

Meta putting AI in smart glasses, assistants and more

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Ray-Ban and Meta's second-generation smart glasses come with the promise of letting an AI-powered digital assistant help the wearer through the day.

Meta chief Mark Zuckerberg on Wednesday said the tech giant is putting artificial intelligence into digital assistants and smart glasses as it

seeks to gain lost ground in the AI race.

Zuckerberg made his announcements at the Connect developers conference at Meta's headquarters in Silicon Valley, the company's main annual product event.

"Advances in AI allow us to create different (applications) and personas that help us accomplish different things," Zuckerberg said as he kicked off the gathering.

"And smart glasses are going to eventually allow us to bring all of this together into a stylish form factor that we can wear."

Smart glasses are one of the many ways that [tech companies](#) have tried to move beyond the smartphone as a user-friendly device, but so far with little success.

The second-generation Meta Ray-Ban smart glasses made in a partnership with EssilorLuxottica will have a starting price of \$299 when they hit the market on October 17.

The [smart glasses](#) also add the ability for users to stream what they are seeing in real time, Zuckerberg said.

"Smart glasses are the ideal form factor for you to let AI assistants see what you're seeing and hear what you're hearing."

Meta also introduced 28 AI characters that people can message on WhatsApp, Messenger and Instagram with "personalities" based on celebrities including Snoop Dogg, Paris Hilton and YouTube star MrBeast.

Zuckerberg demonstrated an interaction with one such AI from the stage

in a type-written chat, promising that the new bots would soon be voiced.

"This is our first effort at training a bunch of AI that are a bit more fun," Zuckerberg said.

"But look, this is early stuff and these still have a lot of limitations, which you will see when you use them."

The event was the first in-person edition of Connect since 2019, before the pandemic, and announcements on generative AI were widely expected.

Meta has taken a much more cautious approach than its rivals Microsoft, OpenAI and Google to push out AI products, prioritizing [small steps](#) and making its in-house models available to developers and researchers.

'Best value'

Meta also unveiled the latest version of its Quest [virtual reality headset](#) with richer graphics, improved audio and the ability for a wearer to see what is around them without taking the gear off, a demonstration for AFP showed.

"This is going to be a big game changer and a big capacity improvement for these headsets," Zuckerberg told developers gathered in a Meta headquarters courtyard.

Quest 3 headsets are priced starting at \$499 and will begin shipping on October 10, according to Meta.

This is substantially cheaper than Apple's Vision Pro, which will cost a hefty \$3,499 when it is available early next year, in the United States only.

The Quest 3 "is going to be the best value on the market for a long time to come," said Meta Chief Technology Officer Andrew Bosworth, to laughter from the audience.

New game titles for Quest 3 included Assassin's Creed Nexus from Ubisoft as well as a Roblox game.

"Meta is trying to bring a much upgraded version of (mixed-reality) to the masses," said Insider Intelligence principal analyst Yory Wurmser.

Meta chief product officer Chris Cox joked to journalists that his sister complains that she often winds up punching furniture when using [virtual reality](#), and that problem goes away when gear instead digitally augments the real world around a person.

"We think that mixed reality is a really big step from virtual reality, which is basically a fully occluded thing," Cox said.

"That will help make this more useful for more people."

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