



The metaverse: looking back on 2022 conversations on Twitter

Learnings from 2022 Twitter conversations

1. Forget the hype cycle – the metaverse now has its own community

One year ago, our first data study revealed discussions around the metaverse were always led by players related to NFT, crypto or gaming. The situation has changed: an independent metaverse community is born.

These actors, scattered in a complex ecosystem at the time, now share the same core interest, which characterises the majority of their online discussions.

Those who believe in it are there for the right reasons – but might prefer to stay out of the spotlight.



2. Opinion is more shaped against Big Tech than for the metaverse

A majority of the important peaks of discussion around the metaverse were fostered by negative reaction. Generally, this was against Big Tech – often Meta. At the same time, fashion and lifestyle brands, artists and the entertainment industry managed to land positive opinion when they engaged with the metaverse.



3. Best practices are being defined for successful events

Top metaverse events that made headlines (such as Fashion Week and concerts) have common characteristics:

1. They are not future promises – they have tangible use cases today.
2. The universes created are outstanding – both technically and visually.
3. The communities already exist in the physical world.



4. Experts remain active – after opportunists leave

In 2022, many vocal opportunists joined the metaverse discussion. But those speakers who talked about the metaverse only when they could benefit from it increasing their visibility quickly lost interest.

As a result, experts who were already there, but less vocal, came together as a community, filling the space and making themselves known and heard.

This community of experts can tip the balance in favour of the metaverse in 2023. They should lead the effort to educate and inspire the broadest possible audience to embrace new use-cases and opportunities.



5. Experts and neophytes – a dialogue to facilitate

At the top of the metaverse pyramid, adepts are few – but particularly active and reliable. This metaverse community exists mainly through the interactions it creates with other communities – those that could be the most likely to lean strongly into the metaverse, such as gaming, crypto, fashion, sports and music.

Moreover, when overall online discussions about the metaverse often make reference to, for example, Meta, the metaverse community tends to focus on existing events.



6. 2023 is the real year-one of the metaverse

2022 was noisy and sketchy. The most relevant advances for the metaverse were not necessarily those that were most discussed on Twitter. A lot of negativity drove the hype.

But now there is a true identifiable community interested in the metaverse, building on its beliefs, engaging and progressing the debate.

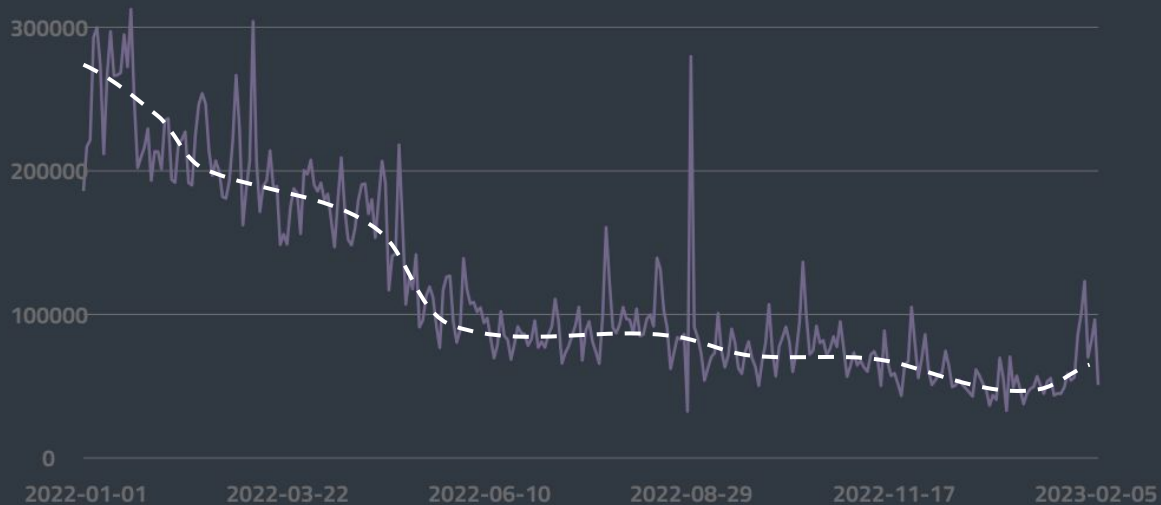


The metaverse: End of the hype

55 million

**English tweets mentioning the word *metaverse*
were posted in 2022 by *5 million* users**

The volume of metaverse mentions dropped significantly throughout 2022



The number of tweets about the metaverse dropped by an average of **1,000 per day** during the first six months of 2022.

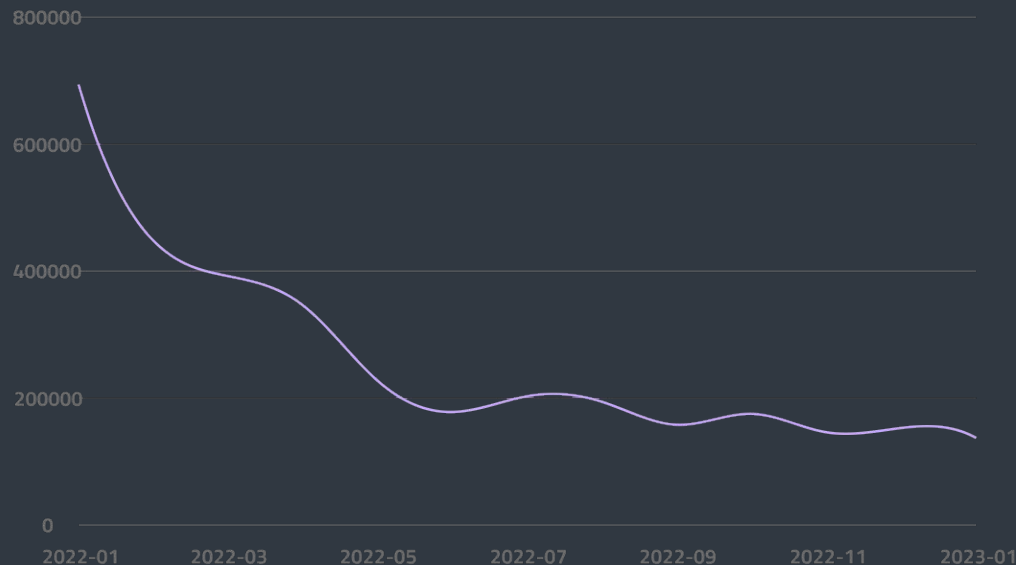
This amounted to a global loss of

-80%

by the end of the year.

The amount of distinct users who talked about the metaverse also dropped significantly: -77%

(Excludes retweeters.)



**The metaverse's year was punctuated
by various popular events**

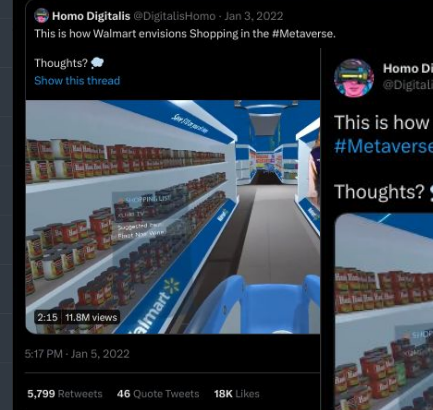
Fake Walmart metaverse video goes viral

16.8k native tweets
533k engagements

These viral tweets contain videos that supposedly show how Walmart envisions shopping in the metaverse. Reactions to the clip were mocking, criticising the VR experience as having outdated visuals. This was appropriate, considering the video was actually from 2017.

The video therefore has nothing to do with contemporary metaverse projects and thinking.

Sentiment



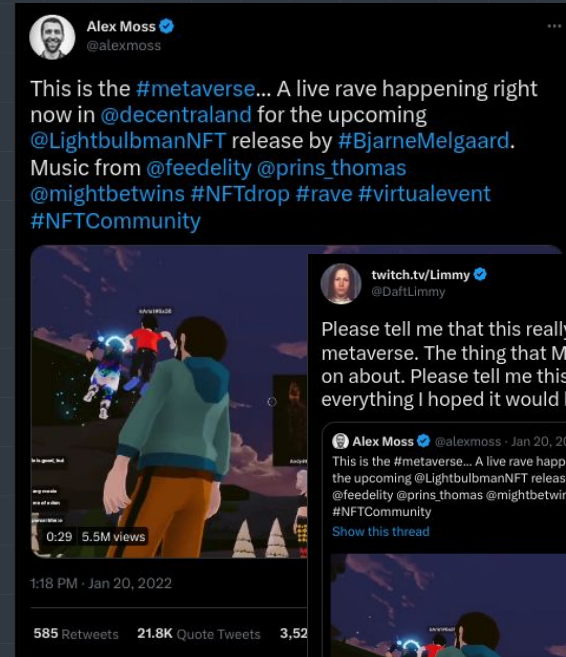
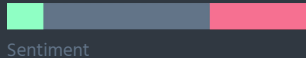
20 January 2022

@decentraland metaverse live rave for @LightbulbmanNFT release by Bjarne Melgaard

10.6k native tweets
257k engagements

Famed Norwegian artist and industry disruptor Bjarne Melgaard took to the metaverse to drop his NFT collection, The Lightbulb Man.

The replies to the top tweets were mostly negative, criticising the graphics or highlighting the event's perceived lack of innovation. These users claimed to find the same features and events on VRChat, Roblox or PlayStation home.



2 February 2022

Huge losses for Meta metaverse investments

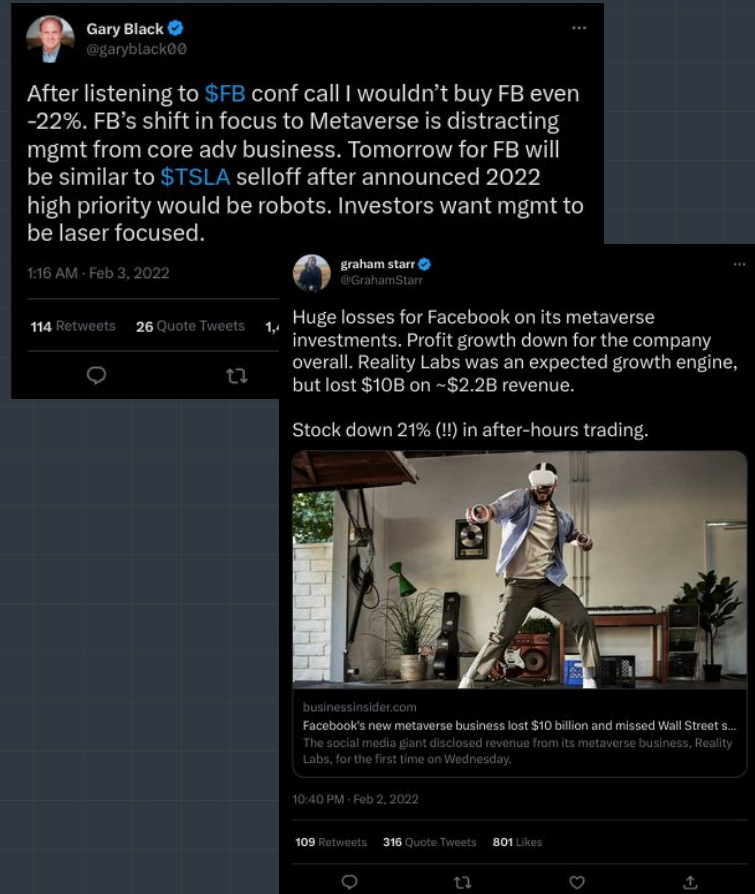
16.3k native tweets
163k engagements

Spending by Meta* on the metaverse and Reality Labs dragged down the company's quarterly profits to \$10.3bn in the three months ending December 2022, as compared to a year earlier. That's despite revenue rising 20%, to \$33.7bn, over the same period.

* Formerly known as Facebook, Inc – and still referred to as Facebook by many.



Sentiment



16 February 2022

JP Morgan, the largest bank in the US, is the first to enter the metaverse

4.9k native tweets
100.3k engagements

JP Morgan was the first bank to enter the metaverse, opening a lounge in blockchain-based world Decentraland – one of the most popular metaverses.



Sentiment

24–27 March 2022

Metaverse Fashion Week

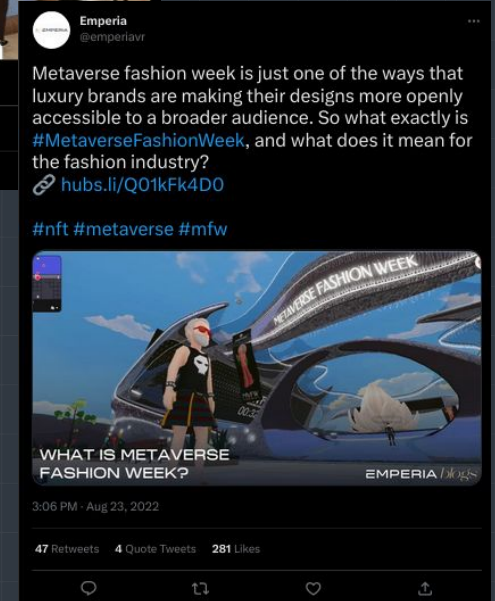
7.1k native tweets

82.4k engagements

From 24–27 March, the first Metaverse Fashion Week (MFW) was held in Decentraland, embodying the rise of the virtual fashion market.



Sentiment



Otherside First Trip event

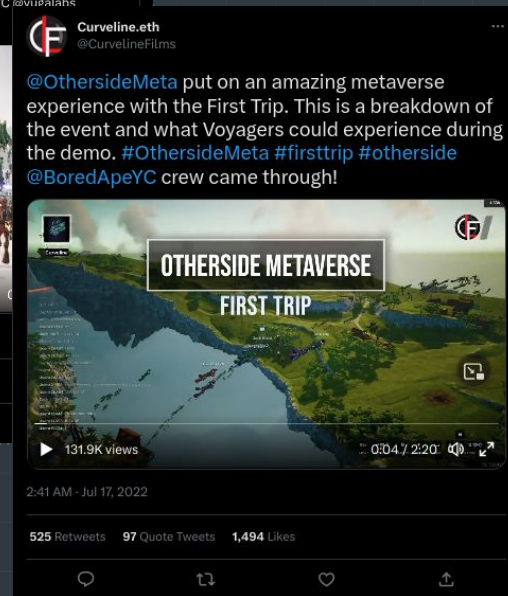
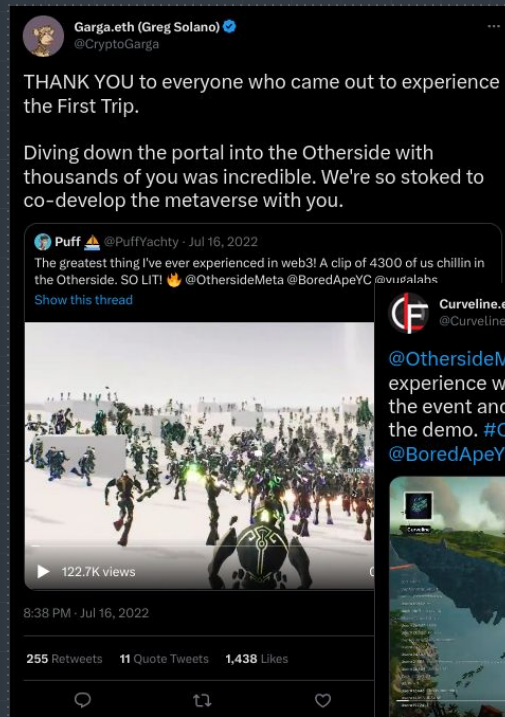
370 native tweets
7.8k engagements

On 16 July 2022, over 4,300 Otherdeed NFT holders took part in the inaugural visit to Yuga Labs metaverse gaming platform Otherside.



Sentiment

16 July 2022



Meta launches Horizon Worlds in France and Spain

8k native tweets
328k engagements

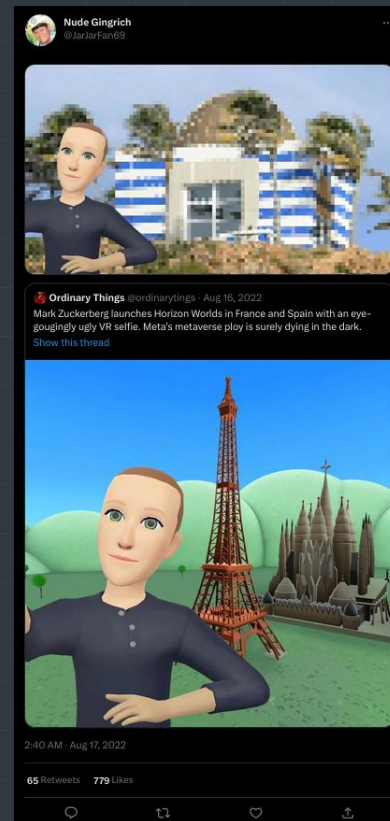
Mark Zuckerberg announced on Facebook the Horizon Worlds launch, noting that the company planned to expand the platform to more countries.

Most of the tweets sharing the news mocked the graphics in the photo shared by Zuckerberg, considering them outdated.



Sentiment

17 August 2022



BLACKPINK metaverse performance

7.5k native tweets
820k engagements

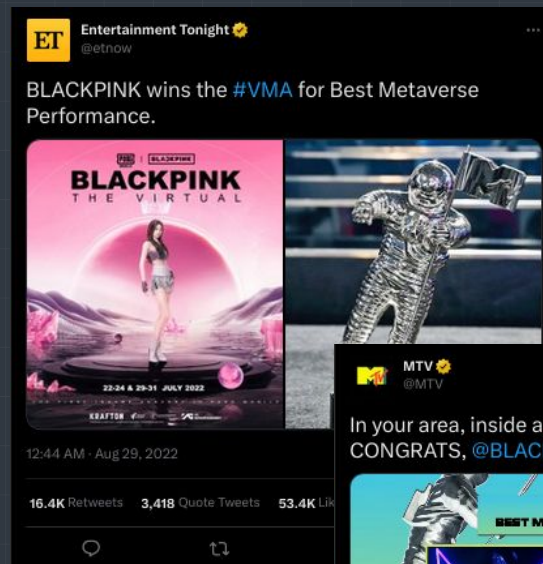
BLACKPINK concert BLACKPINK: The Virtual won the Best Metaverse Performance category award.

By comparison, tweets associated with Snoop Dogg and Eminem's metaverse performance were, respectively, 3k and 2.3k.



Sentiment

29 August 2022



Mark Zuckerberg ends up down more than \$100bn

10.8k native tweets
115k engagements

Mark Zuckerberg's fortune plunged by \$11bn after Meta Platforms Inc. reported a second straight quarter of disappointing earnings, bringing his total wealth loss to more than \$100bn in just 13 months.



Sentiment

27 October 2022



These events comprise three main types:

- **Metaverse-related projects and announcements from big companies**
- **Meta financial announcements – and lost profits regarding metaverse investments**
- **Actual in-metaverse events**

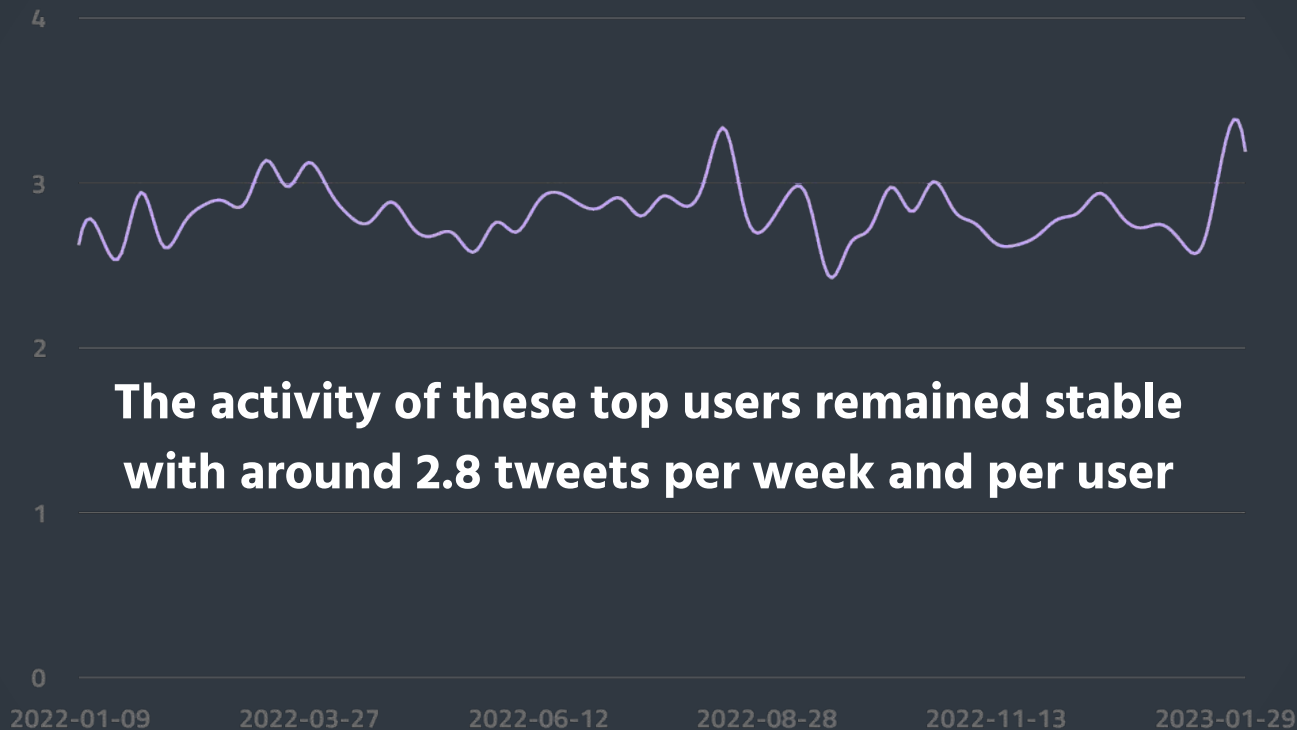
Let's focus on the people who
made the metaverse conversation in 2022

Who are the top **influential** users who published tweets about the metaverse?*

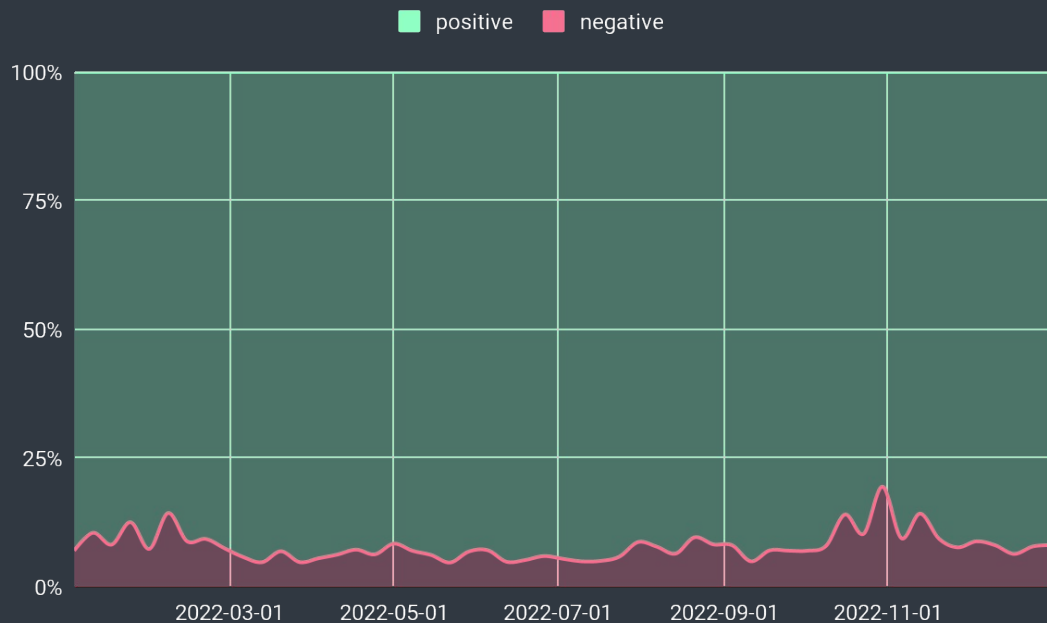


Among these **56k** users, the decrease in the amount of tweets published has been less significant than the 80% drop seen across all tweets – **about 45%.**

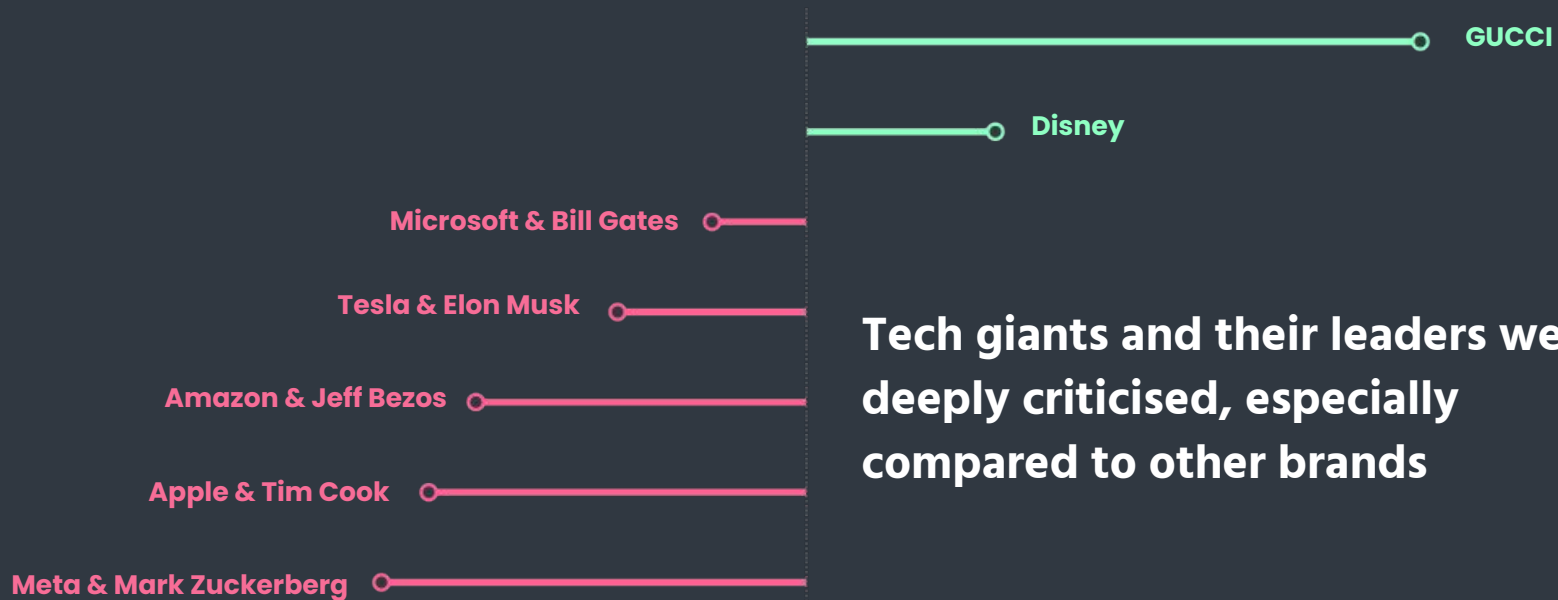
*These categories are inferred by our custom profiling model; 'persons' correspond to normal human users.



Their posts about the metaverse were **mostly positive**



Proportion of positive and negative posts. Excludes neutral messages



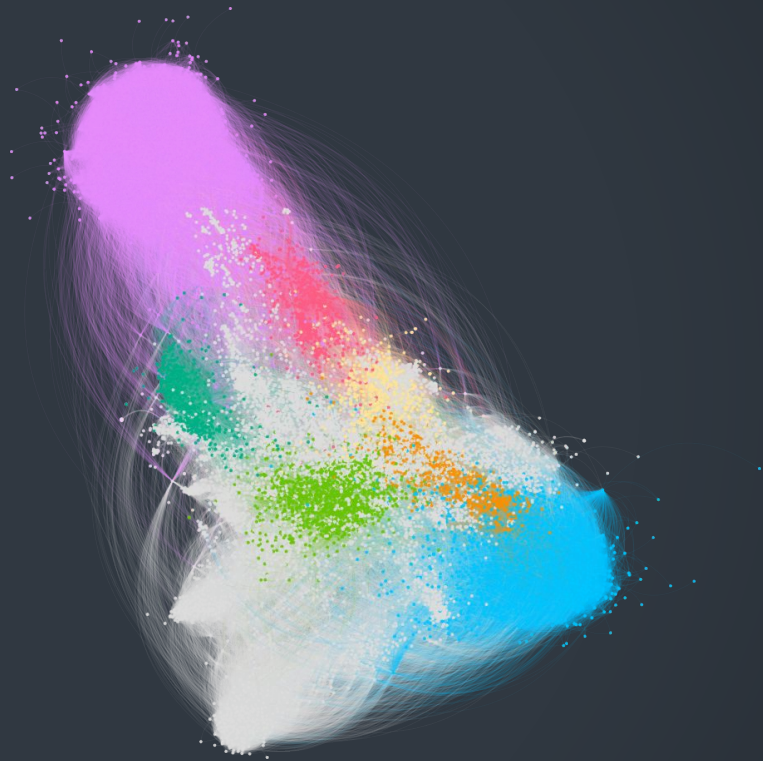
Tech giants and their leaders were deeply criticised, especially compared to other brands

Let's now analyse their interests

The network of followings on Twitter is often used to identify communities. The problem is most users follow very influential accounts (such as @nytimes, @POTUS and @CNN). But these highly influential accounts are not community markers.

We developed our own algorithm that reconstructs the network of interests by weighting accounts by community affinity.

The result is a segmentation of users: in this mapping, each point is an account, and two accounts are connected if they have similar interests.



We focus here on the top 15k users based in the US – the most represented country among users.

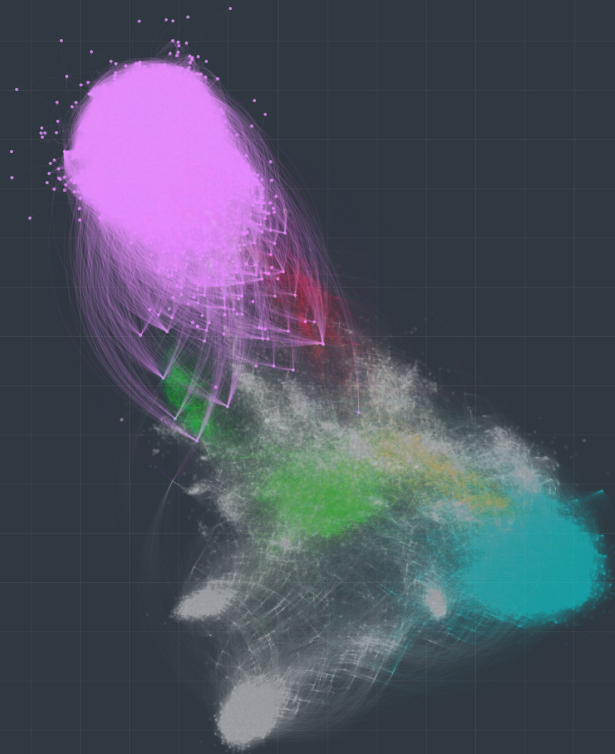
Note: we focus on one location at a time to avoid the bias of overly geographic communities.

Bored Ape Yacht Club

11.7% of users

This community is gathered around the Bored Ape Yacht Club.

It comprises various Web3 enthusiasts, such as NFT collectors and digital artists.



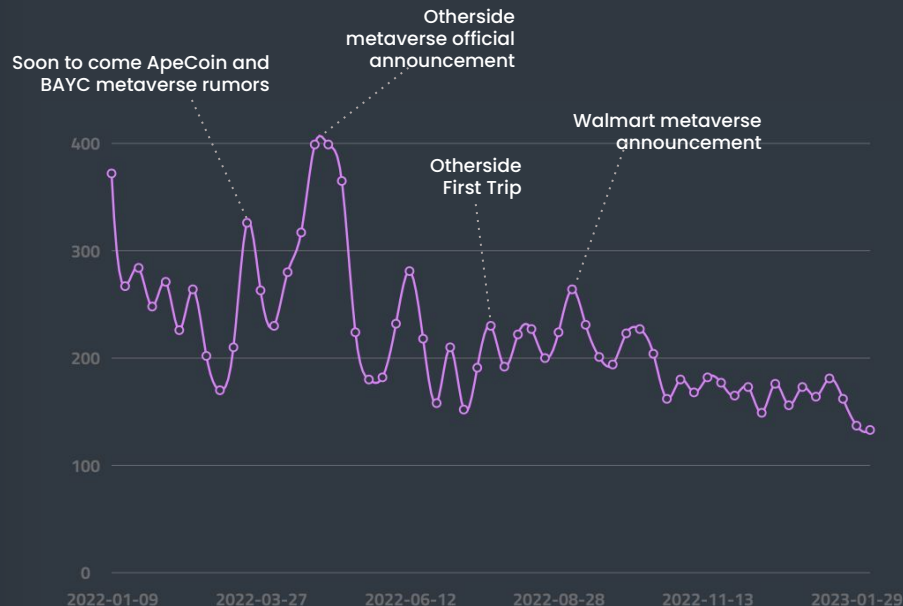
Bored Ape Yacht Club

Despite a global loss of activity, this community has always welcomed metaverse-related events with high enthusiasm.

It showed interest in a wide range of topics, including exploring new metaverses, NFT art galleries, events and concerts.

This community also knows how to be critical when a project doesn't meet its expectations, which resulted in double the average number of negative messages.

Community timeline

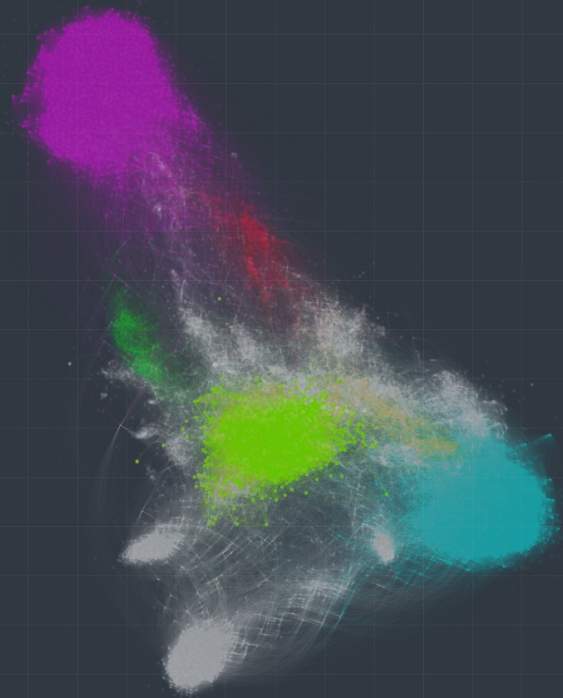


US media

10.2% of users

This community comprises professional editors in charge of tech articles for various general US-based online media.

One can find, among others, reporters from the New York Times, Bloomberg, VOX and CNN.



US media

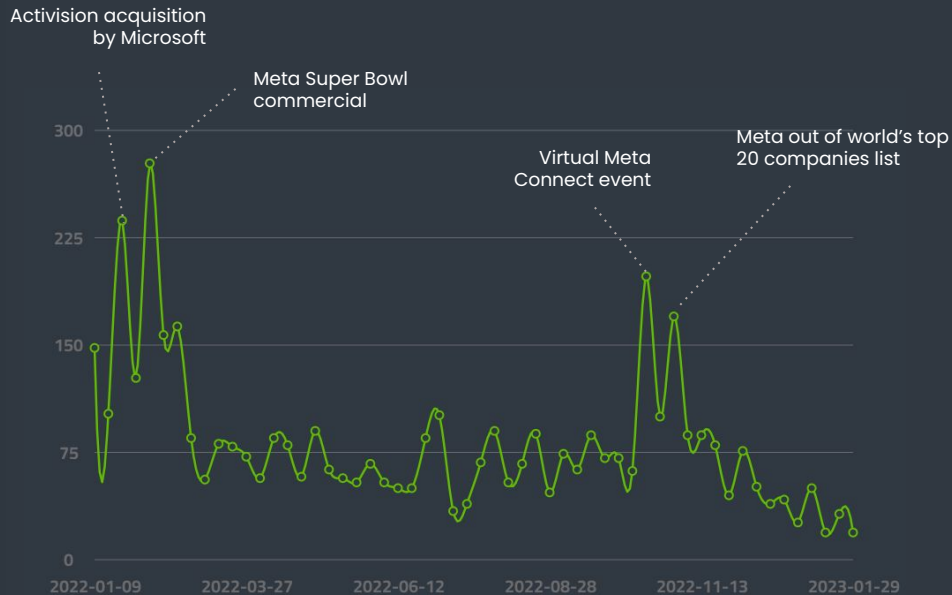
This community mainly shares articles about how big tech companies like Meta, Alphabet, Microsoft and Amazon deal with the metaverse.

It mostly focuses on business aspects, reporting on the distinct visions of CEOs, such as those of Mark Zuckerberg and Tim Cook.

It is one of the quickest communities to lose interest on this topic – and also the most critical.

It mainly focuses on the financial abyss that metaverse projects are representing for companies like Meta.

Community timeline

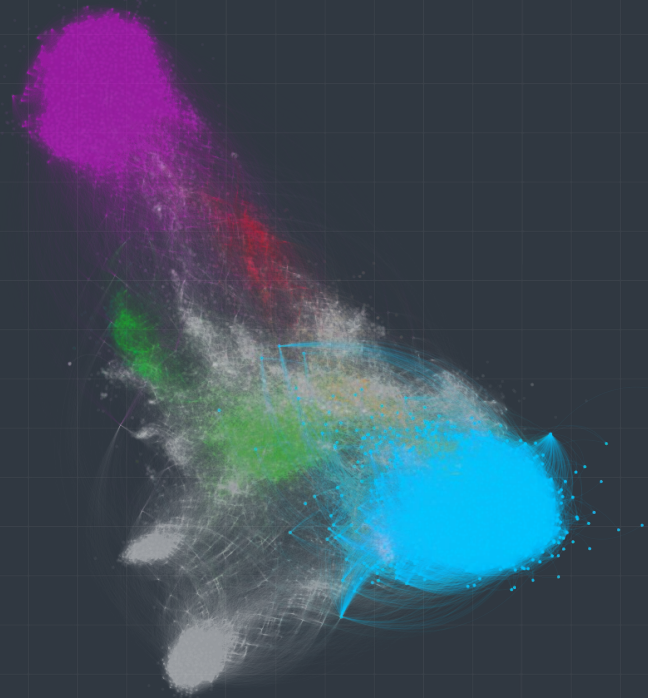


Digital experts

8.2% of users

This community comprises people working in various areas of online communication.

It includes online marketers, social media advisers, content writers, communication coaches, and management and digital transformation consultants.



Digital experts

This community mostly posts catchy general digital business and tech articles.

The metaverse is often mentioned through hashtags, combined with other trendy topics, such as AI and Big Data.

It is a rather active community but also the one with the lowest engagement per post – only one tenth of the average.

While inspecting peaks in the community timeline, no precise subject of discussion stands out, suggesting general articles are posted when the metaverse is in vogue.

Community timeline

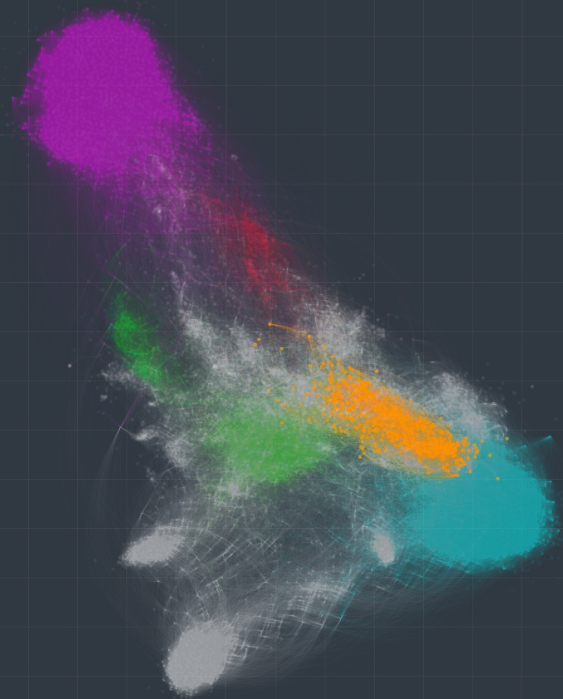


Tech

4.8% of users

People from this community share a common interest for computer technology.

It includes editors for tech media, programmers, software engineers, cyber-security specialists, and other tech-related professions.



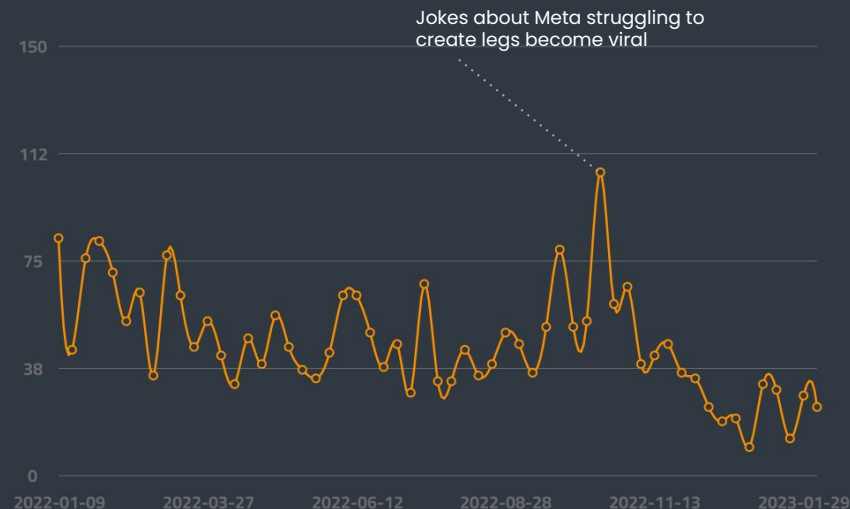
Tech

This community is mainly interested in the technological innovation side of Web3, such as VR, blockchain, cloud gaming and digital twins.

It is sceptical about current metaverses, which the community sometimes describes as overhyped, empty, too marketing-oriented and not up-to-date from a technical standpoint.

The tech community also addresses concerns about the metaverse concept, for example regarding the exploitation of personal data.

Community timeline

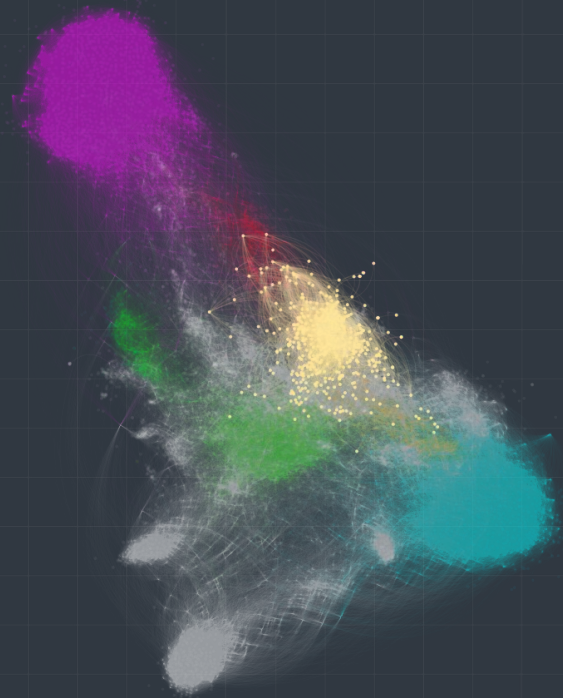


Investors

4.6% of users

This community comprises tech and startup investors.

It is mostly formed of professional accounts, including venture capital advisors and people looking for new business opportunities to explore.



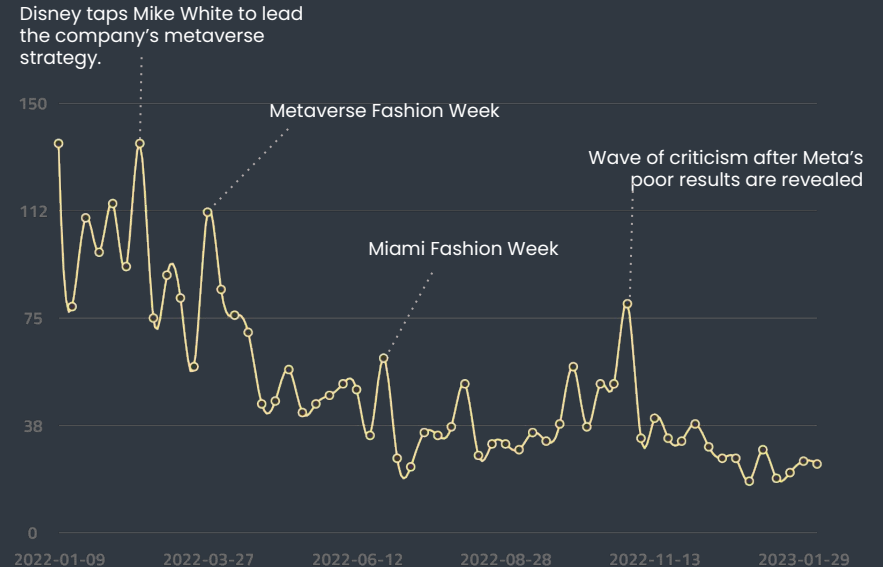
Investors

This community shares mixed feelings regarding the metaverse. It's torn between the attractive perspective of discovering a future tech gem and the financial risk of betting on an ephemeral tendency.

It also follows with high attention how the metaverse can be used in current industries, from fashion to real estate.

This community has had one of the highest drops in interest in the metaverse during the past year.

Community timeline

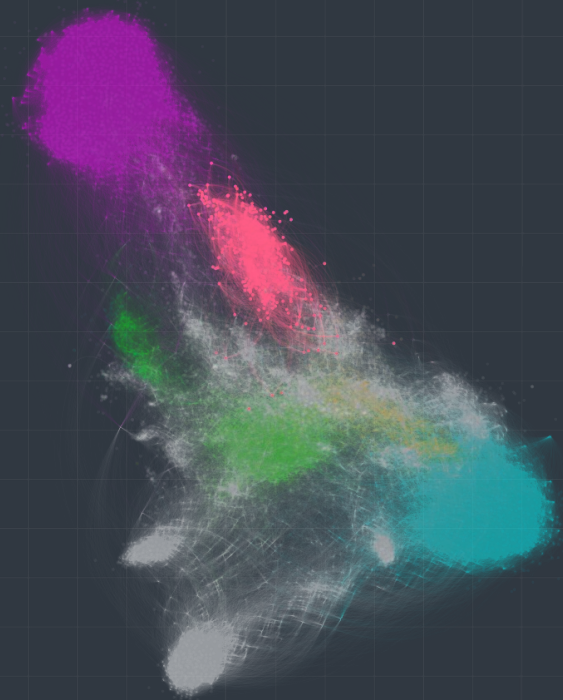


Crypto

4.3% of users

This community comprises various cryptocurrency enthusiasts, either from a professional or a personal point of view.

It also includes some highly followed crypto news accounts.

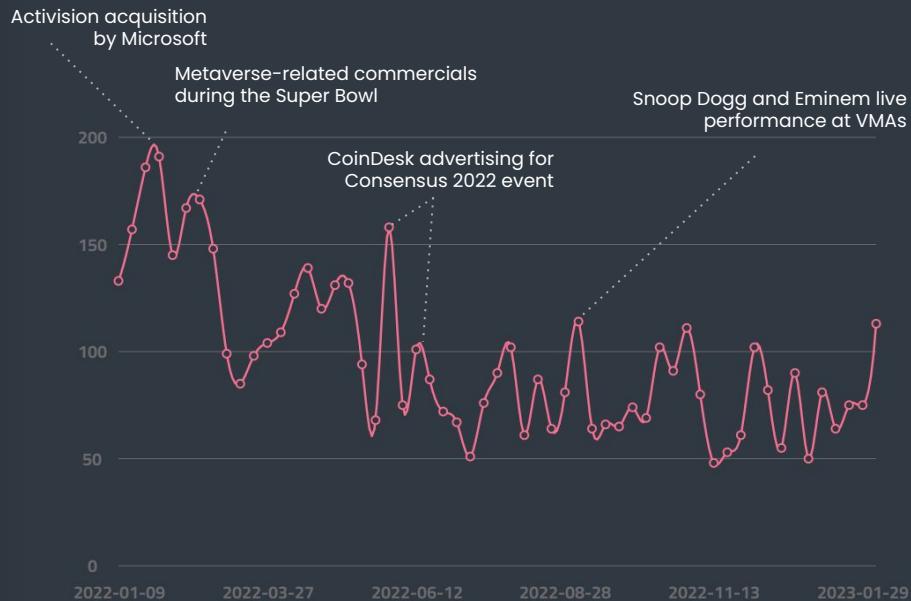


Crypto

This community is always on the lookout for novelties and opportunities about crypto or Web3.

It explains the high engagement rate – double the average – and the relatively low drop of activity throughout the year.

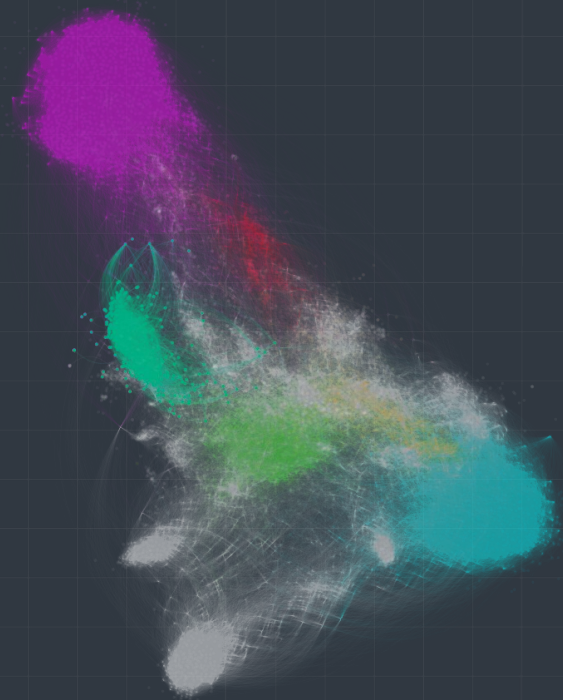
Community timeline



Gaming

4.1% of users

This community contains people working in the gaming industry, journalists and gaming-related content creators, the last of which are mostly on Twitch.



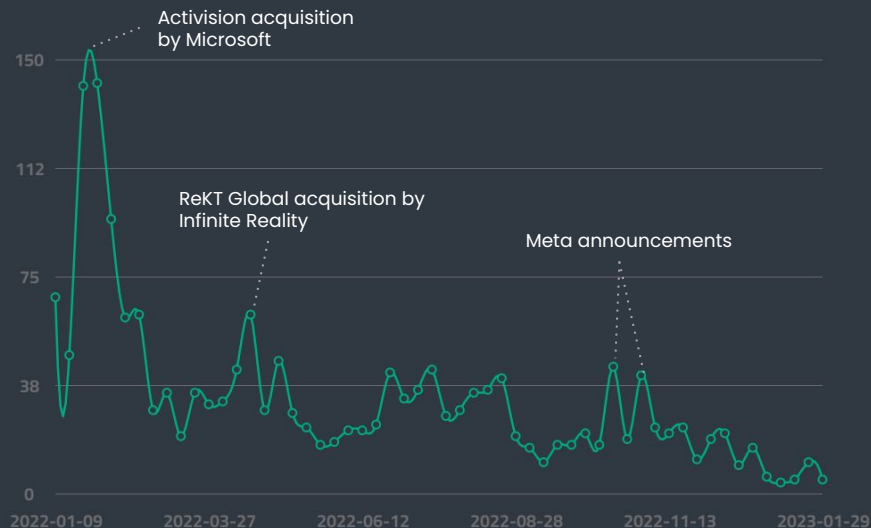
Gaming

This community has numerous concerns regarding the metaverse – and especially its connections with gaming.

From a business point of view, the acquisition of famous gaming companies by metaverse-related investors had a huge impact on conversations.

Additionally, this community considers current implementations of the metaverse as simpler versions of existing video games like *Minecraft*, *Roblox* or *Fortnite* – but without any added value.

Community timeline

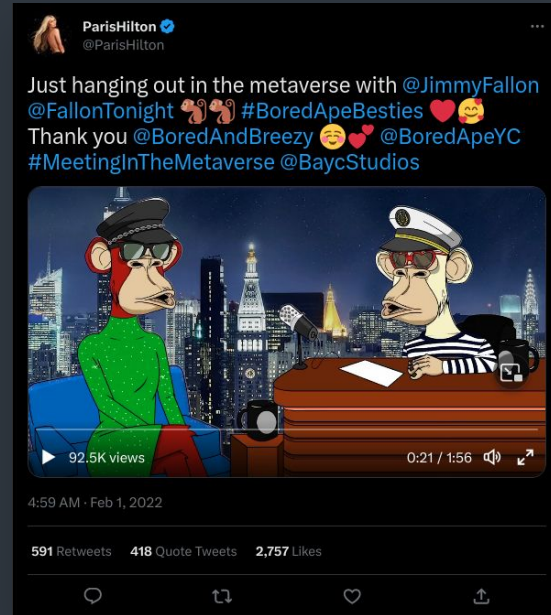


Different people and organisations want different things from the metaverse. But from what was once noise has emerged a community.

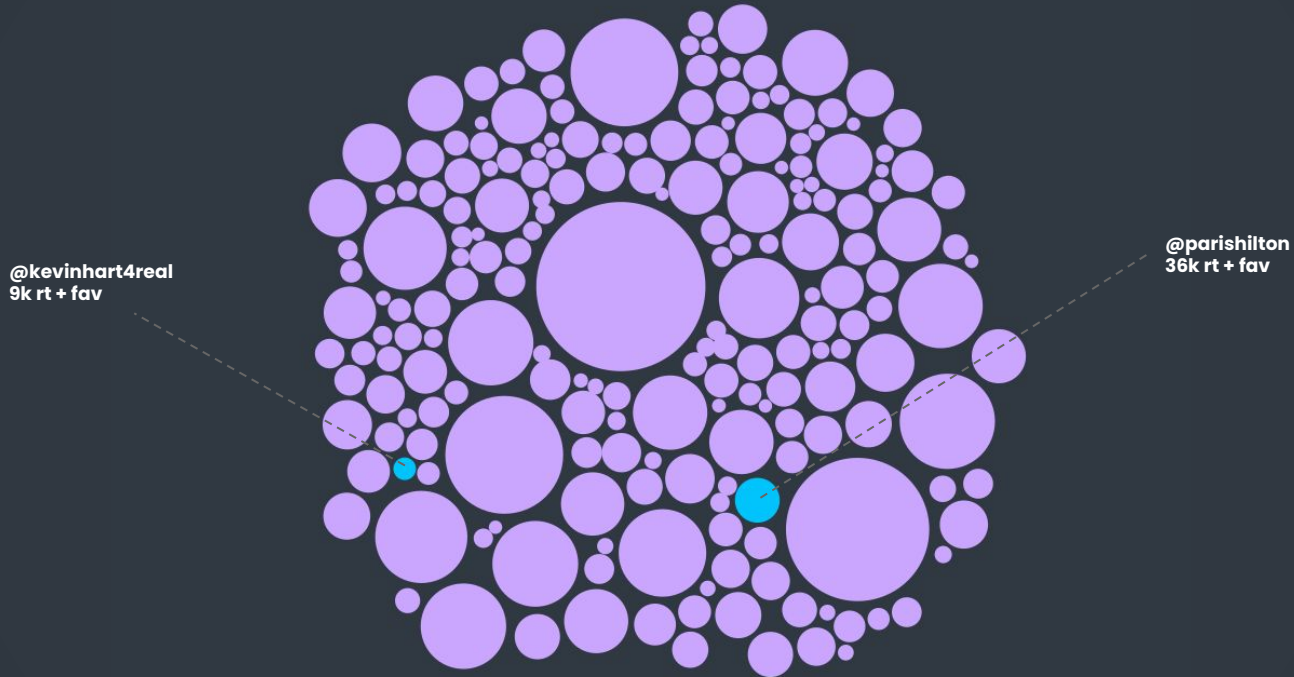
With this comes the creation of a common voice. The community is there for the right reasons – and can act as a barrier to opportunism.

Opportunistic behaviours are not rewarded in the metaverse

Some very influential accounts, such as @parishilton, @snoopdogg and @kevinhart4real, entered the metaverse...



... But they are far from being as engaging as metaverse experts



Engagement induced across the year by top accounts

Others faced strong opposition from their community...

"Romain noooooooo"

"Romain, take a minute to check out the comments & listen to your fans. They don't want this. Keep killin' it on the track in Indy. There's no need for this."

"Seriously Romain? No. Just no. This is not ok."



"Romain, it's time to cut it out. No one will respect you anymore."

"Honestly, pretty disappointed."

**The metaverse has its own codes and culture –
but it is also a mirror image of communities
that already live in the real world.**

**Accordingly, if a metaverse initiative is
sincere and embraces passionate fans,
then it is more likely to succeed.**

Methodology

This study consists of a retrospective analysis of communities and conversations that focused on the metaverse on Twitter since early 2022.

In the first part of the study, we detail the general timeline of metaverse mentions as well as the biggest notable events of the study period. The data for this section comes from all English tweets that mentioned 'metaverse' within the timeframe* – including retweets.

In the second part of the study, we draw a high-definition picture of the **communities** that make up the **56,000 top users** – those with at least 5,000 followers – who have each published at least one native tweet about the metaverse. This dataset comprises **706,000 native tweets**.

*** The data collection covers the period from 1 January 2022 to 5 February 2023.**

All data was collected via the Twitter API and our scraping tools. It was analysed using tools developed in-house by Reputation Squad's Data Science division.