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WEEKEND LIVING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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Loved Squid Game? Check these out from the same director

Hwang Dong-hyuk is best known for his Netflix hit Squid Game, which drew 111 million viewers in its first 17 days on the platform. He's directed a number of critically acclaimed South Korean films. three of which are now available on Netflix.

SILENCED

Silenced, is based on true events and follows a teacher who has recently started working at a school for the deaf. When he discovers that the school's faculty members are abusing the students, he works to expose the truth, only to discover that the surrounding community is willing to cover it up.



MISS GRANNY

Miss Granny is a lighter film than Squid Game and Silenced, following a 74-yearold woman who finds an unusual way to escape her future confinement at a retirement home. She emerges as a 20-year-old woman after wandering into a strange photo studio and having her picture taken.

THE FORTRESS

The most recent of the three. The Fortress. was released in 2017. It transports you to 17th century Korea, during the Qing invasion of Ioseon, when King Injo and his court are forced to retreat to Namhansanseong, a fortress.



Facebook shutting down automatic facial recognition in photos

Facebook Inc announced on Tuesday it is shutting down its facial recognition system, which automatically identifies users in photos and videos, citing growing societal concerns about the use of such technology.

Regulators are still in the process of providing a clear set of rules governing its use," Jerome Pesenti, vice president of artificial intelligence at Facebook, wrote in a blog post. "Amid this ongoing uncertainty, we believe that limiting the use of facial recognition to a narrow set of use cases is appropriate." The removal of face recognition by the world's largest social media platform comes as the tech industry has faced a reckoning over the past few years over the ethics of using the technology.

Critics say facial recognition technology which is popular among retailers, hospitals and other businesses for security purposes - could compromise privacy, target marginalised groups and normalise intrusive surveillance. IBM has permanently ended facial recognition product sales, and Microsoft Corp and Amazon.com Inc have suspended sales to police indefinitely.

The news also comes as Facebook has been under intense scrutiny from regulators and lawmakers over user safety and a wide range of abuses on its platforms.

The company, which last week renamed itself Meta Platforms Inc, said more than one-third of Facebook's daily active users have opted into the face recognition setting on the social media site, and the change will now delete the "facial recognition templates" of more than 1 billion people.

The removal will roll out globally and is expected to be complete by

December, a Facebook spokesperson

Privacy advocacy and digital rights groups welcomed the move.

Alan Butler, executive director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center, said, "For far too long Internet users have suffered personal data abuses at the whims of Facebook and other platforms. EPIC first called for an end to this program in 2011," though he said comprehensive data protection regulations were still needed in the United States.

Adam Schwartz, senior staff attorney at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, said that although Facebook's action comes after moves from other tech companies, it could mark a "notable moment in the national turning-away from face recognition." Facebook added that its automatic alt-text tool, which creates image descriptions for visually impaired people, will no longer include the names of people recognized in photos after the removal of face recognition, but will otherwise function normally.

Facebook did not rule out using facial recognition technology in other products, saying it still sees it as a "powerful tool" for identity verification for example.

The company's facial recognition software has long been the subject of scrutiny. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission included it among the concerns when it fined Facebook \$5 billion to settle privacy complaints in 2019.

A judge this year approved Facebook's \$650 million settlement of a class action in Illinois over allegations it collected and stored biometric data of users without proper consent.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Exciting (?) times ahead

announcement, I couldn't stop thinking about the movie Ready Player One. For those who haven't watched it, it's a Steven Spielberg directed Science Fiction flick where people are shown spending an insane amount of time inside a virtual reality game looking for a famed fortune. Is this how the future is going to be? Dare we take one more step and draw a comparison to the Matrix even?

We ponder these questions as we try to explain the Metaverse craze in this week's cover story. Turn to the centrefold to read and let us know your opinions on Metaverse in our email and social media channels.

Have a great weekend!

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Toyota one of worst major automakers for carbon emissions

The world's top-selling carmaker Toyota has come joint last in a Greenpeace ranking of carbon emission efforts by auto firms, according to a list published Thursday during the COP26 climate summit. The campaign group gave Toyota and US-European firm Stellantis "F minus minus" grades for decarbonisation efforts including phasing out engines that burn planet-warming fossil fuels in favour of electric vehicles.

Minimising carbon emissions in the supply chain and reusing or developing greener technology for car batteries were among the factors examined in the report that compared 10 major automakers. General Motors received the least damning

rating with a C- grade, followed by a D for Volkswagen and D- for Renault. All the other firms, including Ford, Honda and Hyundai-Kia, were rated F plus or minus.

Toyota, the world's number-one car seller last year, is the most stubborn in holding onto internal combustion engines," said Ada Kong, senior project manager of the auto industry campaign at Greenpeace East Asia. The Japanese giant is also "most vocal in such advocacy, domestically and abroad", Kong said in a statement.

Toyota, which releases its earnings later Thursday, said in September it would invest 1.5 trillion yen (\$13.2 billion) in batteries for electric and hybrid cars by 2030. It declined to comment ahead of



the publication of the emissions report, in which Greenpeace urged automakers to embrace fully-electric vehicles.

"Some Japanese companies, such as Toyota, are confident that hybrid technology is an effective alternative to the internal combustion engine," the report

said. "However, the real-world emissions reduction and fuel economy of hybrid vehicles are not as good as expected," it said, noting that plug-in hybrids only reduce emissions by an estimated onethird, compared with petrol or diesel cars.

The assessment came as world leaders met in Glasgow this week as part of the COP26 climate conference -- billed as vital for the continued viability of the 2015 Paris Agreement, which set a goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.Greenpeace said none of the 10 auto firms had announced plans to phase out combustion engines before 2035, which would make the 1.5-degree goal "almost impossible".

3 best Slack alternatives to make your workplace conversations more coherent

OISHEE EERADA MAUDUD

If you are tired of not being able to find your old messages because you have reached the 10,000 messages limit that Slack's free version imposes, or you just want a messaging app for your workplace that does not emulate social media with its notifications, you have come to the right article. Slack has some great features even in its free plan, but striving for better is not a bad thing when it comes to your team's communication

MICROSOFT TEAMS

Free plan available; paid plans start from \$2.50 per user per month.

Microsoft Teams is a widely used Slack alternative that offers a variety of features for hosting meetings and webinars, chatting, collaboration, and data security. It also offers integrations with productivity apps, project management apps, and apps for specific departments and

As it integrates well with the rest of the Microsoft 365 suite, Microsoft Teams is naturally a great option for any company that uses other Microsoft apps such as PowerPoint and Excel or wants to use features like email hosting, custom domain name for email addresses, OneDrive storage, etc.

It has some very innovative features for calls and meetings, such as Intelligent Speakers, which can differentiate the voices of up to 10 speakers in a Teams Room. You can also merge calls to bring different people together and move a call from your mobile phone to your laptop.

PROS

- 250+ integrations with apps including Trello, ClickUp, Azure Boards
- O Unlimited number of chat messages even in the free plan, unlike Slack
- Free 30-day trial available for paid plans
- O Team video calls are possible for up to 100 participants in the free version, unlike Slack
- O 10 GB file storage available in the free version, and 1 TB storage per organization plus 10 GB per license in paid versions

CONS

- O UX is not as intuitive as other apps such as Slack
- O Desktop versions of Microsoft Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and Publisher are not included in the free plan

FLOCK

Pricing

Free plan available; paid plans start at \$4.50 per user per month

Like Microsoft Teams, Flock has a variety of features for communication, productivity, and security. You can create public and private channels, share files, set reminders and to-dos, and bookmark or pin certain messages to make them easily accessible. Flock also allows you to create polls to facilitate teams' decision

Although it is quite similar to Slack in its limitations,



the paid 'Pro' plan is \$4.50 per user per month, which is cheaper than Slack's cheapest paid plan of \$6.67 per user per month (if billed annually). So if you have a small team and are okay with the basic features, you can save some bucks by switching to Flock.

- O 5 GB free storage available in the free plan (which is lower than that in Microsoft Teams though)
- O Paid plans have 20 GB of file storage allotted to each team member
- O 30-day free trial available for paid plans **CONS**
- O Has a limit of 10,000 searchable messages in the free version like Slack does
- O Screen sharing is only available in paid versions, just

Allows a maximum of 20 team members in the free version whereas Slack imposes no such limits for its free plan

DISCORD

Free plan available; paid plans start at \$9.99 per month Although many may think of Discord as a personal space to hang out with friends and gaming buddies, organizations have come to consider Discord an efficient, free Slack alternative for daily communication.

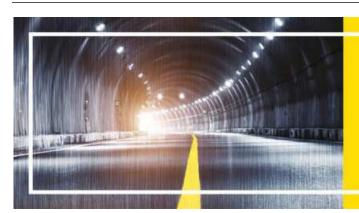
Discord allows the creation of public and private servers and channels. You can create text and voice channels on Discord, call others, share files, and more. Discord also allows you to make threads, which are temporary channels made to discuss one-off topics.

You can upgrade to Discord Nitro for streaming and screen sharing in higher resolution, upload files with sizes up to 100MB, or get server boosts. But the free version will suffice if you just want a platform for text, video, and voice communication.

PROS

- Unlimited message history even in the free version
- Ability to give members custom access
- Unlimited file storage

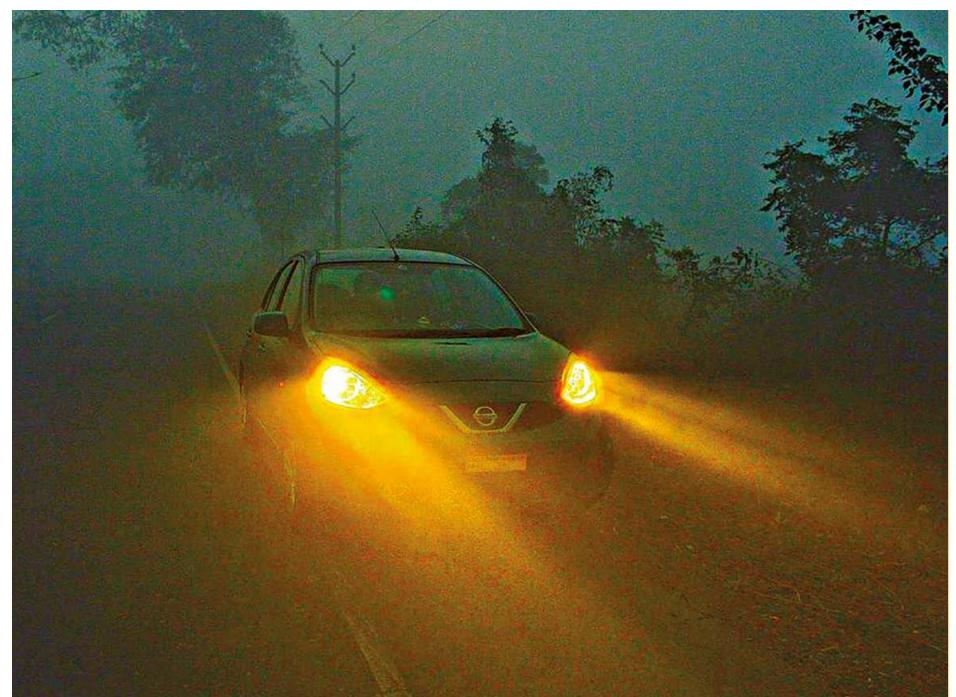
- While Discord may allow YouTube and Twitch integrations, webhooks, and bots, the truth is that it will not have the integrations with other apps commonly used for work that you can enjoy in Microsoft Teams, Flock, and Slack
- The interface often requires some getting used to
- O You can send files with sizes up to only 8 MB with the



Tomorrow's Chattogram is being built connecting both sides of the river Karnaphuli

Bangabandhu Tunnel is being built with BSRM





Caring for your car in winter Things to keep in mind

ARFIN KAZI

Winter is one of the nicest times to experience Bangladesh as the weather stays chilly and it does not get ice cold outside by any means. Many turbo flutters go by, through the thick fog that sets at night time and some might say boosting season is almost here. This week, we talk about how to take care of vour car during the winter season, going over a few tips and tricks to keep your drive without hiccups

CNG cars

When it comes to CNG cars, the issue usually is starting up the car when it is completely cold. The car usually does not tend to start and stays stuck in the ignition. As CNG is a drier fuel compared to octane, although it's cleaner, the engine lubrication is minimal; which ends up

drying up engine peripherals.

The best way to keep the car running is starting the car with regular octane and switching the fuel line when the car temperatures go into operating conditions, this way there are less chances that the car would stall

Fog and headlights

During winter time, roads in Bangladesh tend to get foggy where the mist gets quite thick during night time. It's a great time now to buff out hazy headlights if your car has them and ensure the fog is working correctly to keep yourself and any approaching cars safe as it could be hard to see without clear lights through thick fog.

Paint protection

As humidity tends to stay low during colder seasons, car paint usually accumulates extra dust and grime, which also tends to be dry

which stays stuck and causes feathery scratches on the paint.

The best way to protect the paint from dry dust is by washing the car right after a trip with just running water first, then with your desired shampoo made especially for cars, which does not strip wax and other components that usually protect the paint.

Miscellaneous

A couple other things to keep in mind is to check vital components such as the engine oil and coolant levels as these levels tend to fluctuate when it gets colder, mostly because the viscosity increases. Make sure to check the oil level as it tends to drop more than usual, ensure to top it up, the dipstick is your best friend, and pour up accordingly.

These are some of the ways that you can stay prepared ahead of time for colder weather, which we hope will be enjoyable.

Understanding the Metaverse

ZAKIA SAMEEN NOOR

In the recent Facebook Connect 2021 conference, CEO Mark Zuckerberg revealed the giant tech company's upcoming plans in a major rebrand. Facebook has brought itself and its subsidiaries including its social media apps Messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram, and wearables like Oculus VR under one parent company name: Meta Platforms Inc, aka Meta. It's an ambitious strategy that is a precursor the next possible revolution of the internet: building the metaverse.

COVER STORY

What is the metaverse?

The term was coined back in 1992 by Neal Stephenson in his novel "Snow Crash". It referred to a 3D VR environment where humans interacted with one another and software agents as avatars.

Almost three decades later, the metaverse today refers to a universe where users interact with one another through avatars in a blend of VR, AR, and mixed reality. Interaction isn't just limited to gaming. Users will be able to hang out, socialize, work, shop etc - a multidimensional feel. The main idea behind it is to create an immersive experience for the users – a virtual immersive reality on top of your current physical reality.

Imagine you and your friend are in different countries. In the metaverse, you will be able to hang out together in the same space as avatars. Physical constraints will no longer be a barrier to meaningful bonding.

Why is the metaverse important?

Think of an app like Uber. Its whole business model began as an app. That was made possible because of the smartphone, a gamechanger in technology. It ultimately transformed societies as well, giving opportunities to entrepreneurs building new innovative businesses from the

ground, which wouldn't have been possible otherwise. Retailing and digitization are synchronous when it comes to business transaction. Think of how easier your life is now with apps like Pathao, and even social/worklife apps like WhatsApp and Slack. Bkash has succeeded because of the emergence of digital currency. The metaverse is an extended platform with mixed reality featuring both AR and VR. This means there is more scope for business innovation. Thus, there is a possibility that it can lead to a new economy with transactions taking place via cryptocurrencies like NFTs. According to venture capitalist Michael Ball, one of the prime characteristics if the metaverse is that it will have a "fully functioning economy". The internet has created massive

opportunities for content creators. The metaverse represents more opportunities for them, beyond just visual and auditory capabilities, to interact with their audience. Especially with AR and VR. This means that students' educative experience can also be transformed.

What are Facebook's plans with Meta?

Zuckerberg believes that the metaverse is the next generation of the internet – a whole different ecosystem, analogous to current society. He acknowledges the fact that one single company cannot be the sole proprietor of this new multiverse. Yet, his purpose to put Meta at the forefront in Big Tech's progress towards creating the metaverse.

One of Zuckerberg's visions is that people will be able to access the metaverse economy from normal looking AR glasses over the usual headsets. In an interview with The Verge, he talks about a scenario of creating your perfect workstation anywhere, including Starbucks. At the snap of your fingers, you can have five different monitors in whatever shape your desire be around you.

"If you want to talk to someone, you're working through a problem, instead of just calling them on the phone, they can teleport in, and then they can see all the context that you have. They can see your five monitors, or whatever it is, and the documents or all the windows of code that you have, or a 3D model that you're working on. And they can stand next to you and interact, and then in a blink they can teleport back to where they were and kind of be in a separate place," said Zuckerberg. "So,I think for focus time and individual productivity, I think being able to have your ideal setup, we call this "infinite office."

Several projects are on the line, especially ones about education. The company is investing \$150 million on training educational content creators how to create immersive material for their student audiences. There are other initiatives for content creators including a \$10 million dollar Creator Fund to motivate and teach creators to use Meta's Horizon VR-

The company has partnered with leading higher educational institutes including Hong Kong University, Seoul National University, and Howard University on the ethics, data, and privacy use of its Meta services.

Are there other companies working with the metaverse?

What started as a sci-fi concept is now a budding reality as gaming companies like Roblax, and Epic Games are also betting on the metaverse. Each is bringing new experiments with the metaverse to life. Recently, Epic Games featured a virtual Ariana Grande concert on its hit game Fortnite. Gamers could also go on adventures with Grande's customizable avatar on five different adventures.

Microsoft too has jumped in the bandwagon. It will reportedly bring its virtual collaborative space, Mesh, to Microsoft Teams in the first half of 2022. The vision is to create a multidimensional work experience inside Teams like networking, socializing, collaborating, and using other MS tools like Excel and Powerpoint. The USP of Microsoft here is that it's focusing on keeping the human contact alive in the virtual world



Infinix Hot 11S: Gaming on a budget

SHOUMIK BASU

Smartphones have become a huge counterpart of consoles and PCs in the last few years. With game developers focusing more and more on handheld game releases, the market share of gaming smartphones are at an ever high. Even in Bangladesh, top brands are catering the gamers with nifty hardware every now and then.

> Today we are reviewing Infinix's Hot 11S, a gaming-focused midrange smartphone priced at BDT 15,990. Here's our take:

Exterior

Our review unit came in 'Green Wave' colour with a wavy pattern imprinted on the plastic back. Everyone who says encountered this device in the last couple of weeks. The camera housing design on the back also looked good.

The phone is a bit bulky for one-handed operation and might feel a tad bit heavy to some. All the regular refinements are there on the phone including a 3.5mm jack for audio.

Display

The mammoth 6.7-inch FHD+ IPS LCD panel of the phone offered a decent viewing experience. What made us even more delighted

course, a gaming phone would have been great if we could get 120Hz on the display but considering the price tag, we are happy to settle for a bit less this time. Legibility of text direct sunlight was the best- that I have to admit.

Performance

The phone comes packed with an Helio G88 processor. The phone's primary TG will be very much satisfied with the performance. For day to day operation, you will not notice any lag even when you are shuffling between apps. Coupled with 6GB RAM, we did not have a hard time running graphics-intensive games.

We tried fan favourites, Call of Duty Mobile and Asphalt 9 - both of them offered a high frame rate in medium/standard graphics settings

The triple camera setup on the back includes a Primary 50MP sensor along with a 2MP depth sensor with an AI camera sensor. The phone does not come with an ultrawide camera which is unusual for phones in these ranges. The primary camera of the phone offered decent photos in daylight. With the 50MP on, we could find a lot more details in the photos.

However, the colour rendition and automatic smoothing of the image might be a nuisance when you are trying to take photos

with a coloured background.

Battery

Like most phones out there, no budget phone is complete without packing a hunky battery. The Hot 11S is no exception. The 5,000 mAh battery covered most of our workday with 10-15% charge leftover. We did not use the phone extensively for gaming though, which might dramatically reduce the battery backup significantly.

Verdict

You get more than what you paid for. The phone offers very good performance at a price point. What impressed us most is that Infinix ditched the customary design scheme and colour accent and opted for something refreshingly cool. What annoyed us was the lack of an ultrawide camera, bloatware and associated notifications from it.

All in all, Hot 11S is certainly worth considering for anyone who is looking for a gaming phone on a budget.





More and more official documents are being converted to PDF documents these days. Hard copy paperwork is, in fact, quickly becoming the exception rather than the rule. Even digital documents, however, must be signed. You can go the traditional route and print the documents, sign them, and then scan them back into your computer, or you can create a digital signature and attach it to the PDF directly.

In comparison to Macs, Windows lacks a built-in PDF signing feature. You can, however, sign a PDF document using Windows' built-in browser, Microsoft Edge. You can also download third-party apps that provide the same functionality.

Let's look at how to add a signature in Edge, and then compare it to how to do it in Adobe Acrobat Reader DC, Adobe's free PDF reader.

Microsoft Edge

- 1. In the file manager, look for your PDF file. Open the file with Microsoft Edge by
- right-clicking on it.
 2. Edge's PDF reader will open the file. Select the Draw icon (it looks like a pencil facing downward).
- 3. If you have a touch screen, the Draw with Touch option will be enabled automatically (the icon looks like a hand) 4. Sign the PDF with your cursor (or, if you have a touch screen, your finger) and then save it.

While this is a convenient and quick way to sign a PDF document, it does require you to repeat the process each time. It would be much easier if you

could simply sign the document with your signature. Writing a signature, photographing it, and downloading it as a PDF or graphic file is one way to do this.

Adobe Acrobat DC

- 1. Open Adobe Acrobat (assuming it's downloaded) and in the main window, look for "Fill & Sign." Select a PDF file to work on by clicking that and then "Select
- 2. Choose a PDF file to work on by clicking "Fill & Sign" and then "Select a
- 3. Choose a PDF file to work on by clicking "Fill & Sign" and then "Select a
- 4. You can also open the file first (by going to "File") "Open") and then scroll down to "Fill & Sign" in the right-hand column of the app.
- 5. You'll be prompted to "Fill and sign forms or have them signed by others" in a new window. Select your document from the file manager by clicking the "Select a File" button.

You'll be prompted to "Fill and sign forms or have them signed by others" in

- 6. Acrobat will display your document. If your cursor does not have a small "Ab" next to it, make sure the "Fill & Sign" icon on the right is highlighted. This allows you to sign your form by typing your name
- 7. Tap "Sign yourself" in the icon above the main screen if you want to sign by drawing your signature or save a typed or drawn signature.
- 8. You'll be given the option of adding a signature or initials. Click "Add Signature." 9. You can sign your document in one of three ways: type your name (Adobe provides several handwritten-looking fonts), draw your signature (either using your touchpad or directly on a touchscreen), or upload an image of your signature in a pop-up window. If you don't want to have to write it again, make sure "Save signature" is checked. 10. Your PDF document will be restored
- once you click "Apply." Left-click where you want your new signature to appear on the document. If you want, you can change the size or position of the signature.

Metaverse is already here, just look at Augmented Reality

When Facebook unveiled a mock-up last week of the 'metaverse' -- supposedly the internet of the future -- it showed people transported to a psychedelic world of flying fish and friendly robots. But while even Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg acknowledges these kinds of experiences could be many years away, some enthusiasts argue that a more modest version

about what they were seeing.

It might not feel quite as immersive -- or as kooky -- as the virtual reality (VR) experiences that Zuckerberg wants to eventually bring to people's homes. But it nonetheless blurs the divide between the physical world and the digital one, a key idea behind the metaverse. "With VR, you put on a device, and then

"You can call in experts who can look at the same thing as you are, from another part of the world," she said. "During surgery, you can lay down digital lines where perhaps the incision is going to occur. "Founded in 2010, Magic Leap's initial mission to bring AR to the masses generated huge hype and nearly \$2.3 billion in venture funding.

Early promo material imagined it being used to bring a killer whale into a gymnasium full of schoolchildren. But when Magic Leap's first headset was finally revealed in 2018, there was widespread disappointment; the product was too bulky and expensive to catch on among the general public. The company was forced to lay off around half its staff last year.

Google Glass, a pair of 'smart glasses' that failed to take off when they launched in 2014, has similarly re-emerged as a product aimed at professional users. Johnson predicted it might still be "a few more years" before Magic Leap or one of its competitors creates an AR headset that could feasibly be worn by consumers everywhere. But that's the moment when Johnson predicts that AR could really transform our everyday lives. It might, she suggested, allow us to see reviews for restaurants pinging before our eyes as we walk down a street perusing the options. Forgotten someone's name? No problem. As they walk towards you, it could appear above their head.

"Right now we're all looking down at our mobile phones," Johnson said. Augmented reality, she hopes, could help us to soak up the world around us -- a world with extra information layered over the top of it. If that revolution arrives, the market may be a crowded one. Facebook is working on its own AR headset, while Apple is rumoured to be following suit. Snapchat's developer, Snap, is meanwhile trialling a new pair of its 'Spectacles' on AR artists.

What does Johnson think the metaverse will look like in 15 years? "I think you'll go back home to pick up your glasses because you left them at home," she predicted. "The same way you do with your mobile phone today.



of the metaverse is already here.

"We're in the early stages of the metaverse, in some ways," Peggy Johnson, CEO of Magic Leap, told AFP at the Web Summit in Lisbon on Tuesday. Magic Leap makes augmented reality (AR) headsets, which have already been used by surgeons preparing to separate a pair of conjoined twins, and by factory supervisors carrying out site inspections. In both cases, information popped up before the users' eyes

you're in another world," Johnson said. "With AR, you put on a device, you're still in your world, but we're augmenting it with digital content. "So far, many people's experiences of AR have been limited to playing Pokemon Go or experimenting with image filters that transplant a comical pair of ears onto someone's face.

But it is in healthcare that the true potential of AR is starting to be realised, Johnson said.

