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What is the enterprise metaverse and why is it important?

Last year, Facebook became a trailblazer in supercharging metaverse discourse. Many organisations are becoming acutely aware of the opportunities virtual realities hold and over the next 12 months, we'll likely see many deals and acquisitions being completed in the field.

What exactly is the enterprise metaverse?

Whilst you can trace the term 'metaverse' back to science fiction works of the 1990s, namely Snow Crash by Neal Stephenson and Ready Player One by Ernest Cline, the modern-day iteration of metaverse is seen by some as the successor to our current internet.

The definition of metaverse, now, is the gradual convergence of the digital world with the physical world, a world where we no longer notice a distinction between our digital avatars and our physical selves. It is a world where smart lenses and various devices enable us to be surrounded by information – interactive information for work, education, and more. This is the next iteration of the internet and what prompted Zuckerberg to hail the metaverse as its 'successor'.

Such concepts might be familiar to MMORPG gamers, or those who use Second Life – the elements of the metaverse have essentially evolved or been adopted from such concepts found in these games. Far from being a world just for gamers, however, the metaverse opens up a world of possibilities for businesses – a term that has been coined the 'enterprise metaverse.'

How does the enterprise metaverse work?

The main goal of the enterprise *metaverse* is to bring people together for work, and at the foundation is digital twins. Digital twins enable you to create rich digital models of anything physical or logical, from simple assets or products to complex environments. These environments can be anything from roads and rail to warehouses, factories and homes —anything that's important to you.

Once it's modelled, it can be brought to life and synchronised with the physical world using sensors and IoT connections. This initial binding of the physical and digital is foundational to enabling the enterprise metaverse.

Once this foundation is in place, we can then start applying software techniques to your model. From there, the world essentially becomes your digital canvas. You can run analytics to gain insights from the history of changes to your environment. You can predict future states of the environment – foreseeing when roads will need repairing, or anticipating occupancy needs in buildings before they happen.

Insights can be achieved by using these models to apply 'what if' scenarios in the digital world and once complete, you can apply insights from the simulated copy to the real world twin in the physical environment to realise the benefits. You can even create and automate routine tasks and enhance them with systems that learn and improve over time.

Finally, one of the most powerful things you can do is interact with both the digital model and colleagues and experts in the virtual space. This proves very useful when it comes to surveying or assessing remote and dangerous sites in full fidelity. Imagine being able to inspect a ceiling without needing a ladder, calling up a data overlay that shows you pollutants and volatile gasses.

The benefits and possibilities of the metaverse and the metaverse for business are endless. For large and small organisations alike, other potential hurdles such as accessibility and diversity are less of a difficulty than they seem.

If businesses are expected to soar in the near future and maintain employee engagement and productivity, this is a world they can no longer ignore.

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