



BACKGROUND

Continuously a trending topic of conversation, the Metaverse is linked to huge conglomerates and industry giants from around the world, making huge waves in technology advancements. The global metaverse market is expected to reach \$936.57 billion by 2030 as 60% of US gamers already admit to having used the Metaverse for non-gaming activities such as socialising and shopping.

With the technology being considered extremely innovative and many organisations trying to gain a fuller understanding of the opportunities the Metaverse can provide; the Virtual Engineering Centre was keen to explore further ahead of meeting with several local technology experts and businesses looking to digitise their procedures and services.

During the national lockdown and the COVID-19 outbreak, the world saw many businesses come to a halt and reconfigure their business model for ensuring survival and recovery. With UK Theatres and producers having lost at least £1.04 billion in box office and retail revenue in 2020 alone, these organisations must explore and expand on their technological understanding and usage, to stay ahead of the curve and adapt to ensure they can create more accessible shows and experiences.

As part of the LCR4.0 Holistic project (ERDF funded), the VEC in conjunction with FACT Liverpool ran a Creative Arts Digital Sandpit event in March 2023, welcoming an array of creative SMEs and businesses from local independent artists to theatres and exhibition organisers.

The event enabled guests to explore the possibility of Industry 4.0 technologies within their sectors for improving inclusivity, accessibility, and audience experiences. The VEC also wanted to introduce the Metaverse, enabling remote and virtual attendance but a method which could still generate revenue.

SOLUTION

Having researched several organisations and companies that claim to support the Metaverse, the VEC discovered Get Real, an immersive technology consulting firm and Metaverse strategy and creative agency located in Chicago. Get Real works with their clients to plan and produce world-class experiences in the Metaverse to dramatically improve the way they engage key stakeholders.

The VEC worked closely with Get Real in understanding the logistics of the Sandpit event, from the type of audience members to numbers, accessibility, and connections from the physical venue itself, to how was best to run the virtual event and how we would communicate and share joining instructions to potential users.

Ahead of the event, the Get Real team developed a preliminary run of show and day of support plan for the Metaverse portion of the event, linking with the virtual world which was created by the VEC, to ensure users had a successful experience. This co-created experience enabled remote users to virtually walk around and meet others ahead of sitting in front of the virtual stage to watch a live stream of the event presentations and hear from leading industry experts. The Get Real team supported the VEC in creating a realistic environment for audiences, creating an immersive feeling for imitating attending a physical event within the real world.

“We applaud the Virtual Engineering Centre (VEC) for leveraging this new and innovative technology to deliver immersive and engaging content for the Creative Arts Digital Sandpit. The VEC’s willingness to pilot this event in the Metaverse highlights their unique position of leadership amongst their peers. We anticipate the VEC will build on their initial success with Get Real in the Metaverse towards many future immersive projects and experiences to the benefits of their audience.”

- Ed Haravon, Co-Founder for Get Real

IMPACT

Events hosted within the Metaverse enable remote users from across the world to attend virtual events despite geographical barriers in addition to physical and even mental concerns. The Metaverse can create a much more inclusive and accessible opportunity for events to become better attended, mixing the virtual and physical worlds in a unique way.

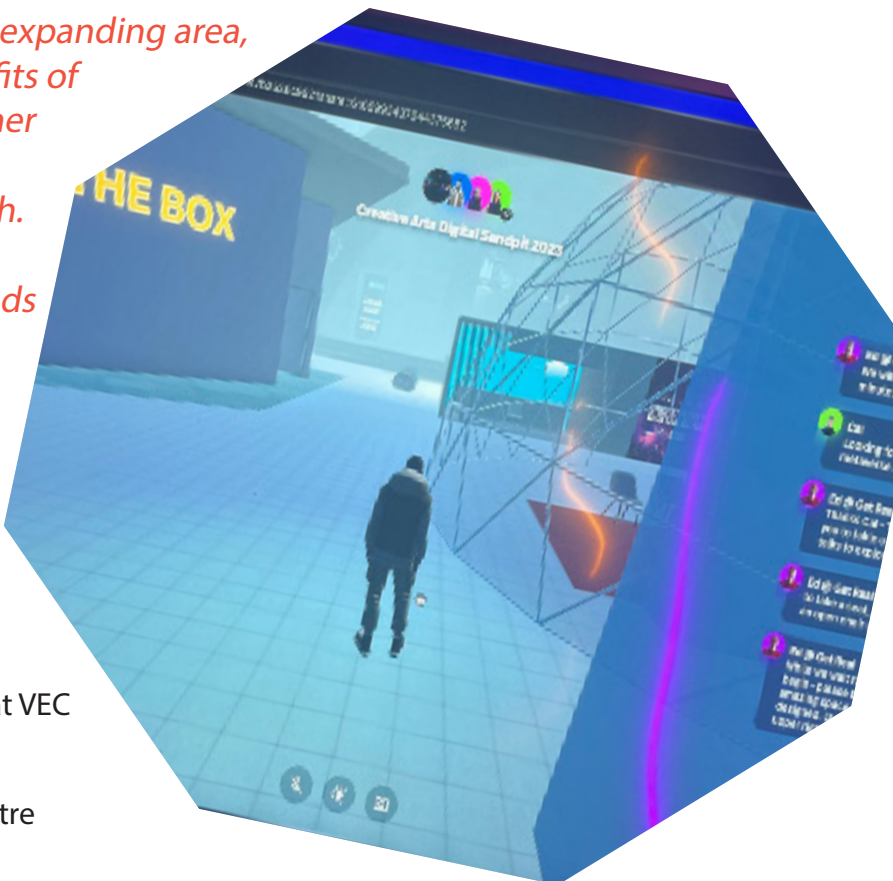
Virtual worlds ensure that users and attendees are provided with much greater convenience, attending events at their convenience from a location that suits them and their own lives whilst organisers will face fewer cancellations whilst allowing all virtual and physical event attendees the opportunity to listen to presentations, learn more from expert talks and network with all other attendees through a truly immersive and interactive experience.

“This collaboration focused on improving virtual event experiences, bringing talks and exhibitions to life. The latest technology is able to bridge the gap between the virtual and physical worlds, improving accessibility and inclusivity for remote audiences. We are seeing a significant increase in Metaverse adoption across the supply chains we work with, creating new opportunities for the clients we support.

The VEC continues to grow in this ever-expanding area, recognising that many of the key benefits of Metaverse tools are transferrable to other wider collaborative virtual experiences that we are currently exploring in-depth.

The VEC’s wider Metaverse vision extends beyond just the user and event experience, as we are working with an array of organisations and industries, harnessing cloud and big data techniques to support the creation of city-wide live digital twins, interactive decision-making tools, enterprise frameworks and more.”

- Matthew Butcher, Digital Projects Manager at VEC



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