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A Beginner's Guide to the Metaverse

[The metaverse](#) is in everyone's mind today. We have collected some of the more popular questions to help people understand and begin to explore the metaverse.

Depending on your relationship to video games and artificial intelligence (AI), the metaverse may incite fears of a dystopian future or a happy virtual reality.

You can't bring up the metaverse to someone and expect the conversation to be simple and digestible. There's no singular definition of what exactly the metaverse is, for starters, but beyond initial confusion, people worry. How will data be used? Will virtual relationships replace human touch? The anxiety has range and many flavors.

Yet, so does the excitement: Does a metaverse future mean online shopping for the right-sized piece of clothing will be easier, thanks to custom-sized avatars? Will Web 3 finally force advertisers to learn from big tech's mistakes and respect consumer privacy? And will people be able to earn universal basic income via crypto tokens for playing games online and going to their favorite metaverse concerts from their computers? (If so, introverts rejoice!)

Everyone – even the experts – has questions about the metaverse. So we decided to compile some of the questions we hear a lot, along with some we imagine you're dying to ask and got answers.

A brief glance at metaverse

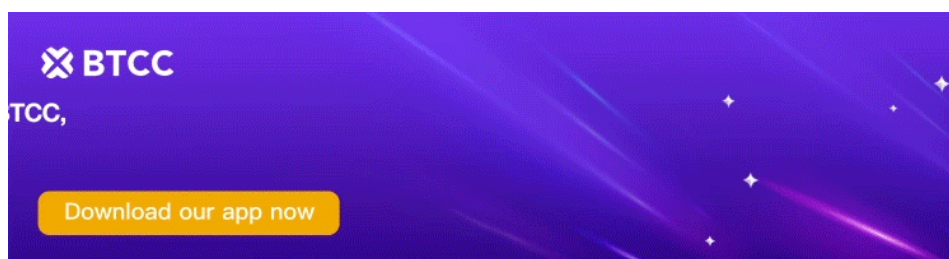
We're starting with the basics, because there's no room for imposter syndrome in Web 3. What's the metaverse, exactly?

Poet and non-fungible token (NFT) artist Sasha Stiles speaks of the metaverse by looking at the word itself: The Greek prefix “meta” means higher, beyond, often even transcending. And the “verse” part comes from the word “universe,” to indicate that the metaverse is a universe that transcends the one we currently inhabit.

Yes, this is a philosophical definition. Bringing it back down to earth, the metaverse is a technological infrastructure that allows for human interaction to move beyond physical and geographic barriers. In some ways, we’ve already been living in the metaverse. Gamers certainly have been with not only virtual-reality games, digital avatars and online communities, but even in-game concerts in Fortnite from the likes of Travis Scott.

Most metaverse enthusiasts argue that the global coronavirus pandemic accelerated the use of technology, and now many of us are used to having interactions across technology, whether on Zoom work calls, Face Time with family members or selling physical wares on Facebook Marketplace. The metaverse as people in Web 3 know it will simply enhance these experiences by equipping consumers with digital wallets containing their cryptocurrency (money) and any digital assets they own in the form of NFTs.

“The metaverse is an immersive universal 3D overlay on real life,” said Isla Perfito, co-founder and CEO of Sator, a blockchain-based entertainment platform. “As an alternate form of reality, we are able to navigate the virtual worlds as we would the physical, you are able to move and interact as you would in real life with the added ability to defy the physics we are bound to as humans on planet Earth.”



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How to access it

To participate in the metaverse, you need a compatible crypto wallet. Most popular metaverse worlds and gaming platforms operate on the [Ethereum](#) blockchain, but some operate on Solana or other layer 1 blockchains. To enter a metaverse, you need to sign up for a wallet that works on whatever blockchain the world is built on, then link it in your internet browser.

Here are some popular metaverse and gaming platforms and what blockchains they operate on:

- **Ethereum blockchain**
- **Solana blockchain**
- **Polygon**
- **BNB Chain**

You can also get fully immersed by wearing a set of VR goggles, which let you control your avatar with your own physical movements, but it's not required.

What do you actually own there?

So, if everything is digital, what do you actually own in the metaverse?

Imagine you're a video game player, and you collect a special token or prize that gives you extra lives. In the video game, your avatar could store these items in a digital backpack. That's an easy enough concept that anyone who's collected gold coins while playing Super Mario can understand.

In the metaverse, ownership will (and already does) operate similarly. Except now, thanks to [blockchain technology](#), you can create a digital deed (aka record) of this transaction. Blockchain is a giant digital ledger that stores all of this information forever, and your assets don't go away just because you turn off the computer or gaming console.

Taking things a step further, metaverse companies are finding ways to expand the definition of digital ownership beyond just video game prizes. The platform Mirror lets writers post content for others to consume, and readers may decide to offer the creator cryptocurrency for it in exchange for some type of ownership.

Brave, an internet browser, lets users opt in to the amount of ads they want to see. When users choose to view more ads, they are rewarded with Brave Attention Tokens (BAT), which get stored in a crypto wallet for consumers to use how they wish.

Similarly, Perfito's company Sator was created with this goal of revolutionizing ownership in mind. Users generate the value of a show by watching it, Perfito argues. However, only centralized entertainment companies currently receive the payout from this user activity. Even if I binge watch the same episodes of "Mad Men" every year, I don't receive any portion of the profit Amazon Prime makes by choosing to continue making it available. Sator's platform rewards film and television

viewers for watching their favorite content, which can then be staked to earn interest or traded for crypto or fiat currency. Sator even sets up virtual Movie Nights in the metaverse for wallet holders.

These new concepts of digital ownership are foundational pillars for the brave new [Web 3](#) world, where all of our digital contributions may be logged on blockchain.



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How do you buy things there?

Just like online shopping, you will access digital metaverse marketplaces through the internet. But rather than connecting to your accounts via a Google or Facebook sign-on, you'll simply connect a digital wallet such as MetaMask. To buy stuff, you'll need to keep enough compatible cryptocurrency in the wallet to cover the cost of the item plus applicable fees.

Is the metaverse enjoyable?

This depends on your definition of fun and what exactly you do in the metaverse, but many do find it fun.

Something about entering a virtual world with new people to meet, novel activities to engage in and fresh experiences to have creates opportunities for human connection, said Luca Arrigo, co-founder of Metaverse Architects, a 3D modeling and game development studio for metaverse worlds like [Decentraland](#) and [The Sandbox](#).

"I believe there's a difference between my personality in my hometown and my personality outside of my country and online. You drop any preconceived notion of who you are and where you come from. We all grow up with different insecurities. I do think that when I go online, I can be more myself," Arrigo said.

But just because the metaverse exists online doesn't mean it has to stay that way. Most proponents of the metaverse emphasize that virtual worlds are meant to be a supplement and enhancement of our life "IRL" (in real life).

"I've met people at a conference," Arrigo said. "And then we started meeting up in [Decentraland](#)."

In one instance, Arrigo and a new friend went to Metaverse Fashion Week together and shared NFT wearables for their avatars.

"I honestly don't think everybody would appreciate an [NFT](#) wearable. But if you're already in Web 3 and you have your MetaMask and you want another NFT and you receive it as a gift ... it really feels like you're giving someone something," Arrigo said.

And for Arrigo, who normally wears plain white T-shirts and jeans, dressing up an avatar in the metaverse is a form of fun self-expression.

"I'm not really a luxury brand kind of person. I don't feel like my identity is tied to real world objects. Yeah, well, ever since I started getting into the metaverse and experimenting with wearables, I'm going nuts for virtual fashion."



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How can you actually find things to do in the metaverse?

As for finding things to do, you might have to rely on word of mouth – at least for now.

"A big problem with the metaverse is that if you go on Google, and that's where we look for things to do online, right. And you search for metaverse, events, or you're going to find in person summits,

meetups, conferences. And those are events about the metaverse while staying in real life in real life," said Arrigo.

In some ways, argues Arrigo, taking a trip to the metaverse is just like visiting another country or another city. And it does need all of the same things that tourist destinations have, such as TripAdvisor and tour guides.

For now, the two ways to find early signs of interesting things are exploring the metaverse project's Discord servers and finding people in crypto Twitter who are excited about the metaverse and following them.