Press contact:
Antara Nandy
Tel: + 91 9674515119
Email: antara.nandy@capgemini.com

Nine in ten consumers are curious about the metaverse

Organizations expect the metaverse and immersive experiences to be an important channel not only for consumer interactions but also enhanced employee and workforce experiences

Paris, December 8, 2022 – According to a new report from the Capgemini Research Institute, 'Total Immersion: How Immersive Experiences and the Metaverse Benefit Customer Experience and Operations', 77% of consumers expect immersive experiences to impact how they interact with people, brands and services, and seven out of ten organizations say that they believe immersive experiences will be a key differentiator in their markets, particularly in relation to the customer journey. Out of the small group of metaverse-experienced consumers[1], three-quarters say they are currently using it and will continue to do so, which indicates there is potential for businesses that can harness the power of this much-hyped immersive experience.

In July and August 2022, the Capgemini Research Institute surveyed 8,000 consumers and 1,000 organizations in 12 countries to understand what potential consumers and organizations see in these immersive and metaverse experiences, whether delivered through headsets or mobile/web browsers etc. The report finds that while the actual decentralized "metaverse", based on blockchain technology, is still in development, the broad opportunities it presents to drive value across the business are already in the process of realization.

"*We're starting to see a more thoughtful and nuanced approach to designing immersive experiences, and the metaverse specifically,"* comments Charlton Monsanto, Global Immersive Experiences Offer Leader at Capgemini. "*This report supports the notion that early interest in the consumer-facing metaverse, propelled by investments from major players, needs to give enough thought to the real challenges around ergonomics, accessibility, safety and privacy, which organizations are now working to address. The potential of the metaverse is transformative and consumer curiosity remains high. Immersive experiences – including the metaverse – for internal use cases could be more impactful for organizations, certainly in the short term."*

Consumers are clear about the immediate potential of immersive use cases

Research finds that consumers are intrigued by the prospects of immersive and metaverse experiences, and they would like to use the metaverse mainly as a place to interact with their family, friends (43%) and even their colleagues (39%). Amongst the brands they would be most interested in interacting with in the metaverse, they cite retail shopping (78%) and consumer product organizations (77%), i.e., enhancing their purchasing or try-on experience for high-engagement products such as cars, furniture, and household electronics.

There is significant potential for employee and workforce experiences

As indicated by the interviews, organizations have already successfully implemented immersive and metaverse initiatives, especially to improve operational efficiency, for example:

- **Retail floor planning in CPR,** where viewing a floor virtually enables organizations to plan their retail store design without teams having to travel there

[1] "Metaverse-experienced consumers" account for 4% of the sample population and circa. 380 consumers

- **Training and education of medical professionals (and other industries),** which allows surgeons to plan, rehearse and carry out procedures using headsets and 3D scans of patients
- **Testing and digital prototyping in automotive,** where VR is used for design and engineering reviews. By reducing the number of prototypes built, organizations can save millions of dollars while enabling considerable environmental savings.

However, many organizations lack a clear strategy to scale their immersive and metaverse initiatives

With the development of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies, the increased pace of digitization due to the pandemic and greater concern for sustainability, organizations across sectors have developed immersive experience pilots and demos at a fast pace in recent years. For the consumer products and retail (CPR) sector specifically, some businesses are piloting immersive use cases such as AR for virtual home decor, electronics and other items (24%) or to create new, more engaging, consumer experiences (25%).

According to the report, 66% of organizations now have a 1–2-year roadmap for immersive experiences and 15% of organizations aim to have some metaverse presence within one year, while 45% believe it will be mainstream within three years. However, many organizations are currently adopting a prudent approach.

In addition to external factors hampering such initiatives (lack of maturity of the technology, lack of connectivity infrastructure etc.), the report finds that there are significant internal challenges for businesses to take full advantage of this consumer appetite and scale up - a lack of strategic planning, and for nearly 40% of organizations, immersive initiatives are still considered one-off projects rather than one link in a chain of continuous improvement. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of businesses admit that there is no management commitment to immersive initiatives and over half (56%) cite that they have no clear roadmap to adoption.

Safety, privacy and inclusivity aspects are important for a sense of community

Curiosity about the metaverse is perhaps tempered by worries about the technology itself. Based on a social media scan of over 180,000 conversations, the research found that concerns around sexual harassment, personal safety, and privacy issues are top of consumers' minds.

If the metaverse is considered to be a network of virtual worlds, safety and ethical aspects will be important to establish the sense of community that is central to its mass adoption. Whether for consumer or employee/workplace use cases, brands will need to address these concerns before they create and deploy their virtual spaces, and have a way to regulate them, while balancing privacy and security issues.

Read the full report here.

Notes to editors

* Capgemini defines the metaverse as a type of immersive experience and a 'network of virtual worlds' where people can play, shop, socialize, learn, and work via their avatars. Using an open network of decentralized 3D virtual and hybrid spaces, the metaverse exists in parallel to the physical world and is designed to combine online digital and real-life experiences, independent of place, time, or device.

** Capgemini defines an immersive experience as one that combines one or more of the following interactions across a journey, moment or task:

- Flat (2D) user interfaces: An enhanced experience accessed through a flat interface such as a smartphone/personal computer (PC)/app such as an augmented camera for scanning QR codes, a virtual walkthrough of houses, cars, and locations (Google Maps' Live view) or virtual try-on of cosmetics, glasses, and clothes or furniture placement (Amazon AR, IKEA AR).

- Natural and spatial interfaces: Experiences realized through natural sensory interactions (audio, visual/sight, temperature, gesture, haptic, touch, motion, and smell). Examples are voice assistants (e.g., Siri, Alexa); gestures (Microsoft Kinect, Nintendo's Wii) or through touch (e.g., by using Nest thermostats). Spatial interactions where we interact with a space through biometric sensors (i.e. facial recognition)
- Extended Reality (3D):AR, VR, MR experiences accessed through headsets and 3D visualization and projection, which enhance reality or create simulations. These interactions can enable augmented reality (Google Glass, "heads-up" display mounts on cars, etc.) or virtual reality (Oculus, SteamVR, etc.) or a combination.

Survey respondents were given the same definition of "immersive experiences" and "metaverse" as defined above, along with detailed illustrations.

Capgemini's Metaverse-Lab, a coordinating hub for research and solutions, is designed to help clients explore the possibilities of the emerging technologies, and shape and execute their metaverse strategies. R&D programs cover the future of immersive human-machine interfaces and controllers, work in the metaverse, digital twins, blockchain, Web3 and decentralized approaches. Read more about here.

Methodology
The Capgemini Research Institute surveyed 8,000 consumers over the age of 18 years in 12 countries across Asia Pacific, Europe, and North America in July and August 2022 to understand what consumers think about AR/VR and other mobile/web-based immersive applications including the metaverse,. It also surveyed 1,000 organizations across consumer products, retail, discrete manufacturing, life sciences, media and content, telecom, banking and insurance sectors to investigate how organizations are harnessing these immersive technologies for their internal operations. This research was supplemented with in-depth interviews with executives and technology partners in this space, as well as a social listening study comprising Google search analytics, social-media analytics, and sentiment analysis and emotion detection.

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