

Why publishing simply won't be able to avoid the 'M-word' (and why the Metaverse will give publishing its second renaissance)

Let's not forget that the very core of the publishing industry is based on one of the biggest disruptions of all time. The year was 1455 – the result was the Gutenberg Bible – and the spread of Christianity to large parts of the world. Publishing has experienced its fair share of disruption since, but as New York Times best-selling author; Martin Lindstrom argues in his thought provoking speech; *The Metaverse: Engineering our Dreams*, the publishing industry is standing right on the edge of one of its biggest disruptions – yet only 8 percent¹ of the industry have so far allocated funds to the next generation of publishing.

As Lindstrom argues - the publishing industry's adaption of the Metaverse won't pan out as a 'one size fits all' solution but instead result in a multitude of vertical-by-vertical approaches each tapping into core strengths of the Metaverse. Take education and business, both genres on the edge of disruption, and how they're likely to transform. In 2022 – 102 middle students participated in an experiment, with the sheer purpose of understanding the true impact of the metaverse. Designed around an expedition to Greenland – the virtual universe enabled the students to interview the native population first hand, gave them a chance to witness the consequences of global warming and the disruption of the eco system and gave them a chance to learn how to survive in nature with only the very basic at hand.

The result? 70% increase in knowledge recall and engagement.

But education is far from a single-standing example. In his fascinating presentation Lindstrom shares surprising adaption of the metaverse by authors, actors, journalists and experts – who currently in the thousands skip conventional publishing approaches and tap straight into groundbreaking Meta-tools.

And on the advertising an equal revolution is likely to happen. Lindstrom calls it Metacebo – an extension of placebo – challenging the until recently conventional thinking that advertising will appear in Times-square like formats – with branded buildings and logos plastered on every square inch in the virtual space. Instead neuroscience based advertising formats will be designed to trick our imagination and even physical reactions in ways until recently unheard of.

The world has never evolved this fast and will never be this slow again. Those days in 1878, where Thomas Edison, shortly after the invention of the phonograph hit upon an idea and created the first ever audio of the spoken word, Edison dreamed that the technology might one day allow a whole novel to be recorded. It took 150 years to gain 50 million users. 50 years for the phone to reach the same penetration. 22 years for Television, 7 years for the Internet, 3 years for Facebook. Nothing indicates that the metaverse will be an exception in this evolutionary trend.

¹ <https://www.twipemobile.com/reuters-prediction-2022-need-to-know/>