


# AR and VR are becoming a way of life through retail and fitness

## Article



**E**xtended reality (XR) technologies are still mostly related to gaming, entertainment, and social media, but their applications are evolving quickly as more consumers and businesses test out immersive experiences.

Pandemic-induced lockdowns and restrictions on in-person activities have provoked a diverse base to make XR—including virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and mixed

reality (MR)—a part of daily routines. Since the Oculus Quest 2 VR headset started shipping in October 2020, for example, subscriptions have more than doubled for fitness app Supernatural, according to Mike Verdu, vice president of content at Facebook Reality Labs.

“[Supernatural has] an incredibly diverse subscriber base that currently includes an equal gender split across all different age groups and backgrounds,” Verdu said in a company blog post in February.

Similarly, workout video app FitXR is among the top nongaming apps on the Quest 2 platform. Its sales grew 535% year over year in Q4 2020, and its weekly active user base has grown fourfold since Quest 2 launched.

Additionally, heightened interest in VR social platforms like Facebook Horizon is spurring businesses in various industries to explore customer-facing applications—including virtual shopping, customer service, and virtual education and training programs—as well as applications that enable virtual work and collaboration among employees. Examples include VR for surgical training, therapy, and rehabilitation in the healthcare industry; concept design in automotive; and manufacturing and marketing research in retail.

Most of the major social network platforms are working to make AR features less gimmicky and more sophisticated, useful, and collaborative. Snapchat, for instance, is now compatible with Apple’s ARKit and the iPhone 12’s light detection and ranging (lidar) technology. The platform also considers branding and shopping among its biggest opportunities, especially during the pandemic, according to Sophia Dominguez, head of camera platform partnerships at Snap, in an interview with CNET in December 2020.

“I think 2021 is going to be one of those years in which we evolve augmented reality out of this pure communication or social media use case,” Dominguez said, “into things that can actually make our lives better in a much broader way.”

To learn more about how XR use extends beyond fun and games, Insider Intelligence subscribers can read our recent report:

**Report** by Victoria Petrock Apr 15, 2021

# US Virtual and Augmented Reality Users 2021

