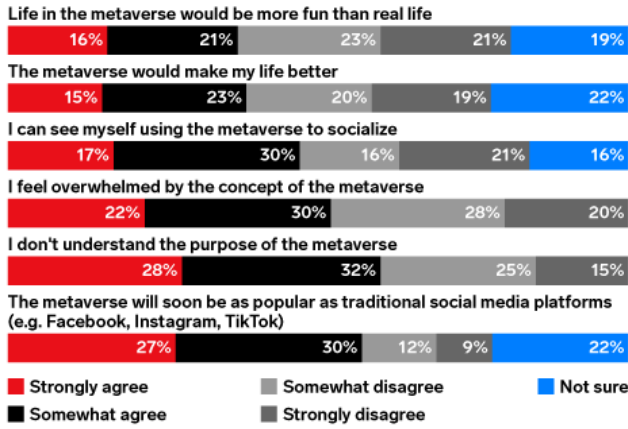
**What it means:** Mastercard is pushing into the metaverse to avoid [disintermediation](#)—especially in metaverses built on decentralized blockchains, which by definition imply little room for traditional payment networks.

- **Mastercard wants to establish itself in the metaverse and NFTs before the hype reaches a fever pitch. Morgan Stanley [called](#) the metaverse “the next big theme” in investing last year, and 27% of US adults said they “strongly agree” that the metaverse will soon be as popular as traditional social media sites like Instagram and TikTok, [per](#) a January Protocol survey conducted by the Harris Poll. Mastercard's trademark filings may suggest the network wants to replicate its real-world brand's success in the mixed-reality realm.**
- **But to do so, it may need to ramp up support for cryptos—which will likely be the main medium of exchange in the metaverse.** Mastercard already powers crypto cards like **CoinJar's [UK debit card](#)**, and it's [piloting](#) crypto payment settlement. But crypto initiatives and investments could help it gain a stronger foothold in the metaverse to avoid being edged out by smaller payment fintechs that see an opportunity to serve the burgeoning space.

**More on this:** Interested in learning more about payment implications in the metaverse? Check out our [“Crypto payments and the metaverse”](#) report.

## Attitudes Toward the Metaverse Among US Adults, Jan 2022

% of respondents



Note: ages 18+; numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding  
 Source: The Harris Poll on behalf of Protocol, Jan 25, 2022

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