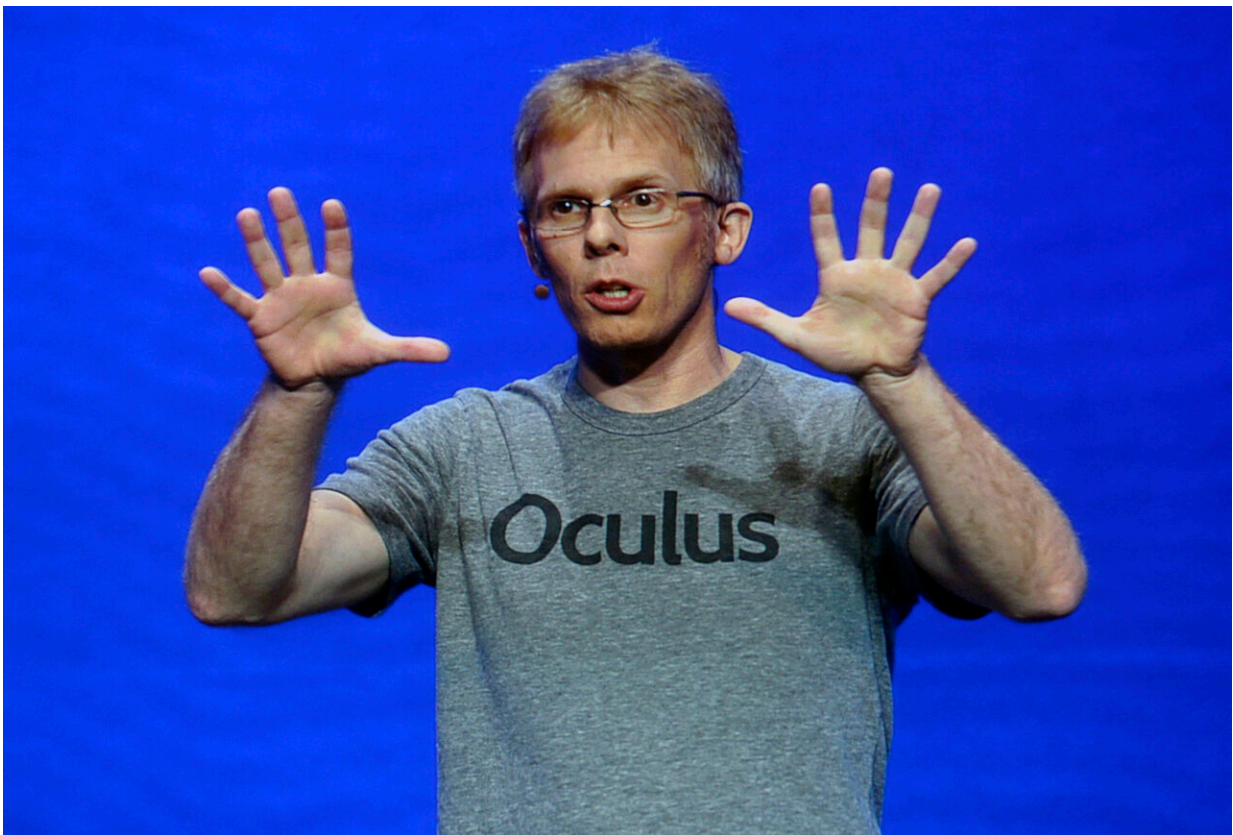


Frustrated virtual reality pioneer leaves Facebook's parent

December 17 2022, by Michael Liedtke



John Carmack speaks during the Oculus 2 conference in Los Angeles, Thursday, Sept. 24, 2015. Carmack cut his ties with Meta Platforms, a holding company created last year by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, in a Friday, Dec. 16, 2022 letter that vented his frustration as he stepped down as an executive consultant in virtual reality. Credit: AP Photo/Nick Ut, File

A prominent video game creator who helped lead Facebook's expansion into virtual reality has resigned from the social networking service's corporate parent after becoming disillusioned with the way the technology is being managed.

John Carmack cut his ties with Meta Platforms, a [holding company](#) created last year by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, in a Friday letter that vented his frustration as he stepped down as an executive consultant in [virtual reality](#).

"There is no way to sugar coat this; I think our organization is operating at half the effectiveness that would make me happy," Carmack wrote in the letter, [which he shared on Facebook](#). ""Some may scoff and contend we are doing just fine, but others will laugh and say, 'Half? Ha! I'm at quarter efficiency!""

In response to an inquiry about Carmack's resignation and remarks, Meta on Saturday directed The Associated Press to a tweet from its [chief technology officer](#) and head of its reality labs, Andrew Bosworth. ""It is impossible to overstate the impact you've had on our work and the industry as a whole," Bosworth wrote [in his grateful tweet](#) addressed to Carmack.

Carmack's departure comes at a time that Zuckerberg, Meta's CEO, has been battling widespread perceptions that he has been wasting billions of dollars trying to establish the Menlo Park, California, company in the "metaverse"—an artificial world filled with avatars of real people.

While the metaverse losses have been mounting, Facebook and affiliated services such as Instagram have been suffering a [downturn in advertising](#) that brings in most of the company's revenue. The decline has been brought on by a combination of recession fears, tougher competition from other social networking services such as TikTok and privacy

controls on Apple's iPhone that have made it tougher to track people's interests to help sell ads.

Those challenges have caused Meta's stock to lose nearly two-thirds of its value so far this year, wiping out about \$575 billion in shareholder wealth.



Meta's logo can be seen on a sign at the company's headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif., on Nov. 9, 2022. John Carmack cut his ties with Meta Platforms, a holding company created last year by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, in a Friday, Dec. 16, 2022 letter that vented his frustration as he stepped down as an executive consultant in virtual reality. Credit: AP Photo/Godofredo A. Vásquez, File

Although Carmack had only been working part time at Meta, the dismay that he expressed seems likely to amplify the questions looming over Zuckerberg's efforts to become as dominant in virtual reality as Facebook has been in [social networking](#) since he started the service nearly 20 years ago while attending Harvard University.

Zuckerberg began to explore virtual reality in earnest in 2014 with Facebook's \$2 billion purchase of headset maker Oculus. At the time, Carmack was Oculus' chief technology officer and then joined Facebook after the deal closed. Before joining Oculus, Carmack was best known as the co-creator of the video game Doom.

Federal regulators are now trying to limit Zuckerberg's sway in virtual reality by preventing his attempt to buy Within Unlimited, which makes a fitness app designed for the metaverse.

Carmack testified earlier this week in a trial pitting the Federal Trade Commission against Meta over the fate of the deal. Zuckerberg is expected to testify at some point in the trial, which is scheduled to resume Monday in San Jose, California.

Despite his frustration with the way things have been going at Meta, Carmack praised its latest virtual [reality](#) headset, the Quest 2, in his resignation letter. He described the headset as "almost exactly what I wanted to see from the beginning" of his Oculus tenure.

"It is successful, and successful products make the world a better place," Carmack said of the Quest 2. "It all could have happened a bit faster and been going better if different decisions had been made, but we built something pretty close to The Right Thing."

But Carmack ended his letter with this entreaty: "Maybe it actually is possible to get there by just plowing ahead with current practices, but

there is plenty of room for improvement. Make better decisions and fill your products with 'Give a Damn!'"

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