

Healthcare in the Metaverse

Description

The metaverse signals the end of the era of the smartphone. We all got accustomed to checking emails, doing work, paying bills and socializing over our mobile devices, but all of that is transitioning over to a new system. The metaverse will be a combination of using virtual reality and augmented reality technology to operate in a virtual world.

Industries are quickly catching up to have a role in the metaverse. For instance, Ralph Lauren launched a holiday experience that features Ralph Lauren outfits for the game *Roblox*. As part of the game, users can unlock accessories, go ice skating and toast marshmallows â?? and this is just the beginning. Eventually, every company will have a role in the metaverse in the same way every company had to create a mobile website when mobile devices became the centralized method for communication.

â??Our engagement in the metaverse is a natural extension of our lifestyle brand which, at its core, has always been about stepping into the worlds of Ralph Lauren,â?• Ralph Lauren chief digital and content officer Alice Delahunt said.

The *New York Times* also recently reported that a couple â?? or rather, their avatars â?? got married in the metaverse. Though not legally binding, the metaverse is a way for couples to celebrate much like Zoom has become.

The luxury that both VR and AR provide is that with virtual reality, a user is completely immersed in the metaverse, which becomes a complete virtual environment. With augmented reality, users are partially immersed â?? with one foot in the metaverse and one foot in reality.

Just like many industries are now racing to have a presence in the metaverse, healthcare will be performed in the metaverse as well. In fact, it already is. Forms of therapy that take place using virtual reality and augmented reality technologies are all happening in the metaverse. Physical therapy, cognitive therapy, support groups and rehabilitation have all been taking place in the metaverse even before the term existed.

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The metaverse will pose some unique challenges to the healthcare industry. One unique obstacle will be ensuring that patientsâ?? confidential information, protected under HIPAA, is safe and secure. Creating a healthcare subsection in the metaverse to ensure that all patient data is protected could potentially be one way to provide safety and privacy.

Healthcare providers will also be challenged in how to make the telehealth experience that includes consultations, remote exams and digital therapeutics even better than the in-person experience.

Some other challenges may include adoption. How will Meta and other tech companies attract people to the metaverse? Will they need to go to a physical location? Will they have glasses at home? When it comes to the healthcare industry, how will the elderly population â?? which is typically not as well-versed in technology â?? enter the metaverse? Adoption could most likely be the biggest challenge.

Of course, healthcare companies will also need to create a new business model that is aligned with patient health insurance, reimbursements and prescriptions all in this new virtual universe.

However, with these challenges will also come a user experience that is essentially limitless, breaking down the barriers of location and providing endless opportunities for patients around the world.

Category

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