

Google doubling down on search, AI in age of metaverse

Article

The news: Sundar Pichai, CEO of **Alphabet** and **Google**, named search and artificial intelligence as the companies' key areas of focus and expansion at the [Bloomberg New Economy Forum](#) in Singapore.

Why this matters: As various companies unveil their plans for the metaverse, an immersive iteration of the internet hinged on VR and AR experiences, Google seems confident that its

key areas of expertise—internet search and AI—as the biggest areas of growth.

- “I feel fortunate that our mission is timeless,” Pichai said in an interview with Bloomberg Television’s Emily Chang. “There’s more need to organize information than ever before.”
- Google briefly crossed the **\$2 trillion** threshold in market value early in November, its growth bolstered by sales and profits during the pandemic. People relied on Google’s services heavily as the world shifted to remote modes of work and education.
- Google was an early proponent of AR headsets. Its [Google Glass](#) headgear, which integrated cameras, sensors, and smartphone connectivity, was dead on arrival, however, in part because of high cost and privacy issues. In context, **85% of US adults had significant privacy concerns** about Google Glass, [per](#) Rasmussen Reports.

The opportunity: Since Facebook’s Meta rebrand, the entire tech industry has been asked to weigh in on their plans for the metaverse, a nebulous and somewhat interchangeable name that’s being used to describe everything from [immersive games](#) to work and [productivity](#) hubs. Google is wisely staying above the fray and sticking with what it knows best: search and AI.

- “Consumers will ask computers more questions with voice and multimodal experiences,” Pichai predicted. “Being able to adapt to all that and evolve search will continue to be the biggest opportunity.”
- As for his take on the metaverse, Pichai was more pragmatic than some of his peers. “I’ve always been excited about the future of immersive computing,” he said. “This doesn’t belong to any company. This is the evolution of the internet.”

The bigger picture: Many technology companies are seeing the metaverse as a pivot point and an opportunity to reshape their business model into an immersive, hardware-dependent, subscription-based content and collaboration play.

Google does not need to pivot. It reorganized in 2015 by naming Alphabet as the parent company to serve as the umbrella for its various investments and projects, leaving Google to focus on its strengths.

- Google staying out of the metaverse fray will help its case in various antitrust investigations that claim Google has gotten too big and is using its dominance in search, shopping, and smartphone operating systems in an [anticompetitive](#) manner.

US Google Paid Search Growth Metrics, Q3 2021

% change vs. prior year



Note: based on anonymized Tinuiti advertiser data, broader industry metrics may vary
Source: Tinuiti, "Google Ads Benchmark Report, Q3 2021," Oct 23, 2021

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