

[Meetings in Your Own Metaverse: your office in 3D](#)

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Nov 2023

Meetings in Your Own Metaverse: your office in 3D

When discussing the future of work, a popular idea is that one day we'll interact with our colleagues in the Metaverse – effectively a 3D version of the internet. In it, our meetings and interactions would take place with 3D versions of each person, that we'll be able to walk around a virtual world. This might seem like a reality reserved for tech-driven enterprises with very deep pockets, but it's more of a widely-available possibility than you'd think, with technology providers making strides in it all the time.

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[Katie Fallon](#)

Innovation Consultant

Email

katie.fallon@waterstons.com

As you might imagine, Microsoft is at the forefront and has even released a tool called Mesh that integrates into the rest of the Office suite, most notably Teams. Mesh is a 3D virtual meeting tool, so instead of seeing the usual 2D videos of your coworkers, you can walk around a 3D space with them – almost like a video game – and it can be accessed on a computer as well as on a VR headset. It's in pre release at the moment, but it's very likely we'll see this rolled out at some point in 2024.

Meeting and collaborating in 3D is an intriguing idea, as well as a big change. Microsoft certainly thinks it will be more fun, collaborative and productive. Many companies have tried to do this before, but without success. Since Mesh ties into a current professional Office 365 account, it will be baked into Teams and be accessible via Outlook, Microsoft might just become the first to achieve success.

But what could this look like in your business? How easy is it to do? And when might this become mainstream? Before we show you our recent experiments with virtual meetings, let's take a look at some industry use cases for 3D meetings and collaboration.

- **Architecture, engineering and construction (AEC):** How about weekly meetings in the building you're currently designing, ? giving you a unique way of viewing how the design is progressing? Not only could you be 'in' the building, but you could view it externally too – even place it on the table next to you. Before committing to the location of a site, you could virtually go there, giving greater assurance in any decision making – and you could even place the building there to see what it looks like in situ. It can be hard to get a sense of scale from drawings, so VR can give a unique vantage point. This could be shown to stakeholders such as future neighbours, to give a better understanding of its impact. You can see the world from a different point of view, which is important for the design of your building – for example, wheelchair accessibility.
- **Higher education:** You could attend lectures 'with' your classmates in 3D without leaving your bedroom. While in class, interact with 3D versions of the things you find in your textbook – dinosaur bones, artefacts, or a car engine! Medical students could complete placement training activities within a VR simulator, safe in the knowledge that mistakes don't have real-world consequences. Generally, meeting in the metaverse allows users to 'be' somewhere they're not, exploring places and things being learned about in a more unique way than ever before.
- **Social housing:** Imagine looking around a property without ever setting foot inside? With VR, a viewing or even moving day, could be simulated to ensure the new resident can get a feel for the space and location without the need for travel. The technology can be used to train employees, giving virtual scenarios to work through based on how tenants might act. Putting on a headset gives a totally new perspective of the world, and the chance to actually walk in someone else's shoes and live in the houses you provide.
- **Manufacturing:** Data can be streamed into the models you meet in – this means you can remotely view virtual versions of your machinery in a 3D space, and have real-time data displayed above them based on how they're performing. By viewing through a headset, you can readily enter spaces across a factory that are restricted or would normally require a large amount of PPE to enter. Visualise time and motion across your factory floor, or take your manufacturing floor to a school to inspire the next generation – the possibilities are endless.

In the Waterstons Innovation team, we've been experimenting with virtual meetings alongside a range of other metaverse tools. We've been particularly interested in how to get versions of an actual office into the meeting tools, to meet with people virtually in an organisations' own spaces. Here's how we scanned our Durham coffee shop and loaded it up into a virtual meeting space.

We've spent a lot of time trying to understand the best way to do this, and how to use these tools to be more productive. However, this is still a new area, and there is still a lot to learn! We would love for you to join us on the journey.

If you are interested in VR, virtual meetings, scanning your offices, scanning objects, or are interested in anything else related to the metaverse and immersive technology, we would love to chat. To talk, either in person, in our office, or even in the metaverse, contact us at: innovation@waterstons.com

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