

Maverick Research: The Metaverse Effect

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The metaverse provides us with a new perspective that shows how our physical world is complex and interconnected. As we look to create a whole new world in the metaverse, that new perspective will act as a call to action to make our physical world a better place.

Additional Perspectives

- [Summary Translation: Maverick Research: The Metaverse Effect](#)
(11 November 2022)

Overview

Specific Maverick Caution

This Maverick research breaks new ground by introducing the idea that a metaverse perspective will directly transform our physical world, if the metaverse is truly a “better” place. As Maverick research, this document’s findings and advice should be treated with caution.

Maverick Findings

- The most common view of the metaverse is that it is a virtual world that people will “transport” to.
- The metaverse expands the physical world to an infinitely limitless space for humans to interact in with no physical borders.
- There are differing viewpoints on the metaverse as a space for good or evil. In this research, we propose that the metaverse will be built in such a way that it will fix many of the common social, political, trust and ethical concerns that exist in our physical world.
- A person’s worldview tends to be influenced by multiple factors, but could be a limited perspective that is bound by one’s own real-world location and experience.

Maverick Recommendations

- Learn from a better designed world (the metaverse) and facilitate the spillover of the positive social impacts it provides into our physical world.
- Expand your worldview, embracing the overview effect that participating in the metaverse enforces, referred to as the “Metaverse Effect.”
- Discern the role of your organization in impacting a world that has become borderless and boundless.

Maverick Research

Gartner Maverick* research delivers breakthrough, disruptive and sometimes contradictory ideas that challenge conventional thinking. Formed in our research incubator, it is designed to explore alternative opportunities and risks that could influence your strategy.

Analysis

All too often, people focus on the idea that the metaverse is a place we transport or go to, but the metaverse will also have quite an impact as it transforms or integrates with our physical world. In a technical sense, “transform” refers to bringing the digital into the physical world in a more immersive and interactive way. But there is another, and much more important, transformation of our physical world that will be changed by the metaverse, and that is adopting a metaverse perspective.

Metaverse is the next level of interaction in the virtual and physical worlds.

There is an expectation that the metaverse will be built in such a way that it fixes all of the challenges that are exacerbated in the digital world. If the metaverse is built with these items in mind, the metaverse will become the normative to our physical world:

- Open and interoperable
- Universally accessible
- Diverse

- Equal
- Decentralized
- Honest and transparent
- Fair
- Trustworthy
- Sustainable
- Empathetic
- Unbiased
- Inclusive
- Ethical

Although that is a very utopian expectation, it is not completely out of the question. In fact, in the case of empathy, the pursuit of equality has fallen far short in the real world. Going forward, people will go to metaverses, knowing they will find empathy (see [Maverick* Research: Metaverses Will Be the Place With Empathy](#)). The main idea is building this better metaverse with empathy. In the real world, differences are emphasized and, in some cases, divisive. In the metaverse, there is an opportunity to accept and embrace differences. This is just one area in which the metaverse could be a better place.

Metaverse provides us with a new viewpoint and perspective that shows how our physical world is complex and interconnected. As we look to create a whole new world in the metaverse, that new perspective will act as a call to action making us desire to make our physical world a better place. We call this the “Metaverse Effect” (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The Metaverse Effect

The Metaverse Effect

Transporting to the Metaverse



Life in the Metaverse



Spilling Over to the Physical World



- Open and interoperable
- Universally accessible
- Diverse
- Equal
- Decentralized
- Honest and transparent
- Fair
- Trustworthy
- Sustainable
- Empathetic
- Unbiased
- Inclusive
- Ethical

Source: Gartner
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The Metaverse Will Transform the Physical World

In the context of the metaverse, the idea of “transforming” the physical world is really focused on spatial computing. Spatial computing provides visual context for digital objects, including digital humans, to interact with the physical world. This allows people to derive more value out of physical and digital assets by surfacing related, “unseen” digital information and new interactions anchored to people, places and things. This idea of transforming the physical world with the digital is a key factor that will lead to the success and proliferation of the metaverse. The metaverse will transform the ways we learn, meet, shop and interact in the physical world.

More importantly, the transformation of the physical world, beyond digital interactions, will be from the experiences within the virtual world itself.

The Overview Effect from space leads to the Orbital Perspective. Similarly, in recognizing the contradiction between seeing our planet as a beautiful whole system and the unfortunate realities of life for many of its people — as we spend time transporting to the metaverse and transforming the physical world — we will “see the bigger picture.” That will lead to us desiring to fix these things on planet Earth.

Positive Habits Formed in the Metaverse Will Spill Over Into the Physical World

Gartner predicts that, by 2026, 25% of people will spend at least one hour a day in the metaverse for work, shopping, education, social and/or entertainment (see [Predicts 2022: 4 Technology Bets for Building the Digital Future](#)). Now, imagine spending this time (or possibly more) in a metaverse that is designed with trust, fairness, inclusion and equity as a forethought, rather than an afterthought.

This world will be developed and built intentionally using the principles of design justice ¹ to be a place where the triggers for bias are minimized or, better yet, eliminated. Key elements of inclusion, such as psychological safety, fair decision making, trust and belonging, are the default configurations. Technology and AI algorithms are so advanced that they can detect and nudge inhabitants toward behaving in a more inclusive and equitable way, which leads to a more welcoming *virtual* world for all, and, in particular, for under-represented groups to inhabit.

“What you repeatedly do (i.e., what you spend your time thinking about and doing each day) ultimately forms the person you are, the things you believe and the personality that you portray.”

— James Clear, “Atomic Habits”²

The behavioral science behind how habits work has become very popular over the last decade.³ If how we behave leads to the formation of habits, and 43% (or more) of our daily lives are taken up by habits,⁴ then designing a metaverse intentionally as one that promotes and rewards pro-inclusion and equitable behaviors represents a genuine opportunity. Behaviors in the metaverse could become so psychologically and emotionally rewarding that they become ingrained habits that “spill over” into how people engage in the physical world. This is what’s known as the “Spillover Effect” in action, and could be one of the significant benefits and opportunities that the metaverse can bring if designed with fairness, empathy, equity and inclusion as key principles.⁵

The Spillover Effect is already happening in the workplace. In recent Gartner research published on neurodiversity and inclusion (see [Talent Diversity: Key Actions CIOs Should Take to Increase Inclusion for Neurodiverse Employees](#)), we highlight the positive effects on the workforce and the behaviors of neurotypical employees and managers that neurodiverse individuals can effect. Research reports that managers sometimes claim that participating in neurodiversity employment programs makes them better managers.⁶ In another study on the positive effects of spillover, insights show that by teaching and enabling people to live more sustainable lifestyles, additional behaviors than the targeted ones also changed over time.⁷

With this growing evidence highlighting the positive behavior change impact that can happen when an environment is designed intentionally, metaverse designers must seize this opportunity. If users spend an increasing amount of time in a metaverse that has been created with design justice in mind, and that encourages the development of positive habits, the benefits may spill over into how they behave in the physical world.

The Metaverse Effect Will Expand Users’ Worldview

The “Overview Effect” is a term developed in the 1970s and 1980s for the shift in awareness experienced by many astronauts after seeing Earth from space. Astronauts reported being struck by the lack of visible borders and boundaries, and the interconnectedness of all those who inhabit the planet, both human and otherwise. This shift in awareness led many astronauts to have a new perspective, emphasizing cooperation between both individuals and nations, and a focus on environmental causes.⁸

These insights from those fortunate enough to have seen the Earth from space have led many to believe that the world would be a better place if many more people could have a similarly transformative experience. Companies such as SpaceBuzz have a stated aim of wanting “every child in the world to experience the Overview Effect” and use educational VR experiences to try to do just that. ⁹ In a similar vein, SpaceVR is offering VR experiences for users who can also experience weightlessness at the same time in a floatation tank. ¹⁰

The Metaverse Effect is the digitally augmented extension of the Overview Effect. Rather than viewing the Earth from space, the transformative experience could be the cumulative effect of seeing and participating in a broad variety of metaverse experiences. These could include:

- **Experiential.** More than seeing the Earth from space, metaverse applications could enable the immersive visualization of any environment on Earth, beyond Earth into space or into imaginary worlds that draw parallels with Earthbound experiences.
- **Social.** The social connections created through interactions in the metaverse, both in terms of their breadth and also the depth of the multisensory interaction (audio, haptic, olfactory), could be equally, if not more, awareness-shifting than any visual stimulus alone.
- **Educational.** The opportunities within the metaverse to enable educational experiences, whether through workforce training, formal academic programs or recreational learning, are manyfold, empowering users to broaden their understanding of the physical world in powerful ways.

These experiences could combine to shift awareness in the minds of metaverse users as they live their lives in the physical world. The Metaverse Effect could be observed in a new breed of users who show:

- Openness to new experiences
- An appreciation of meaningful social relationships
- Respect for real-world law, governance and institutions
- A deeper understanding of the issues and challenges related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)

- A sense of humility as they see their place within a broader social, geographic and political context

Intentionally Design Your Organization to Have a Positive Impact on the Physical World

Organizations must make conscious and deliberate decisions about their activity with metaverse experiences — whether they build metaverse solutions or are using metaverse platforms — with the appreciation that the environment and experience they create will spill over into the physical world via the Metaverse Effect.

Organizations must recognize that not all applications of metaverse are in the future. For example, this could be immediately established as organizations develop ways to provide better engagement, collaboration and connection to their employees through virtual workspaces and the use of internal metaverse experiences called “intraverses.” These intraverses should promote a virtual office that reflects the ideals and values of the organization.

Building an intraverse is a great way to demonstrate, enhance and develop an employee value proposition (EVP) that is designed to provide exceptional digital employee experiences that match employee needs and consumer experiences. The EVP is also focused on delivering features that match employee needs. Leveraging metaverse experiences, organizations are able to deliver a more human-centric strategy deal designed around the whole person, to reach beyond the work experience and provide an exceptional life experience (see [Reinventing the Employee Value Proposition: The Human Deal](#) and [Future of Work Reinvented: Human-Centric Work Design](#)). Providing enhanced EVP across all the physical locations in which employees work, including their remote and home offices, is extremely complex, especially without an example to show what “good” looks like. The intraverse could provide that example by the way organizations provide radical flexibility in terms of how people work, when they work, what they work on or who they work with, and should then impact the physical world.

In her book, “The Writing Life,” Annie Dillard famously wrote, “How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.”¹¹ Employees spend a large portion of their days at work, either physically or virtually. Because of this, organizations should be intentional about using intraverses designed to encourage an environment that has the potential to create virtuous spillover effects that positively impact all parts of their lives.

Acronym Key and Glossary Terms

Design justice	Design justice rethinks design processes, centers people who are normally marginalized by design, and uses collaborative, creative practices to address the deepest challenges our communities face. Source: The Design Justice Network
Spatial computing	Spatial computing is an environment that combines physical and digital objects in a shared frame of reference.

Evidence

¹ [The Design Justice Network](#).

² J. Clear. "Atomic Habits." Avery. 2018.

³ The science of habits has been developed by James Clear, [Charles Duhigg](#) and others. It has broken down habit formation into four simple steps: cue, craving, response and reward. Breaking it down into these fundamental parts can help us understand what a habit is, how it works and how to develop one. Habits are automatic behaviors that allow us to do a lot more than we would if we had to think about everything we do.

⁴ Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. Vol. 83. No. 6. 2002.

⁵ The [Spillover Effect](#) refers to a positive or negative impact experienced in one region or across the world due to an independent event occurring from a seemingly unrelated event. While there are four types of Spillover Effects, the Social Interaction Spillover Effect is the one most applicable to the opportunity that comes when relating to habits and the metaverse. It refers to "effects where a person or community benefits from a program indirectly through interacting with a target program."

⁶ [Talent Diversity: Key Actions CIOs Should Take to Increase Inclusion for Neurodiverse Employees](#); [Autism@Work Playbook: Finding Talent and Creating Meaningful Employment Opportunities for People With Autism](#), Autism Speaks.

⁷ R.D. Austin and G.P. Pisano. P. Neurodiversity as a Competitive Advantage.

Harvard Business Review. Page 95; 96-103. Google Scholar. 2017.

⁸ F. White. "The Overview Effect: Space Exploration and Human Evolution." Independently published. 2021.

⁹ [SpaceBuzz](#).

¹⁰ [SpaceVR](#).

¹¹ A. Dillard. "The Writing Life." Harper Perennial. 2013.

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