

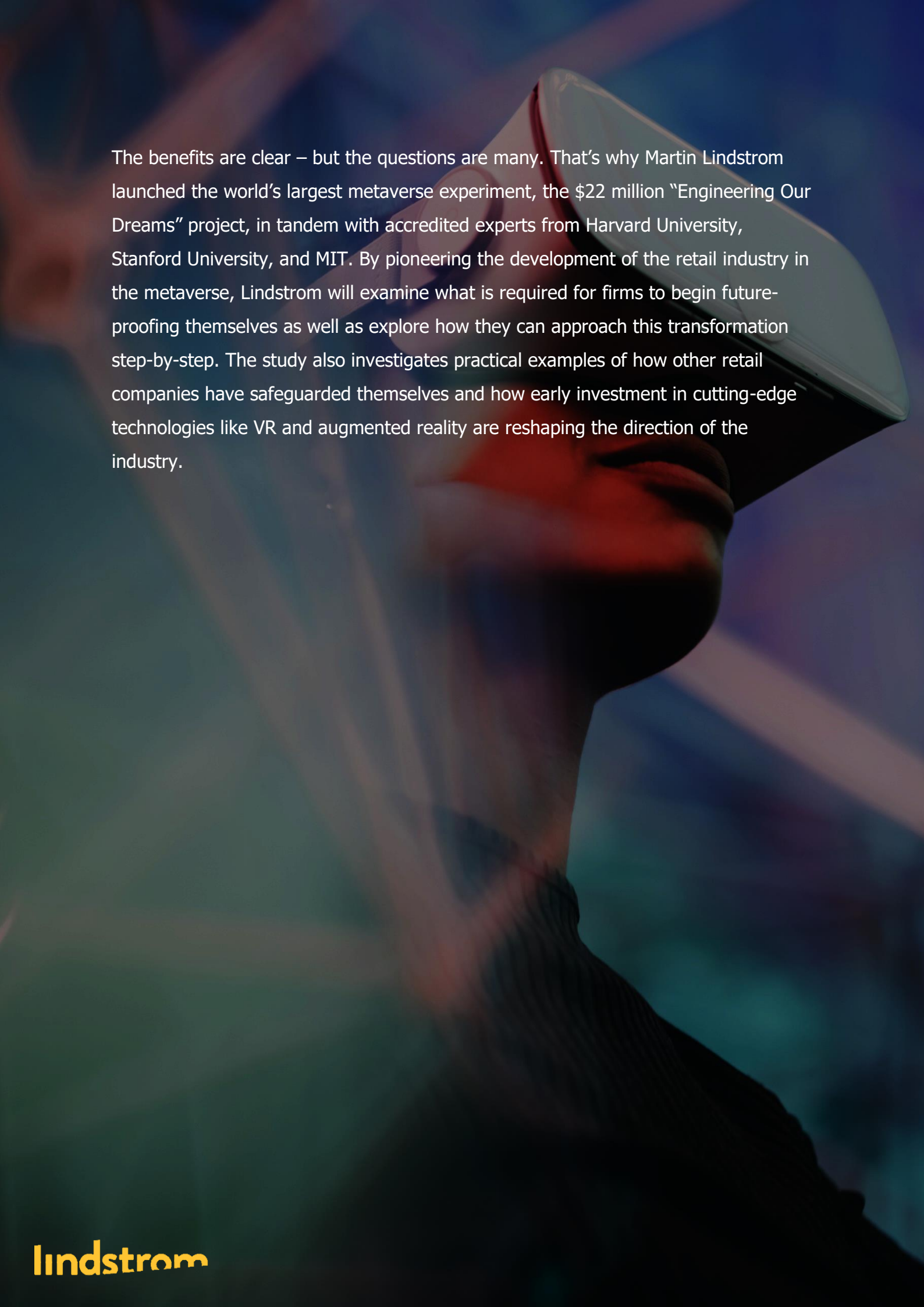
The Metaverse Revolution: How the next generation of the internet is transforming the way we shop

On average, an American adult spends 10.5 hours a day in front of a screen. This explains why, according to CITI, by 2030 almost 1 billion people will wear virtual reality (VR) glasses every day. In fact, global consulting company McKinsey estimates that the transactional value in the metaverse by 2030 will be \$5 trillion – equivalent to the third-largest GDP in the world. These changes in consumer behavior patterns will fundamentally reshape the retail world. Thus, the important question then becomes: How will retail companies adapt?

Retail is on the brink of a permanent transformation. Imagine walking down the aisle of a large supermarket and being exposed to 18,000 products — most of the items you'll see are not relevant to you or what you have in mind to purchase. This visual clutter will soon disappear; the metaverse will take center stage and reshape what you see. It is highly likely that an avatar will represent you in the not-too-distant future. When you go on a diet, for instance, you will design your avatar to be 6 kg lighter than you currently are, so you know how you will end up looking like as a result. Such life-like avatars already are in production, and their widespread use will make it nearly impossible to separate your physical appearance from your virtual replica.

And it won't stop there. As you walk through the supermarket aisle wearing your VR glasses, the glasses will filter your view of the world—and the commerce within it—depending on your mission. If your goal is to lose 6 kg, all products not relevant to you or that run counter to your goal will be blocked or “edited” out of your vision. If, for example, you have an allergy to peanuts or to a certain chemical, then the VR glasses will filter out all brands and products that contain those ingredients.

This new curation tool will help you and consumers navigate what's available on the shelves while at the same time making the presence of advertisements significantly more contextual than they are today. It will cater to who you are and what your feelings are in that moment, and even respond to what your mission is in life.



The benefits are clear – but the questions are many. That’s why Martin Lindstrom launched the world’s largest metaverse experiment, the \$22 million “Engineering Our Dreams” project, in tandem with accredited experts from Harvard University, Stanford University, and MIT. By pioneering the development of the retail industry in the metaverse, Lindstrom will examine what is required for firms to begin future-proofing themselves as well as explore how they can approach this transformation step-by-step. The study also investigates practical examples of how other retail companies have safeguarded themselves and how early investment in cutting-edge technologies like VR and augmented reality are reshaping the direction of the industry.