[**Vogue Business Summit**](https://events.voguebusiness.com/summit2021/agenda/session/650649)

*Panel Discussion - “The metaverse: Fashion’s role in a new reality”*

*Pre-Recorded 10/25; Released on 11/10*

**Pre-Record Date:** Tuesday, October 25

**Released:** Wednesday, November 10 (6:30am - 7:15am PT)

**Panel Recording Time:** 7am - 8:30am PT

**Format:** [**Zoom**](https://condenast.zoom.us/j/97026335210?pwd=VHQwRkpHZHN0ZmovTWEzaHE0UDByQT09)

* Meeting ID: 970 2633 5210 | Passcode: 824542
* **Directions**: The Zoom will be pre-recorded and you do not need to use a Zoom background. There is 90 minutes blocked for the pre-record time (will not likely need the full time) and the panel discussion will be more conversational in nature.

**Moderator Information**

**Moderator:** Maghan McDowell

**Email:** [maghan.mcdowell@condenast.com](mailto:maghan.mcdowell@condenast.com)

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**Abstract:**

Fashion has entered the metaverse, opening a new world of possibilities for technology and tools, such as augmented reality try-ons, gaming partnerships and avatars that can interact in digital worlds. It’s a new way to introduce younger customers to luxury brands. This panel will explore what fashion needs to know.

**Outline:**

Intro (Maghan)

* Topline overview of the discussion
* Short intros on panelists

Group Discussion (Maghan) - This panel will be more conversational in nature and we discussed the below topics with Maghan prior.

* What is the metaverse?
* Why is it important for fashion brands? What is the opportunity?
* What is the importance of digital Identity?
* How are brands getting involved - (specific metaverse teams)?
* What’s next?

**About Panel:**

* This will be a pre-recorded 45 minute panel with two other panelists - Burberry’s Rachel Waller, and futurist Cathy Hackl - panel will be moderated by Vogue Business Senior Innovation Editor, Maghan McDowell.
* The panel discussion “The metaverse: Fashion’s role in a new reality” will focus on the innovations in the technology space and how fashion brands are pressing forward utilizing the metaverse.



**Participants:**

**Moderator:** Maghan McDowell

* Maghan has been innovation editor at Vogue Business since January 2019. She was the first technology reporter for WWD and has written for W, Marie Claire, the San Francisco Chronicle and Business of Fashion. Maghan is the voice of the Vogue Business Technology Edit.
* She’s well versed in the metaverse and you’ve spoken to her prior for stories around fashion in the metaverse.

**About** [**Cathy Hackl**](https://www.linkedin.com/in/cathyhackl/)

* Cathy is a leading tech futurist and globally recognized business leader with deep expertise in augmented reality, virtual reality, spatial computing, and the metaverse. As the founder of the Futures Intelligence Group & Future Metaverse Labs, an emerging technology consulting firm and lab, she helps brands and businesses enter the metaverse via virtual goods, virtual worlds, AR, VR, and gaming. 
* Hackl also serves as VP at Avatar Dimension, helping brands in entertainment, fashion, enterprise, and beyond create holograms. Most recently supporting Dimension Studio in London with their work on Balenciaga’s futuristic fusion of volumetric capture and video gaming for the launch of their 2021 Fall Collection, which was one of the largest volumetric video projects ever undertaken.
* She currently hosts a podcast on Adweek and writes regular columns on Forbes about the metaverse. 

**About** [**Rachel Waller**](https://www.linkedin.com/in/rachelwaller/?originalSubdomain=uk)

* Rachel Waller is the Global Vice President of Channel Innovation at Burberry where she leads global teams across digital, brand, social, CRM, experiences, content, communications and digital innovation.
* Previously held various leadership roles at Farfetch from its infancy to IPO across brand, communications, content, digital marketing & social media.

**Key Messaging:**

**Roblox Mission:** Connect billions of people in the metaverse with optimism and civility.

**Roblox Promise:** Our platform enriches the way people connect, create, and express themselves through shared experiences.

**What is the Metaverse?**

* The Metaverse, is the place to be when you can't be in-person - the next iteration of internet that’s immersive; where you experience things rather than clicking on links or watching videos (i.e. walking into a virtual Vans fashion store with your friends and trying on real-time customized shoes instead of clicking designs on a site), and it is bigger than gaming.
  + Whatever you see in real life, we can imagine it in digital life.
* We have been building this platform for 15 years. We don’t see any limitations on what Roblox can be and what people will use it for - a place for people to have shared experiences, be it entertainment and play or fashion, music, work, learning.
  + People want to participate in authentic experiences with their friends
  + We are ushering in the Metaverse and this new category of human co-experience
* Last year’s events (still continuing with the pandemic) underscored the importance of our mission and social aspects of the platform. People come to Roblox to be who they want to be (online identity), socialize with friends, use it for creative expression, etc.
* There’s a wide range of virtual immersive experiences for everyone! From exploring a movie set to walking in a fashion show or teleporting to Paris, becoming your own DJ, or dressing up and enjoying a concert together with friends.

**Why is it important for fashion brands? What is the opportunity?**

* The opportunities in the Metaverse are limitless and are constantly evolving. You can literally build anything you want without having the restraints you would in the real world.
  + When brands learn about the reach of Roblox and how engaged our community is (**millions of users with billions of engagement hours every month)**, they get really excited.
  + One of our key recommendations is that they try to enhance our community’s shared experiences.
* Fashion brands are showing interest because Roblox is a place where the next generation of designers are cutting their teeth, trends are being shaped, and the virtual economy is growing quickly.
* Virtual fashion and branded merchandise is a great way for brands to promote designers, test new ideas, discover new revenue streams and experiment and expand their reach to Gen Z.
* Virtual goods pave the way to a more sustainable future that’s fresh and fun. We see and hear from the next generation of consumers (i.e.Gen Z users on Roblox) that they often value virtual items more than physical ones, especially if they’re hard to get.
* As consumers start to view less as more, it doesn’t mean they’ve stopped wanting to express who they are. They can pursue coveted trendy virtual items, or even limited-edition collectible and couture pieces, at a lower price and without adding more waste to the world or violating their personal sustainability ethics.
* Building persistent branded worlds in the Metaverse offers fans evergreen spaces to enjoy their favorite content, helps maintain and even increase their emotional investment, as well as draw in new audiences. They are the natural evolution of social media interactions, allowing fans to connect with brands, creators, community members, and content curated specifically for them in immersive 3D environments.
* A great example of this is “[Vans World](http://www.roblox.com/Vans)” which we launched last month and is now approaching 45 million visits with 94% positive feedback from the community.
  + An interactive 3D persistent experience developed in partnership with Roblox community developers The Gang Stockholm.
  + The space is inspired by Vans’ signature locations such as House of Vans, the Vans Off the Wall Skatepark in California, Vans retail shops and revered skate destinations from all over the globe.
  + In this persistent space, users have the ability to use the Vans shoe customizer to create.

**What’s the importance of digital Identity?**

* Roblox experiences are social in nature, our community members love dressing up and showing off their latest virtual fashion items, merch, hair styles and overall looks. They adapt their avatars as their real-life interests and preferences evolve and they use their unique identities to connect with friends or belong to a broader community.
  + **1 in 5 of Roblox daily active users update their avatar on any given day** which points to the importance of self-expression through online identity for our community members.
  + **Approximately 2 in 5 of Roblox weekly active users** update their avatar in any given week.
  + And [**around 50% of our users**](https://corp.roblox.com/2019/08/roblox-reaches-100-million-monthly-active-user-milestone/) update their avatars monthly.
* Self-identity is a crucial pillar of the metaverse, and the ability to precisely customize your clothing to your unique tastes is key to personal expression.
* We recently announced that **Layered Clothing** is coming to Roblox at our annual developers conference a few weeks ago.
  + With Layered Clothing, you can layer entirely new 3D items on top of any body, and our technology will intelligently fit the layered items on the body.
    - The goal is to let Roblox users swap clothes just like one would every day in the real world and this is the next big step in the evolution of the Roblox avatar.
  + Layered Clothing will spur creativity for creators and players alike and creates boundless opportunities to explore new design elements and revenue streams within their own Roblox creations.
  + Initially Roblox developers and UGC creators will be able to incorporate their own Layered Clothing items into their experiences for the Roblox community to enjoy in-experience.In early 2022, Layered Clothing items will be available to wear across Roblox experiences, allowing users to express themselves in the metaverse.

**How are brands getting involved - (specific metaverse teams)?**

* It really varies. Brands have been on the platform for the past eight plus years and we’ve worked with many brands, from entertainment to fashion to music to sports to create experiences and virtual items.
* Each experience is unique and varies from creating virtual items and collaborating with top Roblox developers and experiences, to building persistent worlds. In the earlier days, we saw brands coming on to create exclusive avatars, digital items and even scavenger hunts. Now brands use the platform for a variety of different experiences, including creating persistent worlds that live and breathe 365 days a year and serve as places where fans can gather and enjoy exclusive content, connecting with their friends and having access to experiences that may not be replicated in the real world.
* We also see brands more and more embracing our existing creator community to help build the experience and items. For example, Vans partnered with Roblox developer studio The Gang Stockholm to build their [Vans World](https://www.roblox.com/vans) experience, and Gucci worked with creator Rook Vanguard on virtual items for their [Gucci Garden](https://blog.roblox.com/2021/05/gucci-garden-experience/).
* The most successful collaborations on Roblox involve brands listening to our community and engaging with it in an authentic way. When brands listen and iterate on the feedback shared, users feel like they’re a part of creating the experience together and engage more.
* For brands to breakthrough, an experience needs to be authentic, natural, and creative. Our users expect a blend of physical and virtual experiences.
* Just like 15 years ago when brands were building teams to advertise on social media, every brand will need a metaverse strategy in the future and the ones that have them now are at the forefront.

**What’s next?**

* We expect people to engage in a vast range of activities. Whether they are historical in nature (visiting ancient Rome), going to an awesome concert, perhaps for the first time, or learning through shared experiences (like dissecting a simulated frog with others in an online classroom) we continue to make long-term bets with innovative engineering to improve the realism, fidelity, and intensity of how we interact online.
* Looking forward, I’m excited about the areas we are focused on to continue to grow our business. We are focused on four core areas:
  + **Investment in our platform**, including continued improvements of the avatars, 3D tech and social features.
    - We recently announced expanded opportunities for UGC applications in Roblox at our annual developer conference. The latest updates to avatar UGC include **Layered Clothing** Studio beta, which allows players to express the breadth and depth of their identities. These releases represent important stepping stones in a long line of innovations to improve the expressiveness and combinatorics in the metaverse.
  + **Expanding our age demographic**, which we are already seeing strong progress towards with users aged 17 to 24 now growing faster than those under 13. Users over 13 years old now make up half of our community.
  + **Extending our geographic reach**, we are already in 180 countries and support 11 languages, but we have room to continue to grow into new and existing markets.
  + **Increase monetization**, including expanding our Premium subscription product and helping developers earn more money which they will in-turn use to invest further in their experiences on the platform.
    - Latest development - we announced we’ll be offering UGC items as limiteds.

**Tough Q&A**

**How do you know this isn’t just a buzzword, that it’s materializing?**

* Building the platform for well over a decade, vision early on, see real-life experiences moving to the metaverse firsthand, especially last year (concerts, graduations, birthday parties, Thanksgiving celebrations, [Princeton Campus](https://www.dailyprincetonian.com/article/2020/06/members-of-the-princeton-class-of-2024-unveil-virtual-interactive-campus-in-roblox) reproduced for new students, music festivals, etc.).
* We used it to connect our own employees (Roblox HQ) while working remotely, celebrating workaversaries, holidays.
* People making real friends, meaningful connections, memories. For some Lil Nas X was their first concert ever, for example. We know it’s real.
* Instead of clicking on sites to read about something or watch a video, people enjoy walking into immersive virtual spaces with their friends to experience, explore, socialize, or even connect with their favorite brands and artists (we see this more immersive version of the internet materialize on Roblox).

**If asked about Facebook, you could reuse Dave’s comments from earnings:**

* We believe that the metaverse must be a civil and safe platform that welcomes people of all ages, where everyone (be it a 7 y.o. or a 30 y.o.) has a positive, civil experience. This is very complicated to achieve. We think it's much easier to start from that civility and safety foundation [that Roblox has] and then open up the freedom than to try to reel it back in and go the other direction.
* Pure player - since our inception
* Developer community - 9.5M +

**Interoperability**

* We are open to it, but usually comes with more mature technology and as technology evolves (right now it’s early stages of this next, immersive iteration of the internet)

**NFT Messaging:**

* A form of this is already taking place on Roblox: we already have “limited” items offered as part of events on the platform. Users then can sell or trade these items on the platform, creating a vibrant marketplace for valuable virtual goods.
* The recent Gucci Garden experience was a good example of that, with virtual goods selling in-experience and then being resold among users for amounts higher than their real life counterparts.
* Just announced at RDC 2021 that we’ll enable UGC items as limiteds, so the original creator could earn Robux for both that initial sale and the resale. With these limited items, the creator name will be listed so it’s easy verify the source, and account names are unique, so purchasers will know they are buying from a verified source. Additionally, developers will be able to watermark their assets.

**If asked about IP Rights (i.e. Squid Games):**

* The Roblox community is quick to react to real-life trends and express their current interests through immersive and interactive fan content they create and participate in. We see this through the development of immersive experiences inspired by trending news/content or dressing up their avatars in the latest fashion trends recreated in virtual hangouts.
* This lightning-fast reflection of real-life interests in the form of immersive content is unique to Roblox, speaks to our platform’s social nature, and current generational and cultural ubiquity. Spending time in the Metaverse has clearly shaped the way people now see the world and vice versa, and it is impacting how they express themselves creatively through outlets like Roblox, leveraging technology and interactivity in new and unprecedented ways.
* In addition, As a platform powered by a community of creators, we are committed to protecting intellectual property rights - from independent developers and creators, to brands - and require all Roblox community members to abide by our Terms of Use. We do not tolerate copyright infringement and expeditiously respond to any valid Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) request by removing any infringing content.