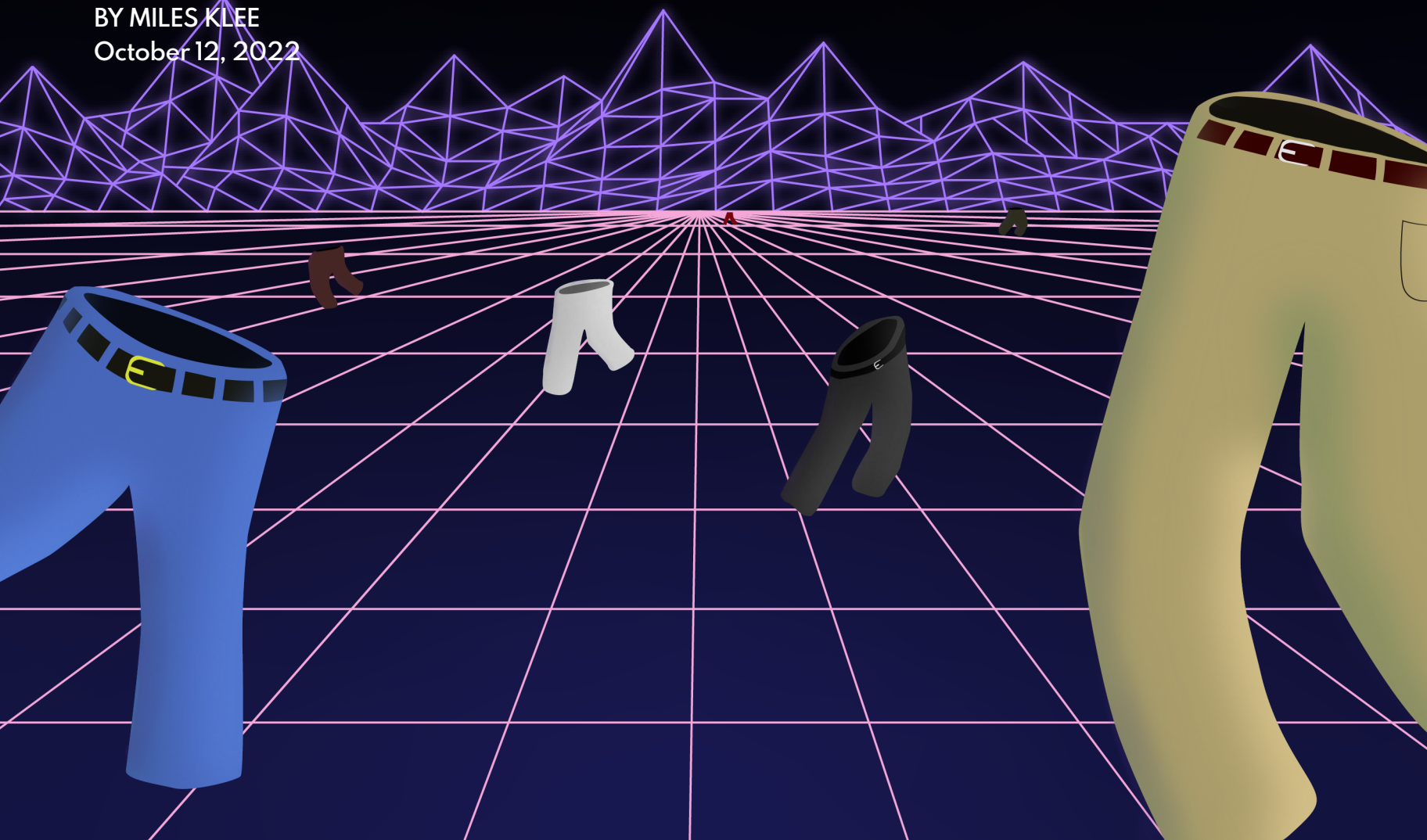


ZUCK OUTTA HERE!

BY MILES KLEE
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AFTER SPENDING BILLIONS ON THE METAVERSE, MARK ZUCKERBERG IS LEFT STANDING ON VIRTUAL LEGS

The latest 'upgrade' to the metaverse must have taken a lot of work, but nobody is impressed

Mark Zuckerberg's dream of a truly immersive virtual landscape for work, play and socializing — "the metaverse" — has been plagued by technical challenges and criticism from the start. But that's to be expected of what purports to be a game-changing Silicon Valley innovation. The corporate line seems to be that with enough time and effort, the doubters mocking every single metaverse update and rollout will be proven wrong, and everyone will happily plug in.

LEGS ARE
COMING
SOON!
ARE YOU
EXCITED?

@MetaHorizon

The people rooting against you wouldn't matter so much if you could make something profitable; instead, the determined CEO has pushed full steam ahead despite minimal customer base and staggering losses

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But another problem for Zuckerberg and his company, Meta, is becoming more urgent. That would be money. The people rooting against you wouldn't matter so much if you could make something profitable; instead, the determined CEO has pushed full steam ahead despite minimal customer base and staggering losses. In 2021 alone, Meta burned \$10 billion on the project. Meanwhile, it implemented a hiring freeze, with Zuckerberg hinting that layoffs are on the table. All of which is relevant context for the metaverse announcement we got this week.

“Legs are coming soon!” declared the account for Horizon Worlds, Meta's virtual gaming platform.

Wow, legs! What's funny here is that Zuckerberg really can't win. The internet mocked the earlier Horizon Worlds avatars for being uncanny floating torsos, and this ridicule no doubt factored into Meta's decision to add legs. For a number of technical reasons—the biggest being that you primarily interact with VR through a headset, not your lower body—this presents a tricky challenge. Now, after programmers put in countless hours on an issue that approximately half of them don't care about (only 58 percent of employees surveyed say they understand

the metaverse strategy), a leg solution can be revealed... to further mockery.

There has been exactly zero footage or images of the metaverse that looks cool, interesting, or even necessary.

@wtflanksteak

Ali Barthwell, a writer for Last Week Tonight, remarked that it's just one more dull glimpse at a boring, lifeless concept. Comedian Rajat Suresh recommended erasing everything but the legs for a “cleaner” look.

my advice? drop the upper body. Just legs running around. It's cleaner

@rajat_suresh

Lots of people snidely compared the news to the evolution of sea creatures capable of walking on land around 375 million years ago.

While others just couldn't get past the absurdity of the phrase “legs are coming soon.”

Again, it's one thing for Meta to faceplant every time they want to show off a

tweak to their VR. It's quite astonishing, though, to consider the amounts of labor and expense that goes into each fix, for a product that has become a consistent punching bag on social media and that the vast majority of Meta's existing customers have no interest in using. It literally cost Zuckerberg billions to get here, and meanwhile, his marketing team wants to directly advertise the hardware to Americans who stand to have their student debt forgiven by the Biden administration. The mind reels.

Plus, as the wording of the Horizon Worlds tweet indicates, the legs aren't even here yet. You, the theoretical user, don't get legs. They'll be here “soon.” Don't ask exactly when, because there's no set date. For now, just be impressed enough by a pre-recorded video of Zuckerberg supposedly demonstrating leg functionality to spend \$1,500 on the high-end goggles that allow you to enter this depressing cartoon universe. Even his staff didn't want to buy the metaverse gear, but I'm sure you'll have a great time with it. **Legs!**

In addition to the new headset and controllers, pre-orders are now open for a variety of related accessories that can boost your Meta Quest Pro experience.

Meta Quest Pro Compact Charging Dock (\$79.99 USD, out October 25)

This two-in-one dock charges your Touch Pro controllers and any Meta Quest headset with a USB-C connection. A 45W USB-C power adapter is included.

Meta Quest Pro Full Light Blocker (\$49.99 USD, out November 22)

A full light-blocking facial interface that easily attaches to Meta Quest Pro for a more immersive experience.

Meta Quest Pro VR Earphones (\$49.99 USD, out October 25)

Tune out background noise and step into a high-fidelity audio experience with a customized fit. Works with the light blocking accessories in place. Separate right and left earphones can connect to either side of the headset, which helps prevent cables from crossing over one another in your field of view.

Meta Quest Pro Carry Case from Incase (\$119.95 USD, out October 25)

A custom-fit inner shell with interior pockets securely stores your Meta Quest Pro and accessories. A lightweight outer shell provides on-the-go protection.