Metaverse

You might remember the beginning of the internet: a text-based world you would arrive to via a dial-up connection funnelled through your landline phone. It was not until the early '90s when Marc Andreessen developed the graphic web browser that opened the world's eyes to the potential of the internet. Now almost 30 years later, we have arrived at the next platform on which we can work, live, connect, and collaborate: the "metaverse". But exactly what is the metaverse, and why should businesses be paying attention to it?

Metaverse is more than the hottest new trend in technology, the metaverse promises to fundamentally reshape the way we interact with machines and each other. It describes a virtual and augmented reality environment that offers ground-breaking new tools and strategies for communication, commerce, research and education.

In the simplest terms, the metaverse is the internet, but in 3D, it's a form of digital interaction where connected, virtual experiences can either simulate the real world or imagine worlds beyond it.

Many of the metaverse ingredients are with us now – think interacting with lots of people and content made by them, in persistent, immersive worlds across many devices, including virtual reality. The more these components intertwine, the closer we get to a fuller version of the metaverse.

The metaverse has generated a lot of buzz. From our experiences of the internet, we know that buzz can go from being a vision held by a few to something that can shape the way we live and work quicker than we could imagine.

Like the internet, the metaverse has potential to be a powerful force for good in two ways: "The metaverse is a tool to connect us as humans and with our planet. It can give us stories and experiences to help us to understand and appreciate people and cultures. Just like when we travel and explore, it will open our eyes and help us build a bigger picture of the world.

Until now, organisational culture has evolved, organically, in single buildings. But with people now working in difference places at different times, companies need a clear vision of how our real world should look to make the most of the virtual one.

In both the real and virtual worlds, we need to be more deliberate, more proactive, to create the culture that chimes with our ethos and vision.

We need to understand the whole working journey to know where it makes sense for the metaverse to fit. We are seeing elements of the metaverse already being used to tremendous effect in business - especially in terms of collaborating more easily with others as we settle into hybrid working.