



"The Metaverse: From Dream to Reality (and Why We're Not There Yet)"

Exploring the origins, evolution, and future of digital worlds.

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1. Introduction: What is the Metaverse?

Define the Metaverse:

- A persistent, interconnected digital universe enabling immersive experiences, interaction, and creation.
- **Core Characteristics:** Interoperability, persistence, user-driven content, real-world integration.

Transition into the **conceptual leap**:

- The Metaverse represents an evolution of the internet, transforming it from 2D to 3D, from viewing to living it.



2. The Origins of the Metaverse

- **Sci-Fi as a Catalyst**
- Introduce the origins of the Metaverse in fiction:
 - The Holodeck in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987)
 - Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* (1992) coined the term and set the tone.
 - **Other depictions:** *Ready Player One*, *Johnny Mnemonic*, and *The Matrix*, showing immersive worlds, digital economies, and human interaction within cyberspaces.



2. The Origins of the Metaverse

- **Real-World Precursors** Early experiments that embodied Metaverse-like traits:
 - **Cybertown:** A virtual city with governance and social structures.
 - **Second Life:** A platform where users created, traded, and interacted in a persistent digital economy.



3. The Metaverse Today: What It Is Not

- Highlight the gap between the *concept* and current platforms:
- **Modern Platforms (e.g., Fortnite, Roblox, Decentraland):**
 - Walled gardens with gamified objectives.
 - Limited to no interoperability or cross-platform continuity.
 - More parallel to sandbox games than interconnected metaverses.
- Contrast with the ideals of a true Metaverse:
 - Persistent, interoperable, user-driven spaces with free-flowing digital identities and economies.



4. The Vision: A Technological Leap

- Position the Metaverse as the "next-generation internet":
 - **Digital Mirror of Reality:** Recreating real-world structures and interactions in virtual spaces and also expanding on the real-world with the use of AR.
 - **Enhanced Connectivity:** Utilizing 5G, AR/VR, and AI for immersive, real-time engagement.
 - **Global Interoperability:** Bridging platforms into a seamless ecosystem.
- **Sci-Fi vs. Reality**
- Show side-by-side comparisons:
 - Fictional Metaverses (*Ready Player One's* Oasis) vs. Today's Isolated Platforms.
 - **Key Missing Components:** Interconnectivity, user ownership, and scalability.



5. Why the Current Platforms Fall Short

- Discuss technological and systemic barriers:
 - Lack of open standards and decentralized control.
 - VRML / 3DGL as a standard instead of HTML5 or a mix of both.
 - An open platform for development.
 - Corporate control limiting user agency.
 - The game corporations want to keep a close wall to every platform they create, not allowing interoperability.
 - The few versions of so called Metaverses have not been open sourced nor developed as an open space, most of them have been using old technologies from the game industry and involving crypto as an asset collector.
 - Economic and resource hurdles for scaling immersive experiences.

6. Learning from the Past: The Forgotten Metaverses

- Revisit earlier platforms:
- How **Second Life** allowed for user freedom, persistent economies, and social creativity.
- What modern platforms can learn from these experiments:
 - Prioritize user agency over gamified experiences.
 - Focus on creating *spaces*, not *games*.



7. Looking Ahead: Building the Metaverse

- Highlight the roadmap for making the Metaverse a reality:
 - **Technological Developments:**
 - AR/VR technologies are evolving every year and becoming cheaper too. This could lead to a big leap into a more immersive internet.
 - Blockchain (or alternative) it offers a way of protection and a way for decentralization allowing everyone to develop and own a piece of your digital assets.
 - AI, the development of AI has been accelerating rapidly, involving AI could lead to big leaps in technology and easier access for everyone.
 - Cross- Platform interoperability is the main issue here, If you as a person want to create a "digital version" of yourself to live on the Metaverse, play games, carry your assets and so on. Right now there is no viable ways to do so. We have "socialmedia" accounts that we use with this sort of purpose, but those are not safe, nor interoperable.
 - **Cultural and Ethical Considerations:**
 - Privacy is one of those big issues, as named above. The users have to be protected, making a user agreement only protect the companies not the users. This has to be changed.
 - Accessibility is also an issue, if we want to truly experience the Metaverse, we will need to use a VR headset, and this can be costly.
 - Decentralization for this to be able to happen, we will need to either get the governments involved and make most things open and transparent.
 - **Community-driven Growth:**
 - Ensuring users not corporations define the Metaverse, this is how the internet was created.

The Metaverse Dream

- End on an aspirational note:
 - The Metaverse, when realized, could redefine how we connect, work, and play.
 - It's more than just games or virtual worlds; it's a **new layer of existence**

