

Facebook assembles team to build 'metaverse'

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Facebook on Monday said it was combining specialists from across its hardware, gaming and virtual reality units to build an immersive digital world known as the "metaverse."

The "metaverse," a term coined by sci-fi writer Neal Stephenson, refers to a shared online world in which multiple users can hang out, spend money, consume media and potentially even work.

The project is seen as central to Facebook's future by CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

"Today we're standing up a Metaverse product group... to bring together the teams focused on responsibly building this ambitious work," Facebook executive Andrew Bosworth said in a post.

"The defining quality of the Metaverse will be presence—the feeling of really being there with people."

Facebook hardware such as Portal smart-screens and Oculus virtual reality head gear are already tools for making people feel close together despite being far apart, according to Bosworth.

"To achieve our full vision of the Metaverse, we also need to build the [connective tissue](#) between these spaces," he said.

Vishal Shah from the Instagram team will head a new Metaverse Product Group.

Epic Games, the US company behind video [game](#) sensation Fortnite, early this year announced it raised \$1 billion in new funding, with some of that money to support its vision of the metaverse.

Hit video games such as Fortnite have seen use soar during the pandemic, and their creators see potential to expand to virtual parties, get-togethers or work events.

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