

# **Metaverse Marketing: Understanding Consumer Behavior and Business Models in Virtual Worlds (Summer Semester 2023)**

## **Content**

Virtual reality is forecasted to grow massively in 2023, driven by rapid breakthroughs in technology and applications thought to change business models and consumer behavior considerably (Deloitte 2022). In their quest to create and benefit from what is predicted to be a multi-trillion-dollar industry (Sheridan et al. 2021), players like META, APPLE, MICROSOFT, and BYTEDANCE are currently investing billions in the development of hard- and software in the fields of virtual, augmented, and mixed reality (i.e., VR, AR, and XR). Those technologies are anticipated to disrupt cornerstone industries like education, healthcare, tourism, and retail as well as many facets of our personal lives, be it leisure or work (Flavián, Ibáñez-Sánchez, and Orús 2019).

Industry experts argue that the “Metaverse”, as virtual worlds in which people (inter)act via avatars (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2022), will play a pivotal role in driving those developments. Yet, practitioners and academics are just beginning to understand how viable business models can be established and how consumers perceive, behave, and want to be engaged in those virtual worlds (Larvol 2022; Fahley 2021). We argue that much can be learned from bordering industries and research areas to facilitate this process. The gaming industry serves as a prime example in this regard, showcasing much progress in commercializing and strategically leveraging consumer behavior in virtual worlds like WORLD OF WARCRAFT, DESTINY, or FORTNITE (Swan 2022) during the last three decades.

For this interactive seminar, we are looking for a small number of students who are eager to tap into these new virtual worlds to combine theory with rich practical experiences. We complement the study of a growing body of multi-disciplinary literature on VR, AR, and XR with first-hand experiences of virtual worlds via QUEST 2 state-of-the-art VR headsets, which are provided to each seminar participant by the **XRLAB@MCM**, the Marketing Center’s metaverse research initiative (<https://xrlab-mcm.space>). In addition, meetings with leading thinkers from the areas of business, research, and gaming will enable an active exchange of ideas and perspectives on this dynamic field.

In sum, participants will learn about central aspects of consumer behavior and the creation of business models for virtual worlds. Furthermore, they will also analyze barriers and limitations that (still) exist for the mass adoption of the metaverse and VR – and are encouraged to develop suggestions on how they can be overcome to go forward.

***Sneak peek:** This is the second seminar by the Chair for Marketing & Media that investigates VR and the metaverse. Click here to get some impressions from the initial edition which took place in the winter term 2021/22:*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkKprFNGhos>.

## References

- Bailenson, Jeremy (2018): "Experience on Demand: What Virtual Reality Is, How It Works, and What It Can Do," WW Norton & Company.
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- Flavián, Carlos, Sergio Ibáñez-Sánchez, and Carlos Orús (2019): "The impact of virtual, augmented and mixed reality technologies on the customer experience," *Journal of Business Research*, 100, 547–560.
- Hennig-Thurau, Thorsten, Dorothea N. Aliman, Alina M. Herting, Gerrit P. Cziehso, Marc Linder, and Raoul V. Kübler (2022): "Social interactions in the metaverse: Framework, initial evidence, and research roadmap," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Online First, 1–25.
- Larvol, Bruno (2022): "Introducing and Incorporating VR: A Guide for Forward-Thinking Business Owners," *Forbes* (November 9), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2022/11/09/introducing-and-incorporating-vr-a-guide-for-forward-thinking-business-owners/?sh=1e0452fc5cf2>.
- Sheridan, E., Ng, M., Czura, L., Steiger, A., Vegliante, A., & Campagna, K. (2021): "Framing the future of Web 3.0. Research Report," Goldman Sachs (December 10).
- Swan, Cameron (2022), "Fortnite 5 Years Later - Becoming a Worldwide Phenomenon," *Game Rant* (September 26), <https://gamerant.com/fortnite-5-year-anniversary-worldwide-phenomenon-epic-games-massive-success/>.
- Wedel, Michel, Enrique Bigné, and Jie Zhang (2020): "Virtual and augmented reality: Advancing research in consumer marketing," *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 37, 443–465.

## Seminar requirements

The seminar consists of two mandatory assignments:

- Writing a research paper (2/3 of final grade)
- Presentation of the key insights of your research and discussion (1/3 of final grade)

Both assignments must be passed successfully to receive 12 ECTS for the seminar.

Seminar papers and presentations are individual performances and graded accordingly. We highly encourage literature-based conceptual work due to given time constraints but are open to empirical work if applicable and participants supply data.

## Preliminary Timetable

What	When	Where
Introductory session	End of April	Virtual Reality, Zoom, Seminarraum 006 MCM
Distribution of topics	End of April	Learnweb
Individual meeting with supervisor	tba	Virtual Reality, Zoom, MCM
Meetings with Leading Thinkers in the Field	tbd/tba	Virtual Reality
Brief student presentations about metaverse experiences	tbd/tba	Virtual Reality
Optional 2nd meeting with supervisor		
Submission of research papers and presentations	End of June	Learnweb
Presentation of research papers	End of June	Virtual Reality, Zoom, Seminarraum 006 MCM