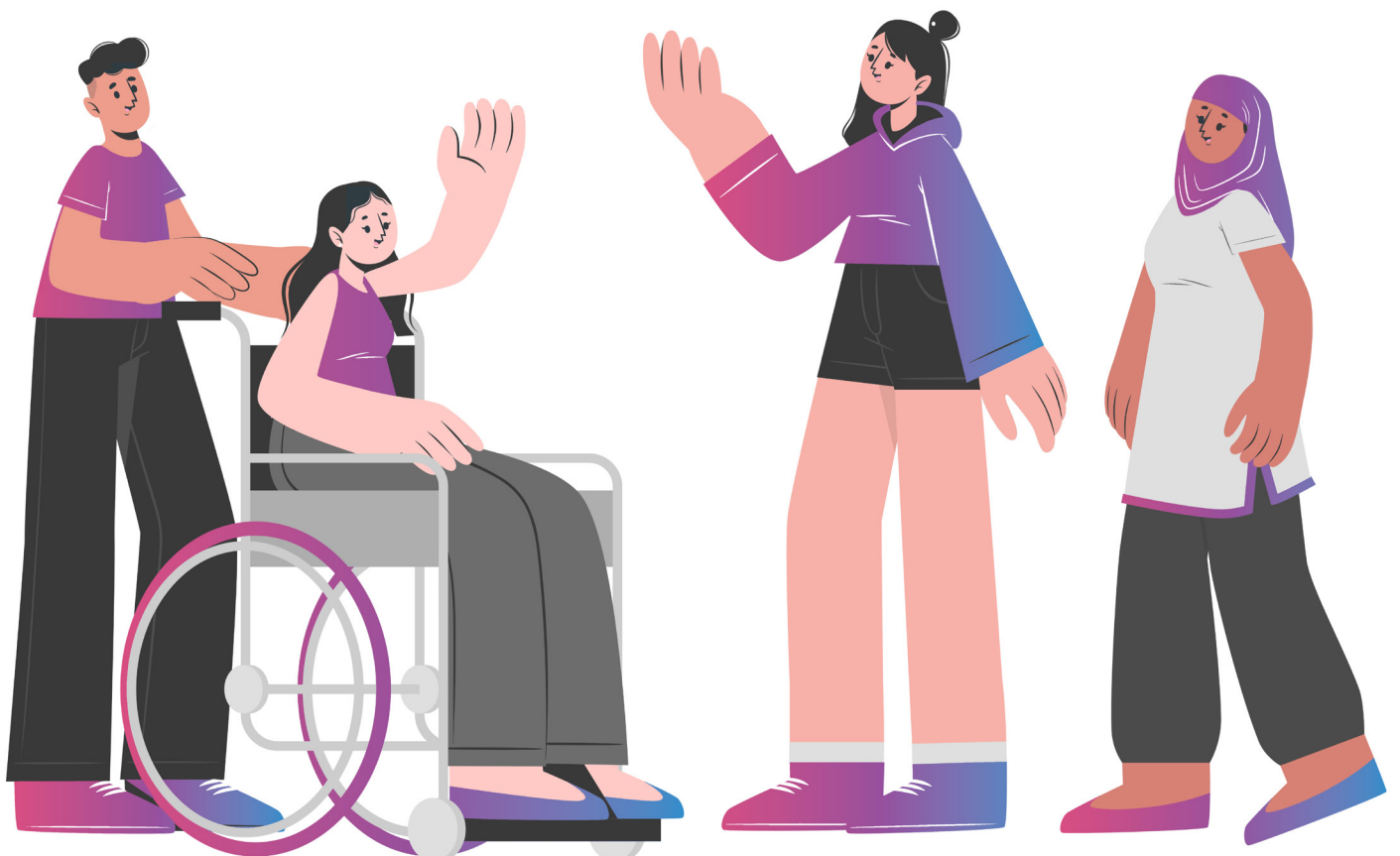




OUR METAVERSE

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE DIGITAL FUTURE



COPYRIGHT PROJECT ROCKIT 2022

All rights reserved. No part of this report may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, without prior written permission.

For requests, please write to:
Lucy Thomas
Suite 1, Level 2
58 - 62 Rupert St
Collingwood VIC 3066
lucy@projectrockit.com.au

SUGGESTED CITATION

Thomas, L, & Unity, E, (2022). *Our Metaverse: Young People and the Digital Future*, Melbourne: PROJECT ROCKIT.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

PROJECT ROCKIT acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we live, work and play, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. We also acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander custodians of Country across all of the places convened as part of this project.

We share our deep respect to elders past, present and emerging leaders. We extend this respect to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who have contributed so generously to this project. We recognise their continuing spiritual and cultural connection to the land and acknowledge that Aboriginal sovereignty has never been ceded.

PROJECT ROCKIT

PROJECT ROCKIT is Australia's youth-driven movement against (cyber)bullying. Founded on the dream of a world where kindness and respect thrive over bullying, hate and prejudice, PROJECT ROCKIT delivers youth-centred workshops, events and projects that mobilise students to lead positive social impact, at school, online, and beyond.



PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Our Metaverse brought together seven leading youth, digital, and mental health partner organisations from across Australia: the Centre for Multicultural Youth, headspace, Indigital, Minus18, Orygen, ReachOut, and UNICEF Australia.



Indigital



OUR METAVERSE

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE DIGITAL FUTURE



CONTENTS

- 06 FOREWORD FROM THE YOUTH CONSULTANTS**
A letter from the young people involved in the project to metaverse stakeholders.
- 08 INTRODUCTION**
What is the metaverse and who are PROJECT ROCKIT.

- 07 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**
A one-page summary of the project and young people's hopes for the metaverse.
- 09 CONSULTATION PROCESS**
The project's design, participant demographics, and aims.

To access this report online, scan this QR code or go to

BIT.LY/OURMETAVERSE



- 10 GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES OF THE METAVERSE**
Connection
Education
Shaping Identity
Advocacy
Mental Health
- 18 SAFETY AND PRIVACY PRINCIPLES**
Protect human rights and dignity
Support the balance of online and offline
Build trust through transparency
Keep people accountable
Build agency through data literacy

- 14 GREATEST CONCERNS OF THE METAVERSE**
Safety and Privacy
Access and Inclusion
Balancing online and offline
Misinformation and manipulation
Regulation and accountability
- 22 ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION PRINCIPLES**
Centre lived experience as expertise
Strive for equitable access
Continuously co-design
Value and amplify diversity
Collaborate and communicate

- 26 REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**
Concluding remarks and summary by the Project Manager, Co-Founder and CEO.

- 29 APPENDICES 1 - 4**
Screenshots, footage from Virtual Reality, and more quotes from young people.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TO THE YOUTH CONSULTANTS

First and foremost, the PROJECT ROCKIT team extends its deepest gratitude to the 42 Youth Consultants who have journeyed with us through the past, present, and into the unknown – the metaverse. We especially want to acknowledge the young people who identify with lived and living experiences of mental health challenges and recovery, LGBTQIA+, disabilities, neurodiversity, and those who have been carers, families, or supporters.

We also want to acknowledge the Youth Consultants who have written the Foreword, reviewed and edited the report, and contributed their personal stories. These include Azhaan Haq, Esther Nyak, Hannah Diviney, Harrison Oates, Henry Hughes, Jaanu Kalyani, Joshua Melone, Matthew Blanch, Rachael Laing, Tiara De Silva, and Zinab Al Hilaly.

YOUR LIVED AND LIVING EXPERIENCE IS THE FUNDAMENTAL EXPERTISE ON WHICH THIS ENTIRE PROJECT IS BUILT

TO THE PROJECT ROCKIT PRESENTERS

We would like to thank our PROJECT ROCKIT Presenters, Amelia, Ella, Gian, Jay, Jayde, Lachy, and Tayla, who have facilitated open, accessible, and inclusive online spaces for our Youth Consultants, and for bringing such a depth of perspective as young people themselves.

TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We give special thanks to each of our community partner organisations who have made it possible to convene this incredible group and build genuine support into the participation process: the Centre for Multicultural Youth, headspace, Indigital, Minus18, Orygen, ReachOut, and UNICEF Australia.

TO META

We acknowledge and give our sincere thanks to Meta for initiating and backing this project. This project demonstrates a firm commitment to significant, meaningful, and measurable action for young people, with the potential to not only benefit Meta's internal approach to safety but to also inform and support the efforts of wider stakeholders as we build the metaverse together. We also want to especially thank and acknowledge the Safety and Public Policy teams at Meta (Australia and New Zealand), who have made this a genuinely collaborative and supportive partnership.

TO YOU

Finally, we want to thank you for reading this report and joining us. We must all ensure that young people are equal partners in shaping our shared digital future.

FOREWORD FROM THE YOUTH CONSULTANTS

Many of us were initially hesitant to contribute to this project. We weren't sure what value we could add as we are not traditional 'cybersafety experts' and have varying experience with digital technologies. However, as we journeyed our way through this consultation, we realised the greatness of this opportunity to shape our future. We realised how the metaverse will impact our lives, regardless of our level of experience, literacy, engagement, love, like or dislike of it. This is why this report is an act of care - both for ourselves and communities to come.

It is easy to see how existing technology informs how we live our lives today. However, it is much more challenging to think about how technologies that don't yet exist will shape our futures. The metaverse will generate untold opportunities, including allowing us to access new experiences that are not limited by our physical ability, geographical location, assigned gender, and much more. We also acknowledge the uncertainty and unease that the metaverse presents - not every problem can be predicted or prevented, nor every need be foreseen. However, we know that this fear of the unknown can translate into avoidance. We believe that we must not shy away from these conversations.

Suppose we don't involve ourselves in new change. In that case, people with the privilege of not being directly impacted by key concerns will continue to take the lead. They can sleep easy, knowing that this novelty supports their interests, whilst we remain without the opportunity to contribute to decision-making that affects us.

THIS WAS A GENUINE AND TIMELY EFFORT TO LISTEN TO YOUNG PEOPLE, INVITE US TO SPEAK UP, AND OFFER AN INVITATION TO BUILD THE METAVERSE NOT JUST FOR US, BUT WITH US

As Metaverse Youth Consultants, we disrupted the traditional narrative of technological development. We had the true honour of connecting and engaging with the most diverse group of young people across Australia. Many of us who have traversed to the darkest, lowest, and most desperate parts of our minds find healing and meaning in dedicating ourselves to the pursuit of helping others. Our lived and living experiences, excitements, concerns, and recommendations were varied, rich and powerful. As a team, we opened our minds to worlds that many of us have been so afraid of in a way that excited and challenged us in all the right ways. This project has showcased the incredible power of creating an open space for lived experience-led design.

We would like to highlight the immense amount of care and attention put into the project from PROJECT ROCKIT, especially our Project Manager Emily Unity, who has been so endearing and meant so much to build a safe, supported, and trusting space. The team has meaningfully engaged us every step of the way and went to enormous lengths to demonstrate the significance of our effort and expertise. With their help, we have championed an effective and empathetic dialogue, which we know will be received most authentically and used to construct better futures for all.

Each of us will be more connected and invested in the metaverse since now we know it will be shaped by us. Our passion and drive to help build a safe and accessible digital future was genuinely inspiring for each other, and will stay with us well beyond the end of this project. Thank you for reading our report, for listening to our lived experiences, and for building our metaverse with us.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

First, there was the Internet. Then, came social media. The metaverse will be the next chapter in the evolution of social technology - an immersive, three-dimensional social space with the ability to both parallel and completely reimagine our physical world, facilitated by extant and future immersive technologies.

Genuine youth-led action is essential in the creation of an inclusive and safe metaverse. As such, this project is all about centering and valuing young people's lived and living experiences as vital expertise on how we can proactively build a safe, kind, and inclusive metaverse - "Our Metaverse."

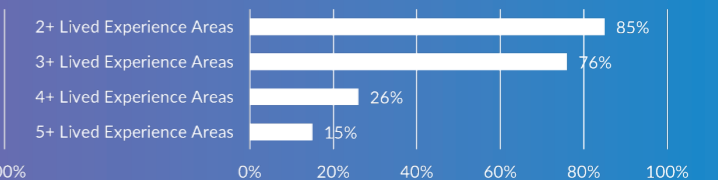
The project team convened 42 Youth Consultants (aged 18-25) who were nominated by leading organisations in youth, mental health, and technology from across Australia including the Centre for Multicultural Youth, headspace, Indigital, Minus18, Orygen, ReachOut, and UNICEF Australia. The Youth Consultants were engaged in a series of youth-led roundtables to capture young people's hopes, priorities, reservations, and recommendations canvas their expertise in support of the variety of stakeholders responsible for designing, building, and regulating the metaverse.

In assembling our team, diversity and inclusion were prioritised, ensuring participation from several communities at greater risk of encountering negative online experiences. A summary of Youth Consultants' lived experiences is below.

LIVED AND LIVING EXPERIENCES



INTERSECTIONALITIES



GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES OF THE METAVERSE

- Connection
- Education
- Shaping Identity
- Advocacy and Justice
- Mental Health

SAFETY AND PRIVACY PRINCIPLES

- Protect Human Rights and Dignity
- Support the Balance of Online and Offline
- Build Trust Through Transparency
- Keep People Accountable
- Build Agency Through Data Literacy

GREATEST CONCERNS OF THE METAVERSE

- Safety and Privacy
- Access and Inclusion
- Balancing Online and Offline
- Misinformation and Manipulation
- Regulation and Accountability

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION PRINCIPLES

- Centre Lived Experience as Expertise
- Strive for Equitable Access
- Continuously Co-design
- Value and Amplify Diversity
- Collaborate and Communicate

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THE METAVERSE?

First, there was the Internet. Then, came social media. The metaverse will be the next chapter in the evolution of social technology. Whilst a fully realised metaverse is estimated to be 8-10 years away, it is anticipated to turn the 2D web into a 3D immersive experience. The metaverse extends beyond the devices we merely hold in our hands, and beyond even the first shaky steps we are taking with cutting-edge virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies. It is an immersive, three-dimensional social space with the ability to both parallel and completely reimagine our physical world, facilitated by extant and future immersive technologies.

The metaverse will feel like a hybrid of today's online social experiences and the physical world, seamlessly stitched together allowing us to jump from one space to another. It is a system made up of different technologies, spanning across companies, devices, software, and boundaries. People can use the metaverse to socialise, shop, access entertainment, or work in a virtual office. Beyond that, the metaverse will also allow us to do things we could never do in real life with people we can't physically be with and in times and spaces that aren't bound by physical limitations.

BUT WHAT ARE THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DIGITAL FUTURE?

WHY IS PROJECT ROCKIT LEADING THIS PROJECT?

The metaverse is a broad and general term, like “the world” or “the internet.” The metaverse is not designed or owned by one company, nor governed by any single regulatory body. In order for the metaverse to develop responsibly, industries and societies at large will need to work together to address the emerging regulatory, ethical, commercial, educational, vocational, and socio-political issues presented by the emerging metaverse.

As Australia's youth-driven movement against (cyber)bullying, PROJECT ROCKIT is committed to amplifying young people's voices to be heard by those in a direct position to engineer a kinder online world. We believe that genuine youth-led action is essential in the creation of an inclusive and safe metaverse for everyone. As such, we have employed our youth-led approach to ensure that this project is all about centering and valuing young people's lived and living experiences as vital expertise on how together we can proactively build a safe, kind, and inclusive metaverse - “Our Metaverse.”

The metaverse has seen an explosion of interest and investment from global tech platforms, including Meta, Microsoft, Google, and Apple. This Youth Consultation project has been funded by Meta. In their commitment to co-designing the metaverse responsibly, Meta has recognised the importance of youth lived experience in fostering young people's digital literacy and embedding safety and wellbeing into emerging metaverse technologies. They have initiated and supported this project, demonstrating a firm commitment to significant, meaningful, and measurable action for young people, with the potential to not only benefit Meta's internal approach to safety but to also inform and support the efforts of wider stakeholders as we build the metaverse together.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

PROJECT ROCKIT co-designed a series of youth-led digital roundtables to capture young people's hopes, priorities, reservations, and recommendations, canvassing their expertise in support of the variety of stakeholders responsible for designing, building, and regulating the metaverse. The series of four two-hour digital roundtables were led by trained young people, held once a month from April to July 2022, and utilised a range of digital platforms.

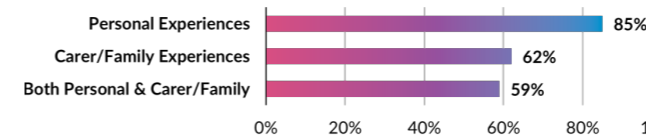
The project team convened 42 Youth Consultants aged between 18 to 25, nominated by leading organisations in youth, mental health, and technology from across Australia. These included the Centre for Multicultural Youth, headspace, Indigital, Minus18, Orygen, ReachOut, and UNICEF Australia. The project sought out specific participation from several focus communities at greater risk of encountering negative online experiences rather than producing a representative sample. These include people who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTQIA+, lived and living experience of mental health challenges and recovery, disabilities, neurodiversity, and more.

All Youth Consultants provided prior written consent to participate and share their views in this report. Each received a \$100 honorarium per roundtable, with further remuneration provided to those who reviewed and edited this report.

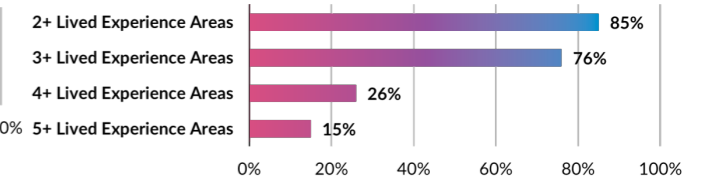
ROUNDTABLE AIMS

1. Elevate young people's top concerns and recommendations to inform stakeholders co-designing the metaverse.
2. Provide a channel for embedding safety and wellbeing into the design of emerging metaverse technologies.
3. Strengthen community collaboration across the youth sector to inform industry technology development.

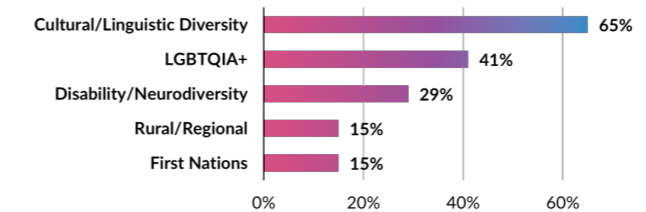
MENTAL HEALTH LIVED EXPERIENCES



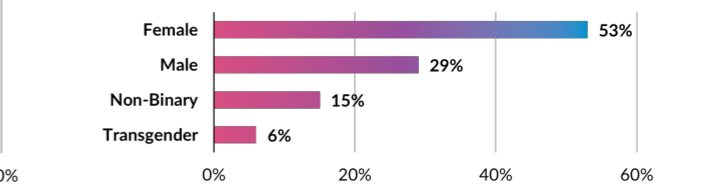
INTERSECTIONALITIES



OTHER PRIORITY LIVED EXPERIENCES



GENDER IDENTITIES



FEEDBACK

“I LOVED seeing a genuine cross-section of the community represented. I truly felt that people of diverse lived experiences were all seen & heard in this space.”

“It was validating to hear that my own hopes & concerns around the metaverse are shared and to hear insight into the hopes & concerns of others.”

“It just opened my mind so much. I went into this thinking I had nothing to contribute but I know now that I do! :)”

“It was so inclusive and accessible! No wrong/right answers, and a great soundboard for our hopes and concerns.”

GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES OF THE METAVERSE

From the outset, our Youth Consultants seized this project as a vehicle for exploring a collective good. They were eager to vision shared digital futures in which humanity will prevail over current technological shortcomings and social inequities that we currently face. The group was broadly excited by the possibilities of genuine youth-led projects such as this, on the basis that, “young people are uniquely well placed to inform on the design of future technology because many of us have a unique insight and skill set into the way technology interacts with our life from growing up with increasingly powerful technology.” Drawing on their input spanning four roundtables and additional surveys, this report presents their five greatest opportunities.

CONNECTION

Across the board, Youth Consultants were hopeful for deepened connections to people, communities, and cultures through the metaverse. Some identified it as an avenue for “deepening and maintaining existing connections,” such as “families and friends overseas.” However, many were excited by the possibility of creating new and meaningful relationships that are less possible offline, such as “connecting with chosen communities” with shared lived and living experiences, particularly “for those who struggle to find [their] people offline.” This was especially relevant for those who have lived and living experiences of “domestic violence, disability, cultural/linguistic differences that all contribute to not finding community/space or feeling unsafe.” Others shared aspirations for “breaking down cultural divides by connecting people who might otherwise never meet,” using the metaverse as a medium for cultivating more inclusive communities. Another strong theme was the prospect of people being able to “leave their homes without leaving their homes,” with Youth Consultants optimistic that the metaverse would be a vital tool for those at greater risk of social isolation and loneliness.

“I’m thinking about the remote community I’m from and how queerphobic it is... The metaverse could be a great way to connect with other queer people in a safe way.”

“For those of us who struggle to find our people offline, the metaverse has huge possibilities for REAL human connection.”

“I love how the Metaverse connects a person with a disability to those like minded individuals. When I say that, it is hard to find mainstream people who can accept that people with disabilities can do something, in the metaverse, it can prove that we can do something.”

EDUCATION

Youth Consultants identified the metaverse as a vehicle for “finding new ways to learn.” They shared excitement about the potential for more innovative modes of learning such as “studying history if you could experience

it happening” or “stand[ing] among the planets when learning about astronomy.” They shared hopes for the metaverse improving the accessibility of education “help[ing] people who struggle to learn in classrooms.” Youth Consultants also highlighted the provision of greater access for young people who are living in rural and regional areas to “diverse learning opportunities and subject matter experts,” with a Youth Consultant sharing their desire that potentially, “in the metaverse, education is less about a teacher standing at the front of the room and more about learning from a range of people all around you.”

“Being able to explore a virtual model of a brain would have made my psych degree so much easier!”

“Being able to access immersive experiences that make it easier for neurodiverse people and people with different learning styles understand concepts and ideas.”

SHAPING IDENTITY

Youth Consultants were hopeful about the possibility of “choosing who [they] want to be” through practices of constructing chosen digital identities in the metaverse. The discussion explored a range of possible benefits offered by representing themselves as digital avatars rather than as traditional physical beings, such as “not being constricted by [their] identity and its various stereotypes” and “being able to decide how the world sees [them].” Youth Consultants also voiced aspirations for immersive technologies to deliver freedom from the forces that limit their true identities, including “challenging body dysmorphia” or “appearing like the gender [they] identify as.”

“Having a virtual representation of myself as a trans person means that I can appear the way I want to be seen.”

“In the metaverse, I’m not judged for things I can’t control - my race, gender, or creed. But instead for the true value of my ideas.”

“I’ve really never felt safe exploring my identity offline... but the metaverse may be a safer place for me.”

ADVOCACY AND JUSTICE

For our Youth Consultants, the growth of the metaverse presents a key opportunity to disrupt traditional systems and spur innovation for “*solving real-world problems.*” In contrast to traditional offline advocacy or current-day 2D online spaces, Youth Consultants observed that the metaverse provides “*more immersive experiences around teaching people about issues and perspectives.*” They expressed their hopes that the metaverse can provide free and accessible places to meet that aren’t constrained by geography, governmental interference or participation barriers, the metaverse can “*level the playing field*” about whose voices are heard. We emphasised that “*protecting this equalising opportunity during its design is necessary to realise the potential of the metaverse for advocacy.*”

“The advocacy that matters most to me requires community-building (not one person out in front) and the metaverse can create stronger and more level ways to do that”

“I am a huge fan of advocacy. I believe that everyone, especially youth should be an advocate for something. The metaverse allows the spaces that can cultivate those environments.”

“Can we use the metaverse to truly work together to solve real-world problems like climate change?”

MENTAL HEALTH

Youth Consultants were enthusiastic about the metaverse's potential to support mental health and wellbeing. Many spoke to the prospect of the digitalisation of existing therapies such as “*graded exposure therapy,*” “*virtual psychology sessions,*” and connecting over shared experiences - “*peer support.*”

Others spoke to the potential for the metaverse to address common barriers to support, such as geographical, financial, and even “*cultural avoidance rules in place that would prohibit someone seeking psychological care.*” More broadly, there was a strong appeal to “*being able to take yourself out of your current environment*” and “*create a safe virtual space if it can't be accessed in real life.*”

“As someone with lived experiences of trauma and PTSD, it is incredibly powerful and healing to have a safe space to participate in, whilst staying in my own safe physical space.”

“Growing up, I've always heard people say 'it's okay to not be okay', but no one was actually showing me that. Online spaces were the first places where I found shared lived experiences and I learned that I was truly not alone. They gave me true hope and role-modelled what recovery could look like.”

“Meditating and taking care of yourself is easier in VR because you can escape from the current space. This is particularly important for those who feel trapped.”

“I'm excited by graded exposure therapy in VR!!! Before confronting a fear in the real world, we could choose to practice safely in our own physical safe places.”



HENRY'S STORY

No one in the outside world told me I was amazing, so I told myself that I was amazing.

As a deaf swimmer, I was and still am besieged with perceptions and judgements of my character by people who only know one thing about me, my disability - my deafness. A trait of mine that has been perceived, labelled as a weakness, not a strength, that makes me sensitive, not empowered. This makes me feel one thing and one thing only - shame. Such a simple word for its meaning sinks deep.

This why I want to do the talking about my character myself.

Let me tell you two things that connect some of my lived experiences to opportunities that we can water and grow in the metaverse, the first one being advocacy.

What advocacy did for me is something that I truly value and will always encourage future young people to participate in. To as little as saying "no rubbish in the park" to as big as saying "no rubbish in the ocean," advocacy has the power to give an actionable voice to those who are quiet, who watch life happen, who simulate life, in lieu of living the life they want to have.



For me, advocacy helped me be active in mountainous times of doubt.

When I was suffering from depression, I used advocacy as a motivation to ensure future generations do not suffer what others fired at me. I strongly encourage everyone to advocate for something.

Advocacy is a regeneration of purpose, of meaning.

The second topic I wanted to talk about is education. Education is as important as water, without education, I cannot write, without education, I cannot talk, without education, I cannot swim, without water I cannot survive.

The access to education is and always will be a right not a privilege, the same goes for a glass of water.

Education enables the student to learn and adapt methods to contribute to society by helping build foundations and platforms like the metaverse to connect with each other, advocate with each other, and communicate with each other.

Prior to the roundtables, I never thought much of virtual reality, not to say I dismissed it, simply because the idea was marketed as a luxury rather than a necessity.

However, delving into the metaverse for the first time, was an experience that cannot be replicated.

Due to having a cochlear implant on my right ear, a hearing aid on my left, the pressure of water does limit my ability to go deep underwater. As a swimmer, a dream of mine was always to swim deep underwater with fishes and sharks.

It was one of the first things I did in virtual reality, already knowing how water flows on me, I meditate on the bottom of the ocean floor.

I am not going to lie, I cried.

In happy tears, with elevated emotion of accomplishment and satisfaction...

GREATEST CONCERNS OF THE METAVERSE

One of the most apparent challenges of the current consultation project was the task of casting perspectives and opinions of a future state and experience that does not yet fully exist. As part of this process, Youth Consultants needed to inform their impressions of the metaverse by piecing together their diverse lived and living experiences of existing technologies, including social media, augmented reality (AR), and social virtual reality (VR). As a result, discussions raised a wide range of unknowns spanning the phenomenological (“how real can the virtual world get?”), cultural (“will the metaverse resemble our society?”), personal (“how fluid are these online identities?”). While our Youth Consultants were overwhelmingly hopeful about the opportunities presented by the dawn of a new digital era, imagining these uncharted waters raised a number of questions and concerns.

SAFETY AND PRIVACY

After experiencing VR, Youth Consultants observed that while digital spaces equip users with the benefit of “being able to decide how the world sees you,” this same quality might make some “more vulnerable to people who can (mis)represent themselves however they want.” In addressing online safety concerns, there was a strong preference for responses that preserve individual agency, describing true online safety as “having opportunities to be part of the safety-making.” In approaching privacy, Youth Consultants were broadly reluctant about “giving up rights to big corporations” as a necessity for participation, noting that in current online worlds, “a lot of behaviour is already tracked and analysed.” Building on this, the group raised concerns about “how much is going on in the background without our knowledge,” due to the possible capture of biometric and usage data via hardware and software without awareness.

“I inherently trusted the people I interacted with because they'd designed avatars that were likeable. They might look friendly, but what if they actually have bad intentions?”

“I worry about being so immersed in the VR environment that I don't even notice when I'm sharing my personal info or data.”

ACCESS AND INCLUSION

Youth Consultants pose the question, “how are biases acknowledged in designing the metaverse?” with many seeking assurance that emerging technologies will not further exacerbate existing divides, imbalanced privilege and power structures. Further questions of accessibility were explored from a range of vantage points, such as disability (“Are we building apps and programs that are audio-based for those who are blind?”), digital literacy (“Could we have government programs in libraries for public VR?”), socio-economic and geographic mobility (“How can the metaverse be accessible for low socio-economic and rural people?”), and cross-cultural contexts (“What kinds of social and cultural rules will we develop to manage social interaction in an embodied space?”). The group

was concerned that “not investing in proper accessibility will further isolate and alienate vulnerable groups.”

“If the metaverse is as big as we expect, inaccessibility will be like putting someone in lockdown while everyone else goes outside.”

“I wonder if we can truly create a space that is inclusive of everyone. That social engineering doesn't seem plausible considering the contentions between different views and beliefs. However, I think everybody should be included. It's important to have a variety of perspectives so that the environment isn't dominated by one particular culture.”

BALANCING ONLINE AND OFFLINE

After first participating in VR together, some of our Youth Consultants reported physical side-effects, such as “motion sickness and disorientation” and a sense of physical detachment, with one describing an experience of “struggling to realise what's real and what's not.” Additionally, there was strong agreement that the “metaverse shouldn't try to fulfil all your social needs,” with a parallel acknowledgement that for some, “the virtual world might seem better than [the] real world.” Youth Consultants reflected that across current digital literacy education in schools and universities, “self-moderation is not taught” and that “having control over your devices is so important to stay connected to yourself.” The group wanted to see developers creating measures to support “post-VR routines” – one idea was an expansion of tutorials into “compulsory tutorials that provide tools to ground yourself after finishing VR.”

“VR made me feel really sick and weird, but I didn't want to stop because I'd miss out.”

“We may risk neglecting our physical bodies in developing our digital identities.”

“After my first VR experience, it took a week for my hands to look normal again.”

MISINFORMATION AND MANIPULATION

Youth Consultants observed that in immersive 3D online spaces, “things look a lot realer, which might even make it easier to convince people of things that are not true.” They reflected that the very nature of the metaverse is a manufactured reality, such that “the entire environment is designed by someone, and thus could manipulate our attention or experience.” Whilst Youth Consultants recognised that 3D spaces may be less prone to the spread of existing 2D misinformation due its embodied medium, there was also a sense that “there’s always going to be misinformation, but how it affects us in 3D spaces is nuanced and we’re not prepared.” Thoughtful design and regulation is imperative. Some reflected that these constructed spaces may result in a narrowing of experience and “can create rabbit hole thinking or view of the world.” Youth Consultants were eager to see strong measures to counter manipulation and prevent “potentially undermining the opportunities of the expansive world on offer.”

“I worry we won’t be able to tell when we’re being advertised to - it could be so easy for it to blend into the VR environment or headsets.”

“We can’t just hand kids a headset without teaching them how to identify misinformation and think critically.”

“Our generation expects more transparency - we’ve learned that digital can be another avenue for people in power to manipulate us.”

REGULATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

There was a consensus that regulation is essential in “prioritising user privacy and safety rather than the interests of companies.” However, Youth Consultants wanted assurance that the metaverse will not be “built top-down by corporations seeking control” and will

instead centre user-driven goals. A number of comments centred around unease about potential Government interference, with questions like, “how can we trust different governments whose intentions are dangerous?” Discussions unearthed a range of practical and ethical questions, such as “how do laws apply in the metaverse?” and “who is regulating this? - who has the right to regulate this?” On individual responsibility, the group grappled with a tension between anonymity and accountability, seeking “more accountability for what people say and do online” whilst also preserving “a minimum amount of anonymity to allow people to be flexible in who they represent themselves as.”

“All of humanity will be better when we ensure accountability for online behaviour - we need to work this out once and for all.”

“Should governments be allowed to have ownership of social media platforms? It’s scary to think about this as a way to control people and get intel that can be used maliciously.”

“It’s scary to be living in a world where the people who ‘write the rules’ don’t have everyday people’s interests at heart.”

“I worry about a world where big companies and governments are in a constant argument about regulation with no clear rules for the rest of us to play by.”



HANNAH'S STORY

As a visibly disabled person, navigating a world not built for me is nothing new.

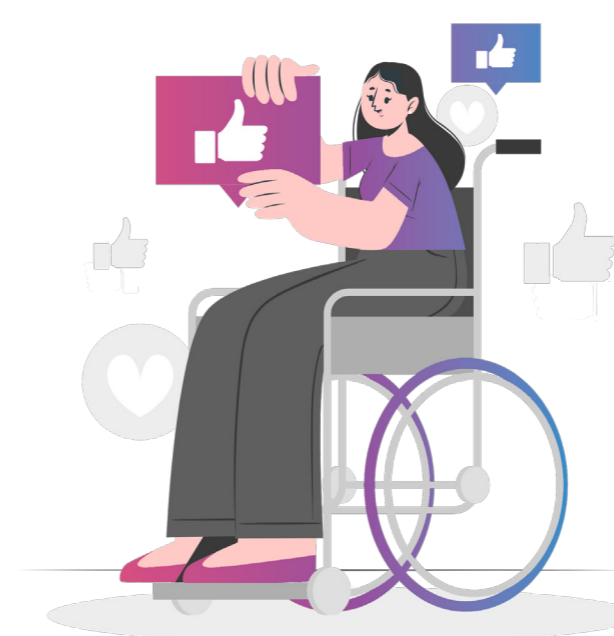
I navigate the world in a wheelchair thanks to Cerebral Palsy. My entire life has been about access and inclusion in its many forms, figuring out how best to build me a life that is the richest and fullest it can be.

Where I have struggled in the physical world, thanks to a lack of physically accessible design and foresight by those responsible for building society, I have thrived online.

It’s where I’ve fully leaned into the role of disability advocate and by doing so, built myself a steady platform from which to make a difference.

This has led to a public profile that is constantly growing, upheld by a global campaign petitioning Disney to create a disabled Disney Princess, my role as the editor in chief of a grassroots feminist youth newsroom called Missing Perspectives and my skill as a writer.

Being outspoken online about my experiences as a disabled person isn’t always easy.



Being so personal comes with the risk that I will be trolled, harassed or otherwise targeted.

For instance I’ve been on the receiving end of dozens of unsolicited messages This happened on an extreme scale recently, when I called out a global pop artist for using an ableist slur in a new song via Twitter in a Tweet that soon went viral.

While ultimately leading to positive change from them, it also came with pretty much every possible insult you could think of on the internet.

I feel deeply protective of and concerned for the wellbeing and mental health of all young people who will move into using the metaverse.

That’s why even though the idea of the metaverse terrifies me, I had to be part of this project.

Once I knew the Metaverse existed and its potential for harm, I couldn’t walk away. It matters a great deal to me that all young people but particularly those in marginalised communities feel safe existing in online spaces.

With such an immersive experience on the cards, it worries me that young people might be more easily exploited, targeted and catfished.

We must ask and answer these questions proactively.

What if young people grow to prefer the Metaverse and its freedoms to the real world?

What if they struggle with preferring the avatar version of themselves?

Who will be held accountable if they get hurt/mistreated?

How will we make sure barriers to access and inclusion dissolve so that if this is where the world’s heading, we can all be a part of it?

SAFETY AND PRIVACY PRINCIPLES

In acknowledging that the greatest strengths and successes of technology to date have only been made possible through multi-stakeholder collaboration, the recommendations put forward by our Youth Consultants have been captured in the form of common principles, in the hope of setting a shared agenda for those working in all capacities to vision and build the metaverse. Thus, the following principles speak to a collective ethos to be embodied by all metaverse stakeholders, including young people, policy-makers, engineers, platforms, educators, and more.

PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY

The metaverse must serve “for people, not for profit,” and seek to respect and protect human rights over capitalist and political interests. In principle, ‘safety’ included the keeping young people “safe from other users” but also “safe from exploitation by companies and governments.” The design and architecture of the metaverse should centre those most at risk, including younger people, with product-makers building “the right settings for young people aged under 18 by default.” Platform designers should invest in embedding proactive tools to detect, triage, and remove harmful behaviour specific to social VR, with law-makers supporting such efforts by “improving anti-harassment laws to protect marginalised people from abuse.”

“I want to see an approach to safety and privacy that centres the people who are most vulnerable and goes from there.”

“Engineers should create features that promote inclusivity and positivity rather than just traditional metrics of safety.”

“Building a range of both specific and general settings to have agency over our avatar and personal info is shown.”

BALANCING ONLINE AND OFFLINE

Social metaverse spaces should encourage a healthy balance between physical and digital worlds, rather than seeking to “[take] us away from reality.” This includes building an evidence base to understand the “psychological impacts of spending more time both online and using [immersive] technology” and effective strategies and “tools to stop derealisation and detachment from reality.” This includes the co-design of tools to support people to “draw the boundary for physical vs digital experiences” and maintain offline “human connections and engagement with the physical environment around [them].”

“The metaverse needs to track the amount of time people are spending on individual platforms and incorporate things like self lock outs, or directions to go outside and move, or referrals on-screen for support services.”

“Having something like a wellbeing tracker where the headset informs how long you've been online.”

“Targeting mindfulness apps to help reconnect with the real world.”

“Creating guidelines on safe levels of exposure as well as good offline practices.”

BUILD TRUST THROUGH TRANSPARENCY

All metaverse platforms must transparently communicate information to end users on their level, including “more accessible terms and conditions that don't 'hide' info on privacy and data collection.” The metaverse should be built to support transparency, including the use of “open source software and principles,” because “without open source, we cannot trust the metaverse - without trust, we cannot feel safe.” Education and training should be directed towards building user literacy, including “explaining algorithms etc to people who don't understand these concepts (like me!).” Through transparency, this new evolution of technology must allow innovation and new entrants to the digital ecosystem, ensuring that it is “Our Metaverse” as opposed to a “monopoly by large tech companies.”

“Establishing clear disclosure standards of what information is shared and where.”

“Presenting important information without requiring users to read legal garb.”

“Creating regulation to ensure platform transparency about the use of information (not ambiguously or in small text).”

KEEP PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE

As best practice, social contracts should be established in all spaces across the metaverse from the moment of sign-up to “support people to be responsible for [their] own actions and words.” Policy-makers across public and private sectors must collaborate on regulatory and legal frameworks that “extend accountability for bad online behaviour to people’s offline lives.” Those with power to shape the metaverse by design should make every effort to ensure that there is a diverse representation of voices, including the “establishment of a democratic structure with clear rules.” This will further the acknowledgement that “the idea of spontaneous conversations face-to-face makes holding perpetrators to account more difficult.” Finally, we must learn from past and current experiences with technology and digital spaces, with platforms publicly “sharing their intentions about how they will be accountable for dealing with harms in the future.”

“Ensuring each person/avatar is following community safety guidelines.”

“Giving reminders like 'did you know people can record in the virtual worlds and capture what you say?' to keep people accountable.”

“Designing spaces and technology to incentivise better behaviour should come first, because even active moderation will be insufficient in VR spaces.”

BUILD AGENCY VIA DATA LITERACY

Stakeholders must understand that in the metaverse, “data and digital literacy is a power and a right not a privilege.” The process of building immersive spaces should support proactive data literacy, such that “education and training are available before the technology, to ensure all people know how to operate

in the space safely and comfortably.” There needs to be a focus on strengthening autonomy through education, which must “focus on giving people skills to participate, not just avoid the risks.” Safety and privacy teams working on platform tools and policy must acknowledge that “privacy has different meanings for people from different minority groups.” We must collectively strive to understand different preferences and understandings of safety, subsequently tailoring data literacy equitably, with strategies such as “adding languages and different accessibility needs.”

“Having control of exactly what information my social media has about me and what parts of my life are not for others.”

“Being able to share what you want but also having your boundaries respected.”

“Using data more efficiently and ethically is becoming increasingly important as we transition to an almost digital society.”

“Having control of exactly what information my social media has about me and what parts of my life are not for others.”

“Building in-app privacy checks while interacting like 'are you sure you want to share this location or share this information?'”



RACHAEL'S STORY

Loneliness is a feeling I am intimately familiar with.

I've lived away from my family since I was 12 and connection with those I love most has often been inaccessible. I've also always felt a bit different to those around me, leading me to being a very lonely teenager. Receiving a late mental health diagnosis has been clarifying for me, especially as online worlds have allowed me to connect with other late-diagnosed people.

Online worlds have been a safe space for me, somewhere that I can find people who understand my experience experientially.

Being able to post anonymously in groups on social media helps me protect my privacy and safety, whilst also accessing support. However, I worry about data literacy and have a persistent fear whenever I am online that I don't have the education to keep myself safe and private.

When I started running, I downloaded an app that enables users to track runs and connect with others. I enjoyed seeing maps of other people's runs, so I could see where I might like to explore. However, I realised that strangers can figure out where you live. This terrified me.



The maps are automatically turned on, so I had to navigate the settings to protect my safety and privacy.

These were classic attention economy tactics, profiting off my attention at the expense of my safety and wellbeing.

I struggled again with 'opt out' settings when I got a smartwatch and was constantly distracted by persistent notifications, undermining my mental safety. Over time it really started to distress me. I found it was pulling my attention away from work, friends, and time with loved ones. Again, I had to dig through the settings, and experienced relief that my attention felt more safely mine - not that of my watch.

Data literacy is important to ensure we know how to address if we feel our safety and privacy are being undermined.

Sadly, they're set up in an 'opt-out' fashion, so many don't know their potential negative consequences or how to turn them off.

Fully immersive online spaces offer a plethora of opportunities for deep human connections for young people.

This is particularly important those who are faced with navigating a world which can oftentimes feel very lonely. I love how online worlds can help me connect with others, find community, and ameliorate loneliness, but I want the metaverse to proactively offer and promote accessible education and training to enable users to harness the positives of online spaces whilst also protecting their safety and privacy.

It's so important that we work together on this.

We must build such technologies to empower young people with the tools we need for the metaverse. We must work together to ensure that we build data literacy and facilitate informed decision-making about our health and wellbeing.

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION PRINCIPLES

While traditional online safety tends to emphasise safety, privacy and security, issues of access and inclusion drew a strong focus throughout the discussions and were of equal or even greater importance to our Youth Consultants. The group broadly reflected on a tendency of existing approaches to online safety to overplay the need to 'protect' groups at risk of online harm at the cost of their participation and agency. The resulting principles offer a shared approach to balancing potential harms and benefits by centering a diverse spread of experiences and voices.

CENTRE LIVED EXPERIENCE AS EXPERTISE

Young people should be respected as the “experts of [their] own experience,” with product-makers engaging them from the outset as valued partners in designing the metaverse. Traditional decision-makers must acknowledge “that [youth] lived experience will bring a unique perspective to the table that deserves to be heard and considered” and that “the insights of young people will never be communicated in a relevant manner if discussions do not include and are led by young people.” In doing so, the metaverse will provide young people the opportunity to “help the next generation of young people avoid, or at the very least, better manage the challenges faced.”

“Young people are the past, present and future - we will eventually have the authority over how technology progresses and works and who better than the people actually using it daily, who have grown with it.”

“Keeping marginalised people involved in the process of development is really important.”

“Decisions made for a group should be informed by members of that group.”

STRIVE FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS

The metaverse must be seen as “a collective step forward in tech evolution for humanity, where everyone comes along for the ride.” Platforms have a major role to play in building accessibility by design, by ensuring that “the broadest accessibility set-up should always be the starting point” and implementing digital versions of “open standards like the real world (e.g. wheelchair ramps, braille).” Efforts spanning public and private sectors should seek to “address the digital divide” by investing in infrastructure to provide “digital access to low socio-economic status or rural’ communities.”

Furthermore, financial accessibility should be considered, “in terms of the raw cost of hardware, the cost of internet, and variability in internet speeds and access depending on what you can afford.”

“Building technology that is accessible to everyone, especially people with disabilities or who are neurodivergent.”

“Opportunities being available for individuals who might not otherwise be able to access them on the daily.”

“Seeing the world’s leaders work together to make the metaverse a public service not just a private good.”

CONTINUOUSLY CO-DESIGN

Product-makers and policy-makers alike should seek “opportunities for continuous improvement from concept to completion, and beyond” to ensure that the metaverse supports the everyday needs of its users. Moving away from “reactive, tick-a-box fixes,” a truly representative metaverse is one where “[lived] experience is integrated at every part of the design process, not just the beginning or end.” Such approaches are essential to facilitating the best user experience for everyone, and a greater rate of participation in the metaverse. Decision-makers must acknowledge that “when things go wrong, [we can] avoid repeats and learn from those mistakes” and that to build better digital worlds for the future requires ongoing engaging with diverse communities “as we collectively learn and adapt.”

“Having regular town halls for community events or different VR worlds. This will allow everyone to participate in something that might be not possible in reality.”

“Making sure the people who write the laws integrate young people at every part of the process, not just the beginning or end.”

“Creating mechanisms or programs that can readily take feedback from users to platforms so that are actually used and applied.”

VALUE AND AMPLIFY DIVERSITY

The metaverse should be a “platform that uplifts, empowers, and celebrates diversity,” and “does not serve to uplift or empower all when it only includes some.” This is only achievable “by including community representatives who can voice diverse needs.” To take a truly intersectional approach to addressing “the obvious differences in needs in groups and populations,” polarities and conflicting expectations must be explored to negotiate inclusive communities, “enabling cross-cutting interactions without the formation of echo chambers.” Efforts to develop policy responses must acknowledge “missing middles,” meaning they consider “not only diverse needs, but also the intersectionality within those needs.”

“Actively creating a wide variety of representation that reflects diverse communities, not just dominant groups.”

“Ensuring the metaverse is an inclusive place - allowing everyone to join freely.”

“Exploring fair representation for diverse groups - perhaps these representatives can be democratically elected.”

“We need to understand the role new technologies play in entrenching current and new global inequalities and actively plan to address them together.”

COLLABORATE AND COMMUNICATE

The metaverse must be designed with a “multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary” approach, ensuring that diverse lived and professional experiences collectively inform the design and implementation of *Our Metaverse*. Collaboration is imperative, with “platforms and communities working together to share learnings.” This avoids corporate

and government monopolies, instead supporting interoperability, accessibility and “allowing everyone to have the same experience across platforms.” In both public and private sectors, stakeholders must acknowledge the metaverse’s “borderless” nature, including the potential to “overcome geographic restraints to create new shared social and cultural rules” and “the capacity to incorporate endless experiences, expertise, and values.” Policy- and product-makers must encourage global collaboration in amplifying young people’s voices, such as by “ensuring similar youth advisory [projects] are happening in non-English speaking communities/countries.” Systemic inequalities must be addressed proactively through the sharing of knowledge and resources. The metaverse concerns all of us and “we all have a role to play.”

“The metaverse will affect everyone. Thus, we need to all be building it - not just software developers, but also lawmakers, teachers, mental health workers, and of course young people.”

“We must constrain hardware limitations so that everyone can use every program, minimising a feeling of ‘the haves’ and the ‘have nots.’”

“Those who are in traditional positions of power must leverage their privilege to ensure that justice is achieved and inequality is proactively eliminated in the metaverse.”



ZINAB'S STORY

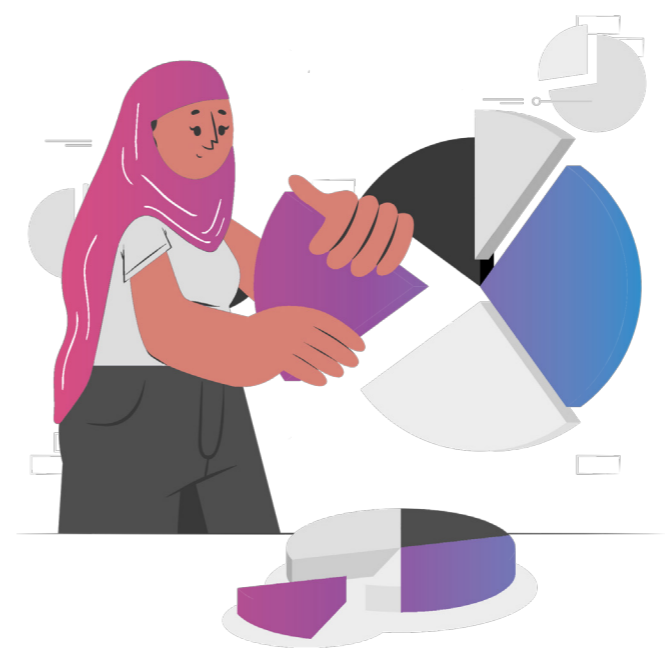
Growing up, every door I opened, every room I entered and every place I visited - I never felt welcomed, included and heard.

As a multicultural woman, I have always found it difficult to find spaces that are truly inclusive, culturally safe, accessible and that celebrate your individual diversity. I dealt with discrimination, being othered, and never feeling a sense of belonging. You then throw in experiencing mental ill health and trauma – and it’s even more difficult to navigate the world around you. I felt alone. Where my loneliness grew, my self criticism took over my thoughts.

Despite these difficult experiences, they encouraged me to work in advocacy in mental health, diversity and inclusion, and supporting multicultural communities.

After my experiences, I wanted to change the narrative for other young people.

With my passion in inclusion and technology I ran my own youth advocacy organisation. I saw the important role of digital spaces in creating community, sharing stories, connecting to culture and supporting others experiencing mental ill health.



The digital peer support program I facilitated aimed to support multicultural young people in Australia, but also allowed me to connect with those of intersectional diversity. This included those who identifies as multicultural, but also with a disability and those being part of the LGBTQIA+ community who were facing even more systemic discrimination.

I made friends with people who supported my mental health journey, who encouraged me to be proud of my cultural background.

We met more marginalised young people from those with temporary visas to international students who did not have a family or community to connect with. This space allowed us to run events like an underground Iftar dinners for young queer and homeless people of Muslim background who may not have had the opportunity to celebrate Ramadan in their communities. To running online check-ins about mental health and storytelling sessions about healing our traumas.

Digital spaces gave us visibility to be ourselves authentically.

Learning and experiencing the metaverse was scary and terrifying. For me as a multicultural advocate the questions that run through my head include:

Will these spaces be culturally safe and have authentic representation?

How will be manage discrimination like racism?

Will they be culturally accessible and provide language access needs?

Despite these many questions, as a multicultural person, this project gave me hope.

I have hope that the metaverse will allow marginalised people to connect, create communities where they may not be as visible, and provide supports that foster celebration of diversity.

REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

EMILY UNITY

METAVEVERSE PROJECT MANAGER

I started volunteering in youth mental health when I was 12 and I became a software engineer when I was 21.

Most people are surprised about my technical background, as I am primarily known for my mental health work. In truth, I rapidly burnt out in the digital space - not from being overworked, but from what I now call "ethical guilt." I discovered that most digital projects were dominated by the voices of a privileged few. "Diversity" was a "nice-to-have", and consultations with marginalised communities were often tokenistic if they were included at all.



This project changed that narrative for me.

The concept of "lived experience engagement" is popular within the mental health sector, but often unknown outside of it. It refers to the act of consulting with communities who have the unique expertise gained through the first-hand experience of an event, as opposed to through second-hand representations constructed by others. Too often is technology built *for* people, but *without* them actually involved. In this project, instead of consulting with people who work with, read about, or study diverse young people, we invited the young people to speak for themselves.

This project was led by young people, for young people.

We didn't cram our Youth Consultants into a pre-defined project mould, but instead asked them to guide us and the project followed where they went. We asked questions with compassion and curiosity, exploring their hopes and concerns without expectation or judgement. We continually co-designed, harnessing every opportunity to empower them as genuine decision-makers. We encouraged them to speak in their own words and acted simply as amplifiers. Thus, the vast majority of this report is verbatim - consisting of their powerful stories and hopes for a shared future.

As a young person, I was humbled and incredibly privileged to lead alongside my peers.

As both the project manager and a young person, working alongside my peers was intensely meaningful to me. Their expertise, enthusiasm, and commitment was immeasurable and will be a true source of inspiration for me far beyond this project. I cried with happiness when we shared VR spaces and cannot wait to share future XR spaces. Thanks to them, this report holds invaluable and profoundly exciting potential for the digital future that will affect us all.

There should be nothing *about* us, *without* us.

Lived experience engagement should be non-negotiable. It is a human right to be involved in decision-making that affects us. Traditional decision-makers have a responsibility to share power and equitably support marginalised communities in building better futures - both offline and online. This report contains many of the imperative ingredients we need for a digital future that is built not just *for* us, but *with* us as well.

However, this report is just the beginning.

We must act. The path forward is not paved with passivity. We must resist the actions, ideas, and institutions that divide us. We must actively address ignorance with education, bigotry with tolerance, and isolation with compassion.

Thank you for reading this report and I look forward to working with you to build *Our Metaverse*.

LUCY THOMAS

COFOUNDER AND CEO



Technology has always held up a mirror to its creator. From all possible vantage points – the gadgets, social media apps, gaming platforms, tools and trends in our lives are human-made and reflexively shape the world as we experience it. But today we have arrived at a rare moment of pause and self-reflection in our human-digital evolution.

With an estimated 8-10-year timeline before the metaverse becomes a mainstream reality, projects of this kind mark an active shift from chasing the runaway train of reactive ‘online safety’ history to consciously write a new chapter. So will we repeat mistakes of the past, or gather our learnings to build an online world worthy of future generations?

Our Youth Consultants have spoken, with clear directives for those with the power and influence to build our shared futures:

PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY
SUPPORT BALANCING ONLINE AND OFFLINE
BUILD TRUST THROUGH TRANSPARENCY
KEEP PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE
BUILD AGENCY THROUGH DATA LITERACY

CENTRE LIVED EXPERIENCE AS EXPERTISE
STRIVE FOR EQUITABLE ACCESS
CONTINUOUSLY CO-DESIGN
VALUE AND AMPLIFY DIVERSITY
COLLABORATE AND COMMUNICATE

This project is really a first step towards setting the youth-driven compass for the critical work to come. From here we put forward the following immediate next steps:

01 DECISION MAKERS MUST EXPERIENCE SOCIAL VR AND GET TO KNOW A RANGE OF USER COMMUNITIES IN THE METAVERSE

What lies ahead is not a natural progression of existing platforms, but a radical re-imagining – current measures and approaches are guaranteed to fail. A central challenge for our current project was finding avenues to critique digital experiences – live, immersive and embodied – that have not been fully realised yet. At times our Youth Consultants struggled to shift their hopes and hang-ups from the familiar into this unknown future state. However, after experiencing social VR firsthand their thinking became attuned to the qualities, subjects and objects of 3D digital space. Therefore, an immediate priority is for key policy-makers across industry and institutions to develop firsthand experience of social VR and other immersive technologies in consultation with a wide range of communities, rather than writing rules of engagement on existing assumptions and principles.

02 POLICY-MAKERS AND PRODUCT-MAKERS MUST PUT COLLABORATION AHEAD OF CORPORATE AND POLITICAL INTERESTS TO JOINTLY MITIGATE NEW RISKS EARLY

The metaverse will not be one single space or product, but an integrated digital ecosystem and as such, will be overseen by a mix of tech platforms, policy-makers, academics and user communities. Fundamental issues of privacy, safety, interoperability, and regulation require intersectional and international solutions. One area of importance to youth cohorts is the need for public and private sectors to be arm-in-on on building access and participation solutions

Our Youth Consultants held a clear view of the transformative potential of the metaverse in improving civic participation, education, training and employment for marginalised groups cannot be realised if barriers to entry (e.g. connectivity, cost of hardware) remain unaddressed. In fact, we will likely see new forms of inequity and disadvantage that directly impact the communities represented in this report. Coordination is needed across platform companies, retailers, network providers, researchers, governments and schools to develop an integrated approach to these challenges.

03 WE MUST SHAKE UP EXISTING ‘ONLINE SAFETY’ APPROACHES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES TO MAINTAIN RELEVANCE AND IMPACT

In contrast to the fixed, globally uniform reality of today’s internet, the metaverse will be an integrated network of diverse 3D spaces that are user-created and governed. While hardware and platforms provide the architecture within which social VR spaces exist, creators will be able to design a multitude of discrete worlds within, each with its own set of protocols and norms. It won’t be possible to implement a universal set of rules and standards to ‘police’ content, instead developers will need to equip metaverse communities with the tools and resources to self-govern (both content and behaviour). This requires a rethink of current online safety training targeting young people, with a shift towards building the proficiencies to not only ‘stay safe’ but to actively build and cultivate healthy and connected online communities. In tandem, product-makers must therefore also seek to build platforms that facilitate healthy norms, accessibility and safety by design with a reduced emphasis on retroactively ‘enforcing’ user safety.

None of the above can be achieved without further genuine involvement of young people. We invite Meta, its neighbours in industry, the public sector, academics, and educators to build foundations on projects such as this one. Youth ‘consultation’ is a strong starting point, but to fully deliver, this work must extend into co-design, co-creation and co-evaluation. Such efforts must seek to centre diverse communities and elevate young people from simple participation into decision-making and leadership roles.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Roundtable designs, principles, screenshots, and footage from VR.

APPENDIX 2

Young people’s motivation and previous online experiences.

APPENDIX 3

Placing opportunities, concerns, and questions about the metaverse.

APPENDIX 4

Young people’s feedback on the project method, mode, and delivery.

APPENDIX 1

1.1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

1.2 ROUNDTABLE DESIGNS

1.3 SCREENSHOTS | MIRO

1.4 FOOTAGE | VIRTUAL REALITY

1.1 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

This project used the eSafety Commissioner's Safety by Design principles and Meta's Responsible Innovation Principles as scaffolding for the PROJECT ROCKIT's Design Principles for the roundtables. All sets of principles ensure the embedding of user safety throughout the design and development of online platforms and services, rather than retrofitting safeguards after harms have already occurred.



SERVICE PROVIDER RESPONSIBILITY

The burden of safety should never fall solely upon the user, but in the design of platforms and services.

USER EMPOWERMENT AND AUTONOMY

The dignity of users is of central importance. Products and services should align with a user's best interests.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Transparency and accountability are hallmarks of a robust approach to safety.

Source: esafety.gov.au/industry/safety-by-design/principles-and-background



YOUNG PEOPLE ARE THE EXPERTS

We will respect and promote the personal autonomy, agency and voice of young people in all processes.

INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE

We will consider how to respond to participant needs and support them to lead the consultation.

CONTINUOUS ENGAGEMENT

We will keep participants connected between roundtables by sharing updates and resources.

SAFE, COMFORTABLE, AND RESPECTFUL

We will work with participants to establish trust, rapport, and psychological safety from the outset.



PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Designing people-first technology starts with being responsible stewards of people's data.

PROVIDE CONTROLS THAT MATTER

Give people tools to manage their privacy, their way. Designing controls for transparency and ease of use.

CONSIDER EVERYONE

Consider each person and designing our hardware with an inclusive mindset, rather than one-size-fits all.

NEVER SURPRISE PEOPLE

With new types of connection, it's critical that we clearly communicate what data we collect and why.

Source: about.facebook.com/metaverse/responsible-innovation

RESPONSIBLE DATA COLLECTION

We will capture both qualitative and quantitative insights, with data de-identified and stored securely.

PARTICIPATION REWARDS

As well as remunerating participants, we will also seek opportunities to build skills and capabilities.

SERIOUS BUT STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH

We will listen and learn with curiosity and positivity, creating an engaging and informal atmosphere.

FEEDBACK ON FEEDBACK

We will seek feedback throughout the process and communicate what impact their contributions have.

1.2 ROUNDTABLE DESIGNS

A series of four digital roundtables was co-designed. The series of four two-hour digital roundtables were led by trained young people, held once a month from April to July 2022, and utilised a range of digital platforms.

R1: DISCOVERY

TOPIC

An introduction to the metaverse was shared firsthand by the Meta team, including its vision for the next evolution of social connection and basic components of the metaverse. Breakout discussion inducted participants into the project through reflection on how we use existing metaverse components.

RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION PRINCIPLE

Never surprise people

LOCATION

Zoom and Miro

R3: ACCESS & INCLUSION

TOPIC

Discussions centred about how we can collectively cultivate a digital world that is more inclusive and accessible than ever before. Breakouts explore lived experiences in navigating technology, which safety messages resonated, and captured a suite of strategies that young people would use based on lived experiences.

RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION PRINCIPLE

Consider everyone

LOCATION

Zoom and Miro

A set of pre- and post-surveys were used to capture additional insights and feedback to aid continuous improvement throughout subsequent roundtables.

Both the roundtables and surrounding surveys yielded an abundance of detailed data, which was analysed by the PROJECT ROCKIT team to generate the insights and recommendations presented in this report.

R2: SAFETY & PRIVACY

TOPIC

Building on the discovery session, R2 explored how metaverse components can be used for good or misused, with specific considerations of privacy and safety. Breakout discussion ideated on hopes, concerns, and the tools that might need to be designed to put people in charge of their experience and make informed choices.

RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION PRINCIPLE

Provide controls that matter

LOCATION

Zoom and Miro

R4: VR & SUMMARY

TOPIC

By using the Quest 2 headsets, participants met each other, Meta, and industry representatives in virtual reality. The roundtable was an experiential discussion space with small groups and exploring virtual spaces together. A summary of the project is discussed, with next steps for the launch of the report.

RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION PRINCIPLE

Put people first

LOCATION

Virtual Reality, Zoom, and Miro

1.3 SCREENSHOTS | MIRO

R1: DISCOVERY



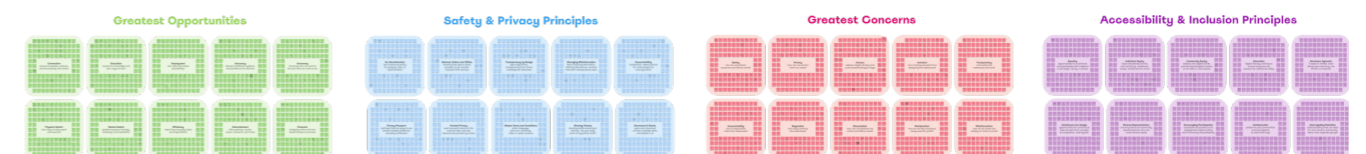
R2: SAFETY & PRIVACY



R3: ACCESS & INCLUSION



R4: VR & SUMMARY



1.4 FOOTAGE | VIRTUAL REALITY



This report contains the screenshots of the Youth Consultants and rest of the project team from the Virtual Reality part of Roundtable 4 of the project.

To access a video recording of the project team in Virtual Reality, please scan this QR code or go to:

[BIT.LY/OURMETAVERSEVIDEO](https://bit.ly/ourmetaversevideo)



APPENDIX 2

2.1 TECHNOLOGY USAGE

2.2 MOTIVATION FOR USAGE

2.3 EXPERIENCES ONLINE

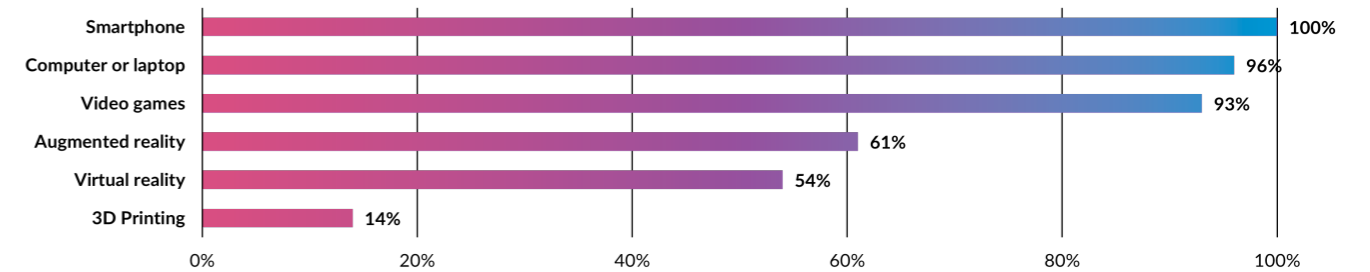
2.4 INITIAL MOTIVATIONS

2.5 INITIAL HOPES

2.1 TECHNOLOGY USAGE

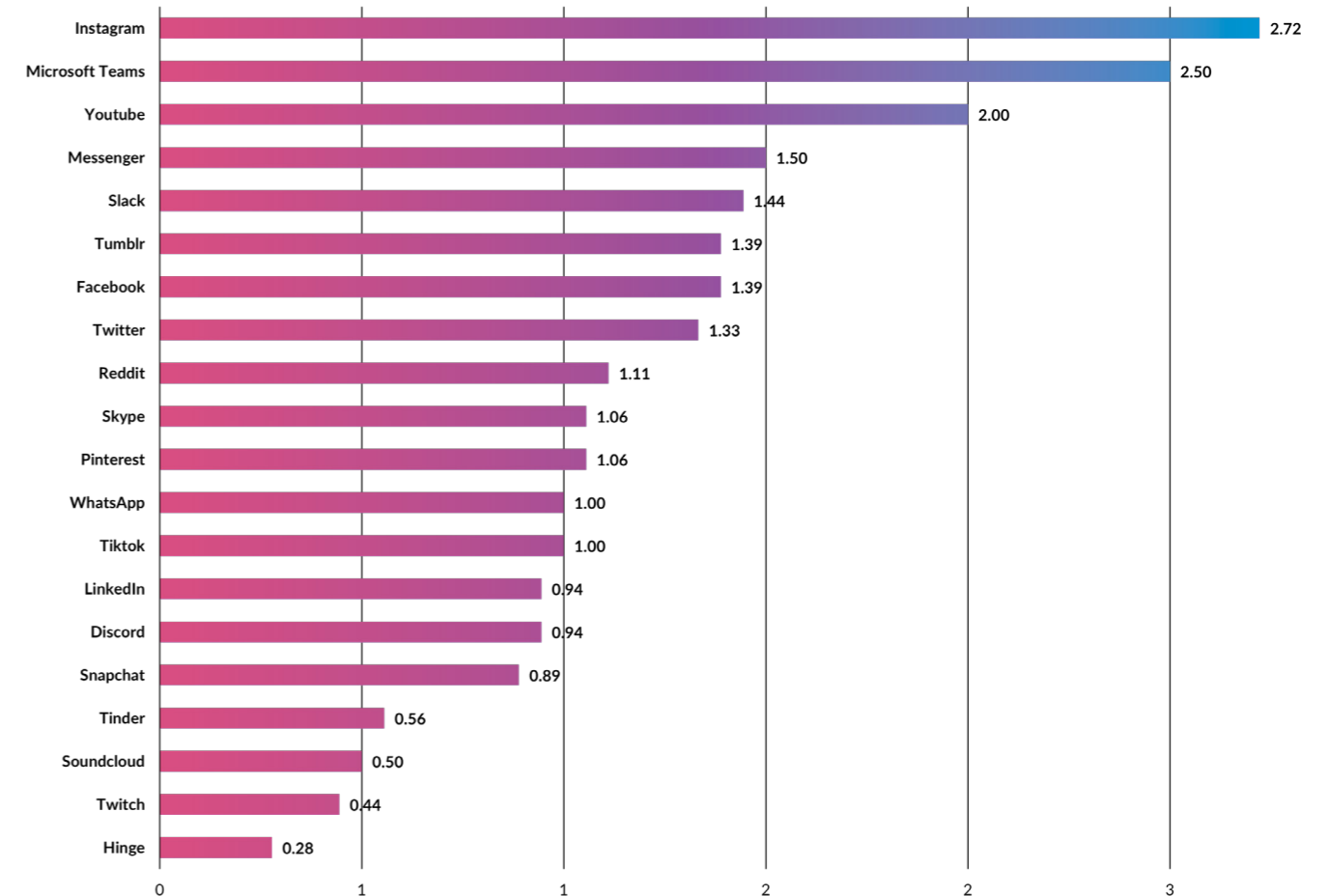
TECHNOLOGY TYPES

What types of technology have you used before?



SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

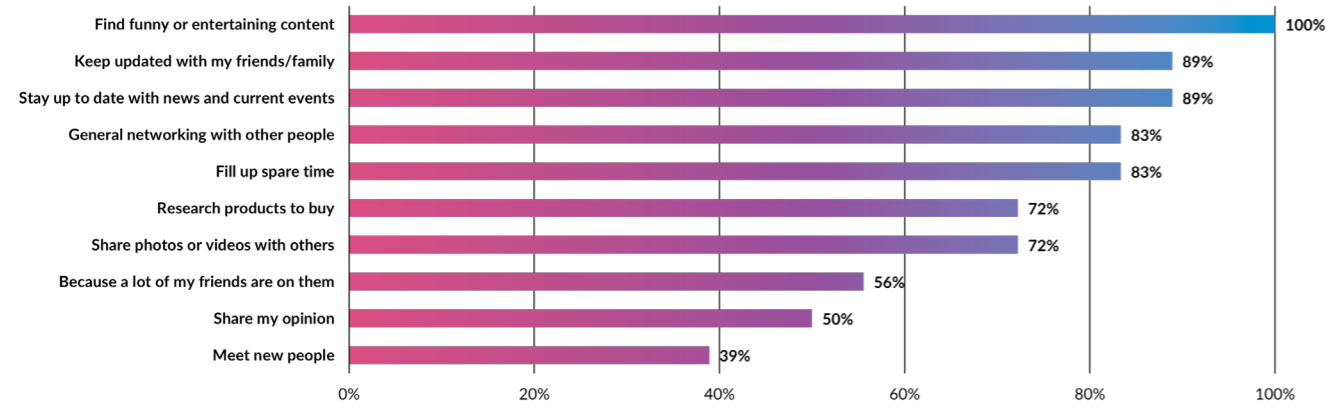
How many accounts have you had on these platforms?



2.2 MOTIVATION FOR USAGE

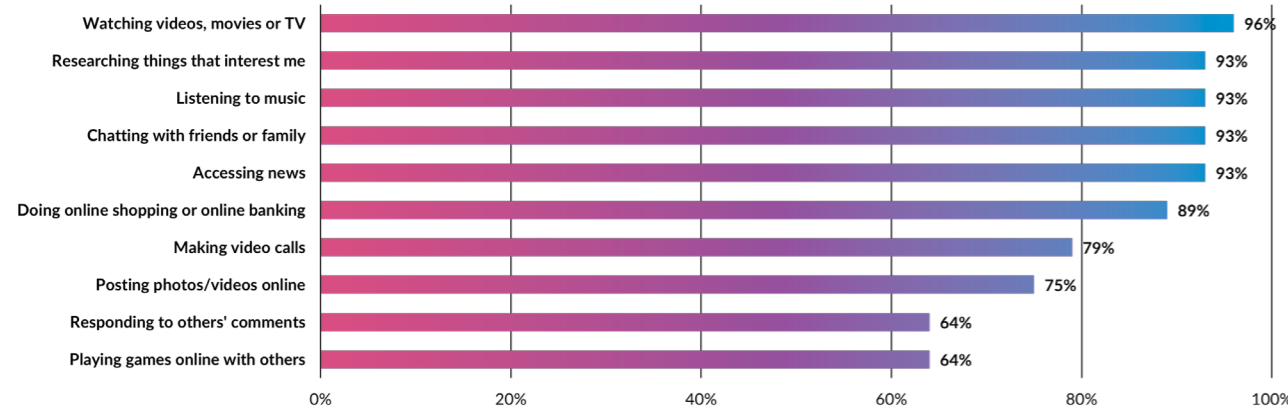
REASONS FOR ACCOUNTS

Why do you use social media?



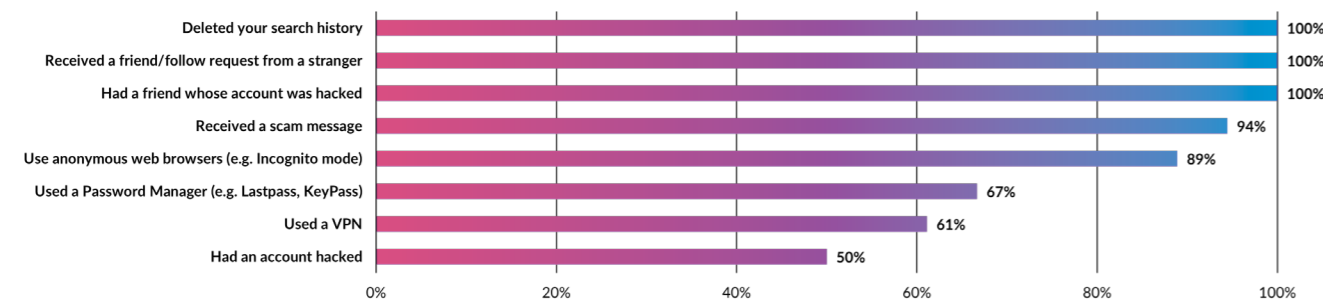
ONLINE ACTIVITIES

What activities do you do online?



SAFETY AND PRIVACY

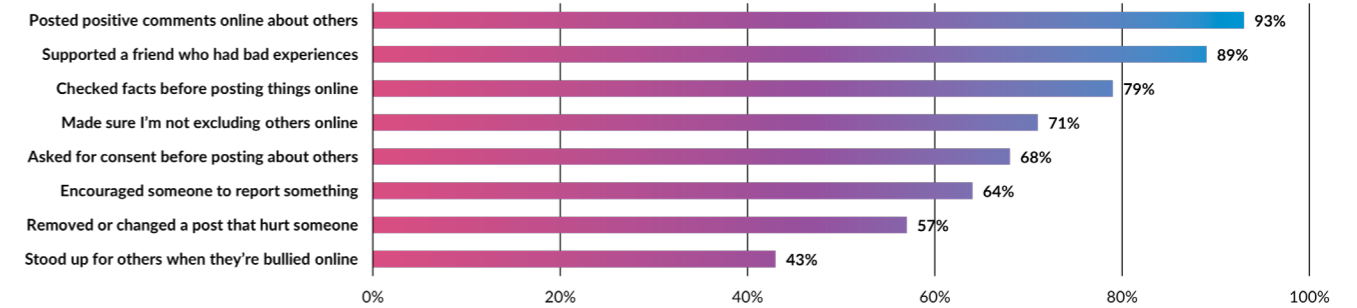
Have you ever made these safety and privacy actions on social media?



2.3 EXPERIENCES ONLINE

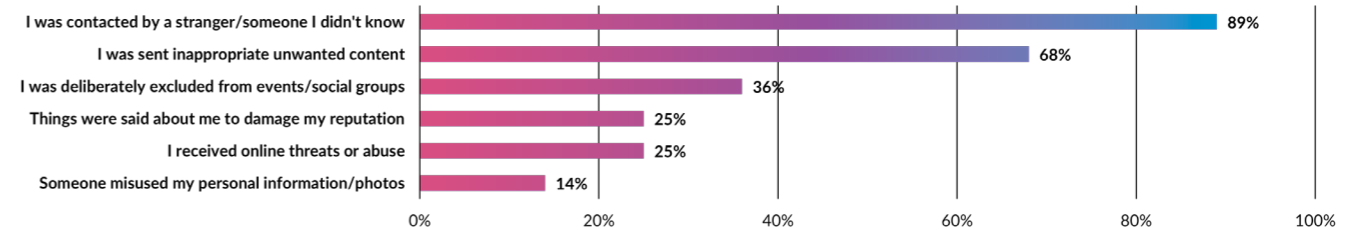
POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

Have you had any positive online experiences?



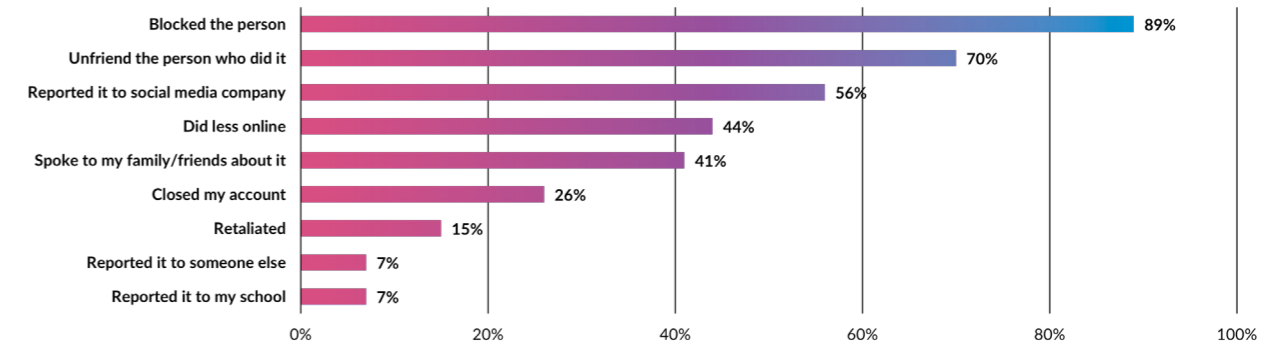
NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

Have you had any negative online experiences?



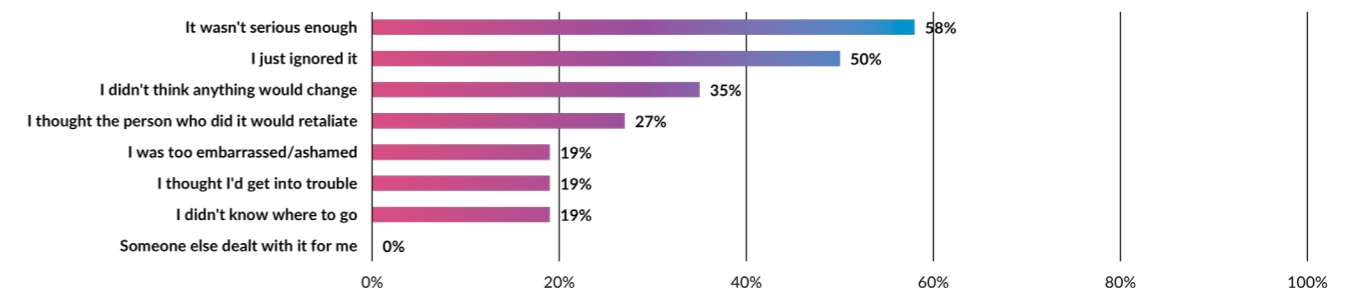
ACTIONS TAKEN

After negative experiences, what actions have you taken?



REASONS FOR INACTION

Why did you do nothing after a negative experience?



2.4 INITIAL MOTIVATION

WE ARE THE EXPERTS

"We have grown up with technology. We have experienced the good and the bad."

"Young people are uniquely well placed to inform on the design of future technology because many of us have a unique insight and skillset into the way technology interacts with our life from growing up with increasingly powerful technology."

"While I have some problems with the idea that young people are 'digital natives, there is no doubt that many young people have an affinity for using technology that comes from deep familiarity. We are confident in the powers of technology, while also being aware of some of its limitations, and use this confidence to navigate the different kinds of technology we choose to use. Young people, then, are perhaps the most intuitive user experience testers. We have clear expectations for good experiences with technology, and are discerning at identifying unsatisfactory developments in technology."

"Young people have watched technology evolve at a rapid pace for the last 20 years, and have evolved with it. Going from playing 1gig games on my dad's old desktop to making my own PC to play 150gig games has been a formative experience as I watch technology grow. Or seeing the changing role of social media, and the tools they have developed to maintain our attention is deeply informative."

"Young people's familiarity with technology makes them ideal to discuss its future."

"It's imperative to include young people as a direct part of the decision making and development of future technologies. The insights of the lived experiences held by young people will never be communicated in a relevant manner if discussions do not include and are led by young people."

"Because we are the ones who use it the most and have had these past positive and negative experiences on it. We will continue to use it so should have the highest say in the future."

"Young people tend to spend more time online or on social media so they can provide input about experiences of how certain things affected their long term better than someone who hasn't spent a large portion of their time interacting with others on the internet."

"Young people need to be involved as technology evolves, as young people are the main consumers of media and users of technology. Their ideas can change so much."

"By using the internet, we can: easily access information to inform and educate ourselves. maintain and develop supportive relationships. form our identities (through self-expression, learning and talking)."

"I have a deep relationship with technology that is characterised by both integration and resistance."

"Technology is deeply embedded in my work, study, socialising, and leisure. I work with communication technology to produce and promote a podcast for my job, and a significant part of my job is to explain the fundamental role technology plays in the contemporary world. I do all my study through technology, and have had to come to grips with the benefits and consequences of learning like this."

"Many of my hobbies are rooted in technology, I'm and avid gamer and I consume plenty of other media through technology. In this way technology brings me much joy, and it is also deeply connected to the social circles I inhabit that have grown around these hobbies. I play games and consume media with a group of friends that formed as I began to learn to socialise in school. Their influence and the safe space we have created online has been fundamental to my development." "We use it the most and have our own experiences with it, therefore know it on a deeper level and can use our voices to advocate for better experiences and more positive growth in the already fast-pace changes occurring."

"I use technology in most areas of my life. I use social media (probably a little too much) to message friends and family and attempt to keep up to date with what's going on in the world, update my calendar, set reminders for pretty much everything (my short-term memory isn't the greatest), listening to music, reading, checking the weather, replying to emails, googling that thing I just told someone I know all about but have only heard in passing so now I need to learn about it so I'm not caught out...so, basically everything. Not to mention everyday things like my toaster, microwave and washing machine."

"I use technology for emotional support, task management, marketing, sales, accounting, design, communication, attending/organising events, communicating with internal & external stakeholders and connecting with my friends, family and loved ones."

"Oh, I use it in all aspects of my life. My university education is almost completely online. My employer and volunteering organisation both operate largely through Facebook and Messenger. I use social media such as Messenger and Discord to contact and communicate with my friends, set up study groups for school, and contact my family. I use to learn things in my spare time, consume entertainment when relaxing and for navigation when I'm completely lost. Ultimately, technology is integrated in my every-day life and I use it very frequently."

WE HAVE A RIGHT TO BE DECISION-MAKERS

"We deserve agency in shaping the world."

"Young people make up such a significant target audience for technology. Currently, their needs and preferences aren't taken into account when designing things in tech that is going to affect them directly. We can't be designing things for the people without the people."

"Future technology should be up to date, empathetic of young people's experiences and worldview, and willing to evolve rapidly with the times."

"As a young person who spent most of their late teenage and early adulthood years working with other young people, facilitating classes/workshops and supporting other young folk-- I am passionate about advocating, being part of and prioritising young peoples voices in decision-making."

"There are far too many institutions that affect the lives of young people without the input of these young people. Traditionally, young people have been relegated to be 'seen not heard', but society is learning more and more that age is not an inherent reason why someone should not contribute to the decisions in their lives."

"Many young people want responsibility, ownership and control over their own lives, and living in a society that undervalues or silences their opinions can be a draining experience."

"I believe youth voices are the most important as we are the past, present but also the future leaders of our world - we will have the responsibility (and already do) of making decisions about how our communities function and operate and by empowering young people to say what they feel from now, I think is the first step."

"Young people should be involved in designing the future of technology because the technology that Australia's young people use for connection and wellbeing is vital for the ongoing prosperity and connectedness of our society. Collaborating and reflecting with children and young people is crucial so that they are central to the design and delivery of services, strategies and approaches that affect them."

WE ARE THE MOST IMPACTED POPULATION

"A lack of young peoples' voices means that at best services are not tailored to be most effective to the issues of young people, and at worst they are actively destructive."

"We make up a significant portion of the consumer base and technology directly impacts our livelihood and future."

"We are the generation that will deal with the online infrastructure that is developed. As tech becomes a larger part of our lives we need to make sure it can be shaped in a positive way."

"We're the ones who have to use it and the ones who are the audience subject to marketing, who will work in jobs that haven't been created yet, who will use the Internet as our main means of communicating and accessing information (based on the pandemic example)."

"Young people are disproportionately impacted by technology, using it for every part of their lives, from socialising to education."

"We are primary users of such platforms, steering the trends etc. It has a large impact on their growth as individuals and the society in which we live relies heavily on these forms of communication hence it is ingrained within all our experience."

"New technology is going to be used by us and built up further by us once they grow to have bigger roles and build their own communities for the next generation of youth entering the digital age."

"Young people also have the most invested in the future of technology, because it will define our own future. Given we will have to live with the consequences, good and bad, of how technology grows, it is crucial that young people get a say in its direction."

"Young people are directly incentivised to see positive technology growth to influence our work, future education, and even our children's lives."

"Young people are arguably one of the largest demographics for new technology and it is important that they be represented in the decision-making process."

"Because they are going to be the generations that will be utilising technology in their future more than anyone else."

"Because we develop with technology, therefore we know it well. Young people are the ones who experience the good and bad and should have a say as their life is digitalised."

"Not only does the lack of young voices impact institutions, it directly impacts young people themselves."

"Young people should be at the forefront of designing the future of tech as it impacts their lives in more ways than one."

"We have grown up with this technology and it has had a greater impact on our lives than somebody who is older. Some kids are on iPad for example when they're mere toddlers. Therefore, we have a personal understanding of the role technology plays in developing humans."

"It's very likely young people are the primary consumers of modern technology. We have grown up with emerging technologies and becoming adults who are now contributing to its advances. Additionally, the larger range of people we have informing the design of technology, the more it will likely be representative and appealing to the broader population (input from the Elderly, for example)"

"Young people are the past, present and future - we will eventually have the authority over how technology progresses and works and who better than the people actually using it daily, who have grown with it."

WE CAN ENSURE THE FUTURE IS SUSTAINABLE

"We should be involved in designing the future of technology to review and update the necessary changes needed for our future. Like business regulation, they always have to be reviewed so that they reflected the minimum standard we live in today."

"Young people play an integral part of the future we will live into and are also the largest growing population that are technology users; especially adaptive technology users. Therefore, their voice and perspectives are fundamental to how the future of tech is (re)designed, and how it will continue to be intersectional in its facilitation of connecting people."

"Young people are the future of not only tomorrow, but ever more so today. Without the voices of young people, we truly cannot change systems for the better of all young people, now and in the future as well."

WE ARE MOST AT RISK

"I believe young people are most vulnerable to online harm, and there is still not sufficient policy and knowledge on how these harms can be evaded and minimised. When affected communities are given the chance to voice their opinions, thoughts, and concerns, especially regarding social media, grassroots change can occur, and the future of social media can be modelled based on people's needs."

"As someone studying cybercrime and psychology, I am deeply intertwined with the risks to mental health that come to people when online spaces are unsafe, and how easily young people in vulnerable positions can be targeted."

"If the metaverse could be designed by young people with harms in mind, as well as an understanding of what works, the world would be a better place to connect."

"In many ways, young people have the most to lose from bad leadership in the design of technology, so it is appropriate they should be given some influence."

"As future technologies evolve and shape into the needs of the consumers its vital to orient the developments in a consumer conscious way, in which vulnerable groups of our communities including young people, are not taken advantage of."

"Because we have been growing up in a world where technology is fundamental to our development and it doesn't look to be going away any time soon."



2.4 INITIAL HOPES

ETHICAL DESIGN

“The way social media has been crafted to so effectively maintain our attention, and commodify that attention. Specifically, I see social media as the most sophisticated example of technology designed to exploit people's psychology. Its ability to provide regular and consistent gratification (and dopamine) has been combined with the development of algorithms to produce infinite loops of content (TikTok is the best example of this) to ensure that people are never given a reason to put their phone down. I think it is deeply destructive that people's attention, and their data, is the product these websites profit from because it means they have been built to hoard that attention. Combined with the ability of notifications to attract attention regularly, this consciously crafted trap ensures that people stay uncritically glued to their devices, rather than choosing for themselves the time they want to spend online.”

“Attention will always be a commodity, and the free nature of the internet is important, but I am deeply troubled by how sophisticated modern technology has become at sucking people in and keeping them in. As people spend more time online, and algorithms become more sophisticated, I am concerned it will only get worse. While I don't have an explicit answer about how to address this, I would like to see the more social debate about the fact that these systems are engineered to be predatory, and governance has a role to play in regulating the extent to which technology should be allowed to exploit these features of the psyche.”

ACCESSIBILITY

“Technology needs to be inclusive of everyone, especially people with disabilities or who are neurodivergent. Times are changing and we are having more of a dependency on using technology to cater for our needs. Functions such as schooling, employment, education, entertainment, civic participation and governmental forms/ information have partially or fully shifted online. People who live with a disability will find these already challenging functions ten times harder because of the inaccessibility, this is threatening to exclude them. There are many different forms of disabilities and the challenges that people face aren't all the same. However, this needs to be addressed and to start to work on ways to include these people, so they have accessibility. I could not imagine how difficult and frustrating it could be for someone who lives with a disability. I don't find it the easiest myself sometimes, and I don't even face the same issues other people deal with.”

“To understand how the access to technology has to be a right not a privilege. Like healthcare, it can determine the quality of life; a poor child in Africa with access to technology can have the same quality of education as a private school child in Australia.”

HEALTHIER ONLINE COMMUNITIES

“Often, social media can exacerbate the worst of people and this is inadvertently encouraged by the anonymity it provides. It would be far greater to have a platform that facilitates deep, thoughtful and peaceful discussions between contending/opposing ideas.”

“I would like to change the algorithmic processes that create a vacuum of ideas that reinforces their preconceived beliefs. I think it would be more fortuitous for individuals to be exposed to a plethora of ideas and perspectives which they can coagulate into a unique perspective of their own. In essence avoid creating an internet culture that facilitates intellectual, political and emotional bubbles and encourages exposure to diverse conversations and schools of thought.”

MODERATION AND MISINFORMATION

“If I could change one big thing about technology, I would implement more intelligent moderation mechanisms so that comments in threads and conversations in chatrooms were safely handled and the risk of misinformation being spread or damaging messages sent was completely eliminated.”

“There should be more transparency around the actions of people within the digital environment and more accountability for what they say and do online. This can look like removing and preventing the creation of fake personas and accounts, validating a user's online presence with personal identification documents. using AI to identify threatening and harmful messages, nudging users to report negative experiences, easier reporting procedures, and creating an information and resource hub to educate users about cyberbullying and e-safety.”

PRIVACY AND SECURITY

“Preserve data rights to users.”

“I think at this point it would be around how data is used for technology-- i.e data management.”

“More privacy, a record of my online footprint, data and trends of my activity for me to access.”

“Possibly-- how data is used, controlled and manipulated for improving technology itself-- there must be higher standards & ethics of data control + management. Data privacy and using it efficiently and ethically is becoming more and more of a priority as we transition to an almost digital society.”

BRIDGING ONLINE AND OFFLINE EXPERIENCES

“I'd make it a more personable and real experience.”

“Make the online world feel more real and immersive. Whether that's streaming, gaming or anything.”

“Influence human interactions so they replicate physical interactions.”

“Changing social media to better emulate real social interactions.”

AGE RESTRICTION

“Better regulation of the ages of young people/children using this technology.”

“If I could change one thing about technology, it would probably be a more thorough regulation of the ages of young people using certain forms of technology. I've seen through my younger cousins and young people I see at work the negative impacts of social media at such young ages, and I know a lot of apps have age limits but it really isn't hard to fake your age and make an account anyway.”

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

“Making it environment friendly in a sustainable way.”

“Make something that doesn't need to be replaced by something new, That is capable of being universal.”

“The future of technology is increasingly being used and designed for younger crowds and as society shifts, young people now have the privilege to be immersed in advanced technology from a very young age. So, it is imperative that they have a say in what is now an essential life tool for them, how it's designed, how it will evolve and how it will impact other aspects of their life (or connected systems such as healthcare, education etc...), to improve their quality of life.”

“Youth can be a difficult time of transformation, but effectively designed institutions ensure that this is a constructive process, not a fraught one.”

“My consumption of technology is paired with a very conscious concern for its all-consuming nature. The ubiquity of technology makes me worried about how to maintain a balance in my life, and I consciously work to resist the more troubling elements of technology. For example, I am deeply concerned about a social culture that expects immediate reply from people on social media, and the fact that phones have the ability to demand our attention with a buzz. To try and resist this process, I ensure my phone is on Do Not Disturb and don't check it as often as my friends would like. If I was not conscious about my use of technology, I am certain it would make me a far less satisfied individual. The ability to critically integrate technology into our lives is only going to become more crucial as its prevalence grows, so this is an important way I use technology.”

WE CAN IMPROVE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

“We need diverse voices influencing platforms we use every day”

“We need lived experience voices increasing accessibility”

“As someone in the LGBTQIA+ community, I believe young queer people are often excluded from conversations about (online) harms experienced and allowing discourse to occur about the harms for marginalised groups is the first step to a healthier and safer online space.”

“A greater swath of people who have their voices heard may create a future that's more representative of the population's desires and thoughts.”

“Growing up I am very passionate about voicing out and then co-creating pathways to ensure that the voices which are not heard, are invited, included and have an equal say for issues that in/directly affect them -- this was my natural drive and one which I have formed into my growing expertise as a Human Geographer.”

“For young people who are ignored in formal institutions like physical or mental health services, this disregard for their opinions about their own lives have serious repercussions. Thus, I think listening to the voices of young people provides substantial opportunities to improve our social institutions, and to directly foster a constructive sense of agency among young people.”

“Providing children and young people with a voice on their experiences has never been more important. Young people overwhelmingly suggest technology-based solutions to enhance convenience and offer an accessible stepping stone to connection and support to not only survive, but thrive. I'm particularly passionate about amplifying and elevating young people's voices because each young person brings with them a unique perspective of lived experience which, when incorporated at the heart of initiatives, can foster a safer and more inclusive experience for the entire world. As a young person with lived experience, this is so important to me and inspires me to help the next generation of young people avoid, or at the very least, better manage the challenges I faced.”

“I am a young person myself, with lived experience of mental illness, therefore I have my own unique experience and knowledge of navigating the mental health system and because of this realise the importance of advocating for other young people to get the care they want and need. I am a firm believer in letting the young person guide their treatment and decision making as they know themselves best - listening to their voices is extremely important and I want to help more of these people be heard, especially when they have trouble articulating or speaking up for themselves.”

“I'm passionate because I am young person. I've had my struggles with mental illness in the past and engaged with some conventional services. A lot of them I found made me feel more isolated. It was so incredibly clinical and lacked that empathy and real human connection I was looking for in my recovery. It's important that decisions made for a targeted group are informed by members of that group. Otherwise, I believe you will get that disconnect I described.”

WE CAN ADVANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE

“Young people should be involved in designing the future of technology because the technology that Australia's young people use for connection and wellbeing is vital for the ongoing prosperity and connectedness of our society. Collaborating and reflecting with children and young people is crucial so that they are central to the design and delivery of services, strategies and approaches that affect them. What steps we take now to involve young people in design have long-term impacts not only on the advancements in technology that improve our productivity but also on the future social and economic wellbeing of Australia.”

WE CAN BRING INNOVATION

“Young people have great, innovative ideas! They have a lot of skills and experience that could bring value to design.”

“Young people are the future of technology, and will one day be designing and using technology we can't even conceive of yet.”

“It will be a part of our future and young people bring fresh ideas to the table a different perspective that is great to have.”

“To have new talents, skills, and new potential ideas to improve already existing technologies that would suit the new generation. Or to create a new technology that can potentially make more possibilities.”

“Young people are able to adapt very well, especially in today's society where everything is about being flexible and willing to take on change.”

“Young people are soon going to take the reins of technology developing right now. It's important we have a say in the technology that we are soon going to be in charge of regulating.”

“Tech can have a profound affect on young people's sociality and how they interact and view the world-- in essence, it provides a lens and perspective of society and is therefore a tool that can be used for better or for worse.”

“There is a lack of social prestige given to the voices of young people, despite the insights many young people can offer. While this is changing, until young people are actually consulted about the processes that affect their lives these systems will miss out on valuable improvements.”

“What steps we take now to involve young people in design have long-term impacts not only on the advancements in technology which improve our productivity, but also on the future social and economic wellbeing of Australia.”

APPENDIX 4

4.1 FEEDBACK | LEARNINGS

4.2 FEEDBACK | FAVOURITES

4.3 FEEDBACK | IMPROVEMENTS

4.1 FEEDBACK | LEARNINGS

SHARED LIVED EXPERIENCES

"I am not alone in my hopes or fears."

"That we all do share similar hopes & fears about what the future looks like."

"We're all in the same boat - we have the same questions, concerns and expectations as each other, which means that the metaverse is in the right hands!"

"There's a lot of other young people out there that have the same concerns I have."

"That a lot of people share the same concerns as me, which is comforting."

DIFFERENCES IN LIVED EXPERIENCES

"The differences in safety needs between populations."

"The different expectations and definitions for online safety expressed in youth."

"How something could be accessible for one person could hinder accessibility for another person."

"So many things!!! I loved the diversity of thinking in the round tables!!!"

"That there were a lot of questions I had that I didn't realise I did until we began discussions."

"Different issues that need to be addressed while we move to the next stage of global connection."

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ROLE IN THE METAVERSE

"How young people are integral to the metaverse's future design."

"The metaverse will be shaped by us."

"Understanding the depth of how diverse voices from young folk of all experiences is important to the design of tools which are now fundamental to society."

"Young people are cool as hell! They have such incredible ideas and are incredibly literate about all of these topics."

"Its okay to challenge the norm."

"That our lived experience will bring a unique perspective to the table that deserves to be heard & considered."

METAVERSE DEVELOPMENT & STAKEHOLDERS

"Meta != metaverse"

"More about the vision of the metaverse as a community, rather than a business decision"

"The metaverse is an awesome tool that offers lots of new opportunities, and creates an entirely new platform to learn the nuances of and learn to navigate."

"The concept of the metaverse is larger than people think it is."

"That none of us are experts in this!"

"I had no prior frame of reference for the metaverse so learning what that actually meant."

"This technology is within a decade of being implemented"

"It was a great chance for young people to learn more about the metaverse - especially hearing from Meta reps and working in Breakout Rooms."

SAFETY & PRIVACY

"There are a lot of issues to be ironed out, for example policing and violent behaviour."

"The complexity of integrating a human race onto the metaverse."

"There is so much discussion to be had over the safety and well-being of people."

"Privacy issues shared by the young people."

"The shared concerns around corporate ownership of the metaverse, and the blurred lines between the physical and virtual world."

"I thought the notion of policing in the metaverse was a very interesting question."

"Our discussions around the impact of the Mmetaverse on social development, and the role it might play in changing emotional and social intelligence in children, was also very interesting."

"How exploitative rules are written into social media terms of services."

"The negative impacts of poor regulation of safety and privacy."

"The challenge in enforcing safety by punishing bad behaviour online - and the implications of this on how anonymous accounts should be."

"That there is many ways privacy can be achieved, that privacy has different meanings."

ACCESS & INCLUSION

"Young people are really conscious of accessibility and inclusion in the sense that they are aware of risks of excluding someone based on their abilities, identities, status, and really want the space to be formed in a way that encourages and celebrates everyone's identity in a healthy way, and provides equal access."

"What navigating life as a person with a disability might look like in the metaverse"

"There are social and ethical issues that need to be considered before, during and after the process."

"I learnt about the role intentional exclusion can play to create safe spaces for some people."

"How language and culture can play as barriers to accessibility."

4.2 FEEDBACK | FAVOURITES

LEARNING FROM YOUNG PEOPLE

"Hearing the ideas of young people - we are all such a savvy group with beautiful hearts!"

"I'm enjoying thinking about difficult and interesting policy problems, and hearing about the diverse opinions on them - especially because so many people recognise consequences I would not think of."

"Hearing everyone's lived experiences and ideas for improving the future of tech."

"I love how everyone was able to communicate their ideas in a way that educated everyone else."

"Hearing other young people's thoughts."

"Hearing everyone's ideas and questions was so interesting!"

"Young people eager for discussion, passionate about safety and empowering all people."

"My mind is spinning & I'm buzzing from all the information & ideas from young people after that session!"

"I think the roundtable was awesome! It was incredible to hear all of the fantastic thoughts and feelings of so many cool young people - they said stuff that I hadn't even thought about, it was great to hear some fresh perspectives!"

"How many people attended, sharing their ideas and inspirations."

"I enjoyed thinking about such an interesting topic with a group of engaged and interesting people"

"Given the chance to talk about issues that affect everyone."

"I loved how young people were given the space to share their insights"

"It was validating to hear that my own hopes & concerns around the metaverse are shared and to hear insight into the hopes & concerns of others."

"Have themes around the main topics we want to talk about. I feel like everyone has so much to say!!!"

"It just opened my mind so much. I went into this thinking I had nothing to contribute but I know now that I do :)"

DIVERSITY OF PERSPECTIVES

"I LOVED seeing a genuine cross-section of the community represented. I truly felt that people of diverse lived experiences were all seen & heard in this space and the environment cultivated in the session (and beforehand) was incredibly welcoming, supportive and affirming. It was exciting to see a mission to have different voices represented actually reflect just that, rather than being all talk. Loved it!"

"That diversity was put at the forefront of the participant selection."

"Many thought-provoking conversations, was so great to see just how many people were there from different experiences and orgs."

"Hearing from all kinds of people."

"Today's round table was INCREDIBLE. It was incredibly empowering to have the voices of so many young people from all different intersections of our community together in one place."

"It is such an inclusive and accessible project, there are no wrong/right questions and answers, and is such a great soundboard for brainstorming/discussion on the metaverse."

"It was great to bring in a diverse range of young people who had burning questions about the metaverse and some really valid concerns about the access and regularity of the metaverse."

"It was really interesting to get to chat to and hear the opinions from all different diverse people about the big things on their minds in regards to the metaverse."

"Seeing such an incredible cross-section of the community represented, with people from intersectional identities present, seen and heard."

"I loved getting to hear so many diverse perspectives and experiences, it made me reflect and think of things that hadn't even come to my mind at all when thinking about this online space."

FORMAT

"The Breakout Rooms were a great chance to get to know other young people and hear genuine concerns/hopes/excitements for the metaverse. I was surprised with how open to chatting my small group was."

"I liked the way we divided accessibility and inclusion, I thought it was a useful guiding tool in this roundtable."

"I liked the balance between group conversations and breakout rooms."

"I enjoyed the break out rooms as everyone had a chance to voice their opinions."

"The diversity of ideas on Miro!"

"I liked that I was back in the same colour team as last time, it felt familiar, safe and comfy. I also had the opportunity to speak this time and people voted a lot for my safety rule and I felt so seen."

"How informal but structured it was."

"The use of the miro boards (i.e. how it was designed) was really cool."

"Breakout Rooms."

"The use of Miro."

"Putting suggestions on the Miro board and then discussing them."

"The break out rooms and option for smaller discussion groups."

"Breakout rooms and conversations"

"Great way to kick it all off and the right amount of interludes/breaks with some thought-provoking discussion."

"It was super interactive & inspiring!"

YOUTH-LED

"Amazing job to Emily and the team at project rockit!!"

"Emily continues to be an amazing host!"

"The young people that represent project rockit are so articulate and talented!"

"Thanks to all the young people for making this whole thing so amazing!!"

"You guys at PROJECT ROCKIT made it a really comfortable and well paced experience, thank you so much!"

"This is incredible, and all the hard work that's gone into it by young people is recognised and appreciated! Thank you so much!"

"Just an earnest expression of gratitude for allowing me to be a part of such an amazing youth-led opportunity."

"I expected it to be much more formal, but it ended up really emulating the PRock vibe of casual, open and informative :)"

4.3 FEEDBACK | IMPROVEMENTS

ROUNDTABLE LENGTH

"I wish there was more time to chat!"

"How fast it was. I want it to go for longer."

"It went so quickly! But that just means I was having fun haha"

"Still felt like there wasn't enough time overall!"

"I could talk about this forever!"

"How little time there was!"

ONLINE VS OFFLINE

"Would prefer a face-to-face consultation. I hope we get to meet!"

"Not being in person :("

"It being on Zoom, I'd prefer in-person - especially with such great people."

"Do in person events!!! This will be great see everyone in their physical form!!!"

"Face to face engagements in person or hybrid."

"Young staff and facilitators genuinely cared about our involvement."

"The energy and vibe of the young host and presenters."

"The friendly and welcoming vibe from it being run by young people!"

"I absolutely loved how welcoming and thoughtful all the young people participating and leading the conversation were."

"I LOVED the music in the breaks and the reading/thinking time!!!!!! big fan, thanks Em"

FEEDBACK ON FEEDBACK

"I and many other consults have noticed great changes between the last and most recent Roundtables. Which gives us trust in Team Rockit's ability to listen and augment these spaces for the best. I am keen to see the progress and development of the upcoming roundtables."

"Thank you for continually co-designing this with us!"

FUTURE CONSULTATIONS

"I have always been one for advocacy. These round tables will be great to have amongst schools and social groups!!!"

"This is such a great opportunity for young people to feel heard and valued, and I get the sense that young people hope to have more touch points in the development of the metaverse!"

"Bitter sweet coming to the last roundtable, but its been a good ride and looking forward to possible new opportunities."

"I am enjoying my engagement in it so far and can't wait for what comes next. I would love to see tangible ways this feedback will be incorporated in the metaverse."

"REALLY looking forward to the next consultation!"

N/A

"Everything ran pretty smoothly in this one. I would have no complaints."

"Nothing!!! A five star performance from everyone involved. This includes Emily and the team at Project Rockit"

"I can't think of anything really, I found this roundtable super engaging and awesome!"

"I think that Em did an absolutely wonderful job catering to everyone and making sure everyone felt included."

THANK YOU FOR READING

OUR REPORT

FOR LISTENING TO

OUR LIVED EXPERIENCES

AND FOR BUILDING

OUR METAVERSE

WITH US



