

2022 The Next Level of

CONSCIOUS DESIGN

FutureView
Trend Report

Next Level **Conscious** Experiences

From Surviving, to Thriving

Last year we predicted the continued growth of more "conscious" digital experiences after a time of complete disruption. We said that businesses must accelerate the adoption of Conscious Experience Design in four key dimensions to ensure that rapid digitization aligns with consumers' changing values and sentiments.

Through our work with numerous clients across industries, we're seeing progress in each area of Conscious Experience Design that we outlined in 2021 – but the mission continues as society now moves from surviving to thriving. While the dramatic pivots over the last two years highlight how technology underpins our lives, people are ready for the next level of conscious product experiences. Products will need to be more intelligent, immersive, systemic and social to meet their needs.

Humanizing Technology for more Value

Technology is becoming more humanized – more conscious. Conscious product experiences are fundamental to helping people and businesses embrace the reality of continued change. As a result, we see new products becoming smarter, more natural, more immersive, and more conscious.

Consumer Consciousness

Having lived through the most transformative moment of their lives, consumers expect and demand more. People are more conscious of the technologies and digital habits that consume their time, attention, and interest. They're focused on the things they value most, and they have little patience for interactions or products that don't add value. Conversely, they have a greater appetite for products and technology that make their life more interesting, their activities more meaningful, and their community relationships more enriching.

Designing **Meaningful** Interactions

Where do we go from here?

Products that engage users in the most meaningful ways will win the hearts of customers, and the minds of the market. We are now in the beginning of a new, more important era of digital transformation and a meaningful evolution in the art of Conscious Experience Design.

Designers are increasingly weighing design decisions and innovation against conscious experiences. Valuable, even meaningful, interactions and results must be consciously designed into every digital product. The result is wildly creative, intelligent, naturalized, and connected products. Designers are increasingly aware that it's not enough for users to be connected digitally. The connection must improve human interactions and experiences.

Design Trends

The key themes driving Conscious Experience Design today include:

- 1) Personal Innovation**
- 2) Insightful Intelligence**
- 3) Natural Immersion**
- 4) Communal Systems**

1 Personal Innovation

People will embrace products aligned with their core values and aspirations. They want products that lead to more meaningful interactions, relationships, and greater wellbeing.

2 Insightful Intelligence

Cooperative intelligence will deliver ultra-humanized assistance and contextual guidance. Products will empower better decisions and save time and effort for more high-value activities.

3 Natural Immersion

Immersive experiences will eliminate technology barriers and create more natural interactions that are spatial, sensory and seamless across digital-physical spaces.

4 Communal Systems

Distributed collaboration and decentralized systems will enable creator-centric communities and alternate economies that thrive on shared relationships.

PERSONAL INNOVATION

People are increasingly embracing products that improve their lives, align with their values and aspirations, and lead to more meaningful interactions, relationships, and greater wellbeing.



Find New Meaning

A circular inset image showing a person in silhouette meditating on a wooden pier. The pier extends into a calm lake, with a range of mountains in the background under a soft, hazy sky. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter.

Reimagining **Wellbeing**

Human ingenuity during survival mode spawned a new era of "personal innovation." People are taking stock of their lives and prioritizing optimal value, wellbeing, and balance. Norms are being reevaluated, reprioritized, and renovated across work, family, community, and self-care. The pandemic forced many of these changes into the digital realm, driving a need for quality digital connection, shared experiences, and products that deliver value.

Moving forward, people will continue to consciously revitalize their lives with human-centric digital solutions that are aligned with their personal and social wellbeing. They'll thrive, supported by technology that helps them explore new ideas and creates opportunities for more meaningful personal and professional interactions.



The pandemic changed your purpose.
The only question now is if you will
consciously embrace this transition and
use it to craft an intentional, meaningful
future in its aftermath.

John Coleman, Author
Redefining Your Purpose in the Wake of the Pandemic, HBR 2022

Trends

Wellbeing Built Into Every Experience

Wellness is expanding from a state of physical health to include multiple dimensions including mental, emotional, financial, and professional wellness. People-first solutions that guide healthy behavior, sustain the environment, and have positive community impacts are highly sought-after and valued. In this new era, all companies have a mission to consciously extend empathy and sensitivity as they reflect a care and commitment for holistic wellbeing in their products.

Essentialism Focuses Priorities

Essentialism is redefining core values, driving people to focus only on areas that bring the most personal joy and satisfaction. As people prioritize activities that matter most, and eliminate mundane and less fulfilling things, essentialism will increasingly act as a filter for customers' attention, engagement, and purchasing habits. This essentialism philosophy will shift away from concepts of material abundance and consumption in order to focus on quality and simplicity over excess.

Successful product teams will increasingly prioritize efficient and conscious experiences to meet consumers' desire for simplicity and value.

Social Intimacy in a Disconnected World

People are more digitally connected than ever, yet rates of anxiety and depression have grown. As the world emerges from the pandemic, people are craving more intimate human relationships. Augmenting virtual or digital connections with purpose-based social activities will help interaction-starved people feel a sense of value and meaning.

Technology that assists with community building, inclusive design, and face-to-face communication will inspire deeper product engagement and loyalty.

From Self-Service to Self-Care


People are seeking more control over their lives. On-demand access to services and communication has inspired the creation of bespoke "care" experiences. Products that empower customers and enable self-care such as remote diagnostic testing, predictive health maintenance, digital therapeutics, and telemedicine will increasingly enable people to receive expert care from anywhere. Always-on access to therapists, physicians, support groups and communities are increasingly supporting greater wellbeing. Digital interactions will become essential to virtually all care experiences.

Creativity Drives Meaningful Growth

People are boldly redefining the boundaries of their professional and personal lives. Fresh perspectives about core values and priorities are being translated into a desire for more creativity, control and inspiration. People are pursuing personal passions, embracing entrepreneurship and becoming prolific creators of virtual media.

Digital products will be creator-defined and enable inspirational experiences that align with personal values and priorities. Products will enable personal creativity and growth while delivering humanized interactions.

Action Items



1 Employ participatory design and co-creation methods with customers that tap into peoples' desire for creativity and meaningful change.

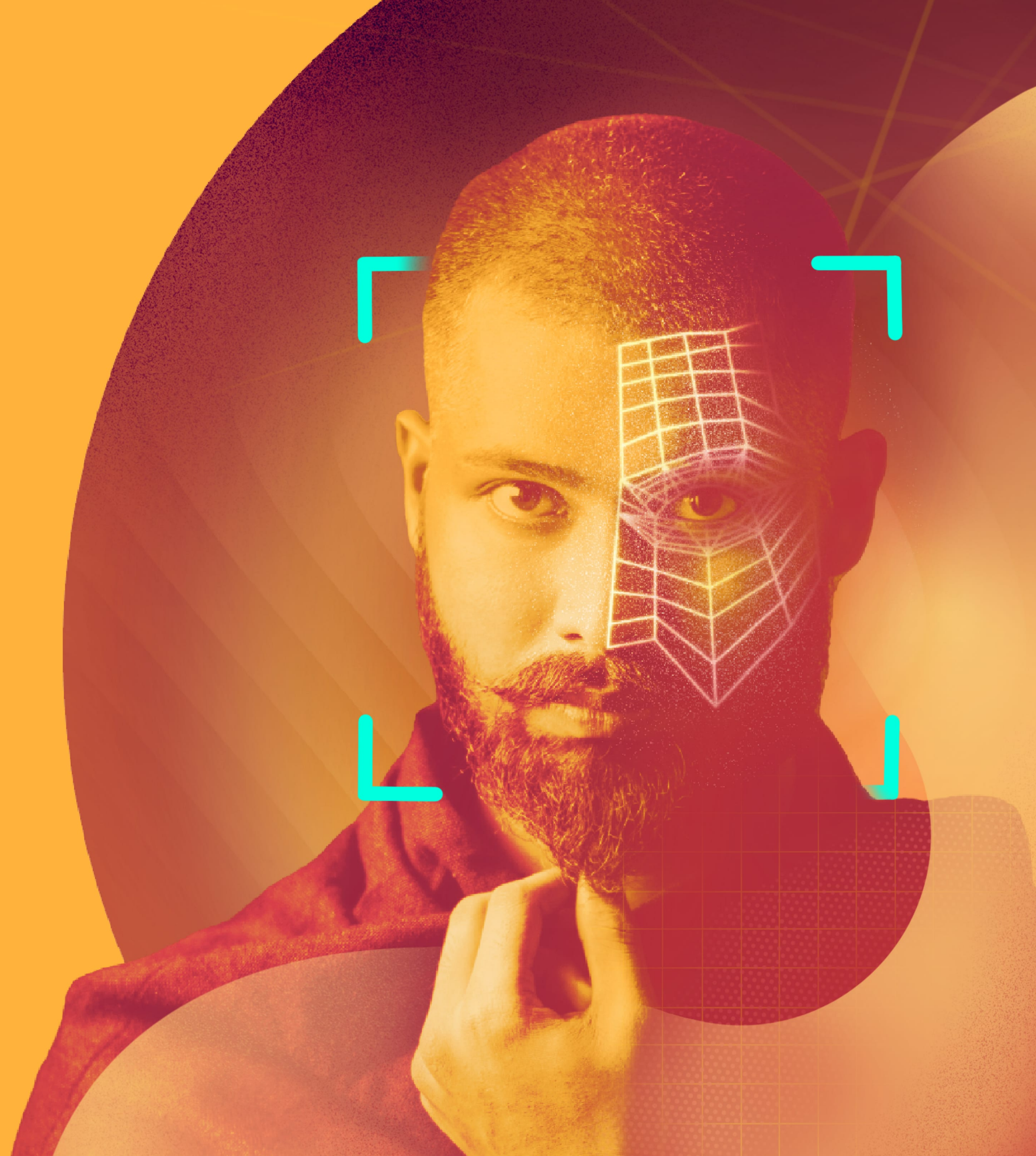
2 Simplify and naturalize every user experience within the product to support users' strong preference for essential, efficient, value-add digital experiences.

3 Research and design for product use cases that encourage healthy behaviors and align with users' wellbeing priorities.


4 Embrace creative product scenarios that fulfill users' needs for energizing collaboration, community, and human interaction.

INSIGHTFUL INTELLIGENCE

Cooperative intelligence will power ultra-humanized assistance and contextual guidance for better decision-making, more efficiencies and richer product engagement and adoption.



Work Together in Harmony

The background features a warm orange-to-yellow gradient. In the lower half, there are silhouettes of two people, a man and a woman, standing and reaching their hands up towards a glowing horizon. The horizon is composed of several concentric, semi-circular arcs that create a sense of depth and light. The overall mood is optimistic and collaborative.

Empowering **Digital Partnerships**

People are growing overwhelmed with the number of digital services and decisions now permeating their lives. They are only embracing products and services that expertly empower and guide them. With so many choices, and so much data, products must become smarter, more collaborative, and more accurate to become essential "digital partners" for users.

AI is making digital partnerships a reality. In the year ahead, we will witness "cooperative intelligence" emerge as the essential core to future digital products and services. Human autonomy will be paramount as people more intimately collaborate with intelligent systems that know them and simplify their lives.

In order to win meaningful digital partnerships with users, cooperative products will reach beyond academic intelligence to engender trust, relatability, and emotional connections.

AI needs social understanding and cooperative intelligence to integrate well into society. The coming years might give rise to diverse ecologies of AI systems that interact in rapid and complex ways with each other and with humans.

*Dafoe, Bachrach, Hadfield, Horvitz, Larsen, & Graepel
Cooperative AI: machines must learn to find common ground, Nature 2021*

Trends

Cooperative AI will Augment Human Agency and Insight

The focus of AI will move from full autonomy to that of cooperation between intelligent services and human beings – enriching the human-machine relationship.

Businesses must imagine intelligent products and services that preserve personal agency while offering capabilities that augment human objectives and abilities. As technology advances, we expect the area of "decision intelligence" to enable more predictive forecasting and insightful decision-making in work and life.

Low Code, No Code with Ambient Automation

The trend of low-code, no-code tools will expand as people offload complex computational tasks to machines in order to focus on higher value activities.

Consumers and workers have no time to waste and are looking to simplify and enhance their lives with ambient automation. Ambient bots and low- or no-code tools will grow across home and work – making technology automation invisible, while its impact clear, with more effective assistance capabilities and increased value.

AI is Getting Emotional: Emotional Intelligence

Imbuing emotional intelligence into smart products is the next frontier in AI. Artificial intelligence currently lacks the sensitivity to nurture human relationships. Consumers are more likely to engage, feel satisfied, and remain loyal to a brand or product with emotionally intuitive interactions.

"Emotion AI" or "affective computing" is projected to grow and enable smart systems to more accurately interpret human characteristics such as facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, the force of keystrokes, etc. With greater sensory capability, machines will more accurately "understand" people to advance digital partnerships and strengthen user/product relationships.

Trust is the New Currency: Responsible AI

With greater digitization comes greater risk of misuse of identity and personal or proprietary data. There is an increasing desire to protect and preserve privacy. Intelligent security and privacy protection must be built in from day one and must be demonstrated with each interaction between products and users. Transparency with customers about products, services and the way that companies use data is paramount.


As we build a world driven by machine learning and intelligence, companies will need to continue to take a conscious, responsible approach to AI. No matter how effective the product is, companies that fail to inspire trust will become irrelevant.

Data Visualization Reveals Decision Insights

Insight derives meaning from data. As experiences become more digital the role of data grows exponentially for both consumers and companies. We see data storage, management and analysis as increasingly complex, increasingly integrated, and increasingly critical in an intelligent world. Thus, data visualization is now a fundamental component of most digital experiences.

Companies must employ data scientists and designers who are capable of using advanced data visualization as a guiding force for within their products. With greater understanding of the meaning behind the data, companies will build more effective products that give people insights and information that will help them improve results and achieve greater personal and business growth.

Action Items



1 Research consumer expectations relative to high-value tasks and activities for more effective digital automation.

2 Intentionally create responsible AI principles that underpin feature decisions and create balanced machine and human autonomy.

3 Capitalize on sensory data to train AI responses to better leverage human emotional cues within the product.

4 Expand data visualization resources and expertise to create dynamic and meaningful approaches to revealing data insights for better decision making.

NATURAL IMMERSION

Immersive experiences will eliminate technology barriers and create more natural interactions that are spatial, sensory and seamless across digital-physical spaces.




Do What Comes Naturally

Spatial, Seamless, and Sensory

As the world opens up, people will seek more holistic solutions that seamlessly weave together both their virtual and physical worlds. Blended physical and digital experiences will enrich their experiences and enable authentic, natural connections. Convergent concepts such as the Metaverse will draw more interest and spark a reinvention of brand experiences across digital and physical immersive spaces--where the boundaries are increasingly blurred.

Thus, immersive design is not simply a technological approach. It is about creating a natural state of being more spatial, sensory, and seamless. It will eliminate technology barriers and create customer experiences that are fluid, intuitive, and enriching. Leveraging multi-sensory interactions, spatial environments, and seamless ecosystems, designers will now create immersive experiences that adapt to people and enable the next dimension in more natural interactions and connections.



When storytelling comes to life, an immersive experience is created. When done right, immersive marketing transforms an ordinary event into an unforgettable experience and makes engaging with a brand feel natural.

Cassandra Popli, Vice President, Agency ETA
Immersive Experiences: Creating a Heightened Level of Engagement



Trends

Converging Digital and Physical Realities

The lines between the physical and digital world continue to blur. Fully virtual or fully physical experiences will be a rarity as experiences converge and augment in both directions – with digital augmenting physical and physical augmenting digital.

This new "hybrid" world will create new extended reality paradigms and modes of interaction. Companies will increasingly research human behavior and leverage these insights to help product teams craft solutions that embrace and capitalize on augmented, cross-over experiences.

Designing the Liminal Spaces In Between

Familiar concepts of place and space are being reconstructed as we begin to define the "in between". For example, ultra-creative art installations and event venues give us a glimpse of what is to come. Liminal spaces create multidimensional and multisensory experiences that transcend familiar realities to create new dimensions and emotional states.

The retail, entertainment, travel, and healthcare industries are among the first to adopt liminal approaches and the first to monetize them.

Humanizing Technology with Multi-Sensory Design

Immersive experiences encompass and engage users' senses. With technology serving as a bridge between the digital and physical worlds, multi-sensory technologies will play a fundamental role in ensuring human senses are stimulated in ways that feel most natural and fulfilling.

Companies will reimagine their products in multi-sensory dimensions, across physical and digital spaces, to capture users in spaces and modes that meet their individual needs and preferences.

Frictionless Interactions will Reduce Cognitive Load

The most rewarding experiences are frictionless and seamless. Yet switching contexts across experiences can present excess friction that makes the transition difficult. Technology companies must develop holistic, interoperable solutions with easy entry and exit without destabilizing the overall experience or introducing clunky transitions.

We see companies focusing on advanced technology, user research, and testing to reduce friction points and create a natural flow between products and spaces. Ultimately, seamless transition between users, products, spaces, and platforms will be the norm.

The Digital Space Race — 4D Interactions

Flat 2D experiences lack depth and dimension that is typical in the natural world. Digital experiences are rapidly being reimagined as rich dynamic spaces that can be fully explored in multi-sensory ways--making them feel more realistic and natural. 3D spatial design and 360 degree XR experience design are becoming critical skills that add depth and dimension in the most intuitive ways.

We see companies racing to expand their capabilities in spatial design as a foundation for richer, more dimensional interactions across experiences.

Brand Twinning across Virtual and Physical Worlds

The future of any brand will exist as much in the virtual world as in the physical one. New immersive platforms are further enabling businesses and people to replicate their routines, interests, work environment, community, and even personal connections in digital spaces. Digital clothing, cars, pets, and virtual cities create a space for virtual relationships and a new kind of intimacy--all driving new spaces for customer engagement and loyalty.

Action Items

1 Focus on reducing friction in existing experiences as a first step to more seamless, immersive experiences.

2 Expand 3D spatial design capabilities and skills to prepare for more multidimensional brand experiences.

3 Avoid the hype and focus product strategies on alignment of immersive solutions that meet real human needs.

4 Establish multi-sensory product strategy and design guidelines to improve product immersion and engagement seamlessly.



COMMUNAL SYSTEMS

..... Distributed collaboration and decentralized systems will enable creator-centric communities and alternate economies that thrive on shared relationships.




Power to the People




Rebuilding **Communities**

Collaborative systems now underpin distributed services and remote teams – transforming work, healthcare and commerce. In turn, power is shifting from corporate centers to spread across virtual networks of individuals. Yet, people feel more siloed than ever. Humans are built to engage in spontaneous, real-life interactions. Virtual spaces must be augmented with real-world, physical interactions to help meet users' emotional needs and strengthen relationships.

As communal systems evolve, businesses will focus on enriching communities, not simply connected products. They must consciously nurture next-gen societies that facilitate closer relationships and enable thriving communities. With the rise of blockchain, Web 3 and the metaverse, we will witness a future that empowers people as the creators of their own destiny in community-driven economies.





Community is the essence and is at the core of everything. Web 3 is all about community ownership, an aggravated sense of passion amongst the members as they are the ones collectively running it.

Keerthana Ravichandran

Building crypto communities on Decentralized architecture – Web 3.0



Trends

Democratization of Influence

As more services and experiences are decentralized, the democratization of industries and organizations is accelerating. Systemic technologies like blockchain shift power from centralized, all powerful mega-corporations to the collective community network to secure, verify, and distribute value amongst all participants. Emerging member-owned communities without centralized leadership, known as DAOs, will expand into fully, autonomous, transparent, and global systems with the power to evolve brands and influence the path of new industries, sectors and products.

From Consumption to Co-Creation

People are no longer passive consumers of goods and services. They are becoming active creators of their futures across many types of products and services. Working together people and companies will collaborate to create, define, and evolve products in real-time. Rich, vibrant communities will emerge, borne of common interest.

We see these collaborative, democratized groups becoming important, defining forces of influence on physical goods and services.

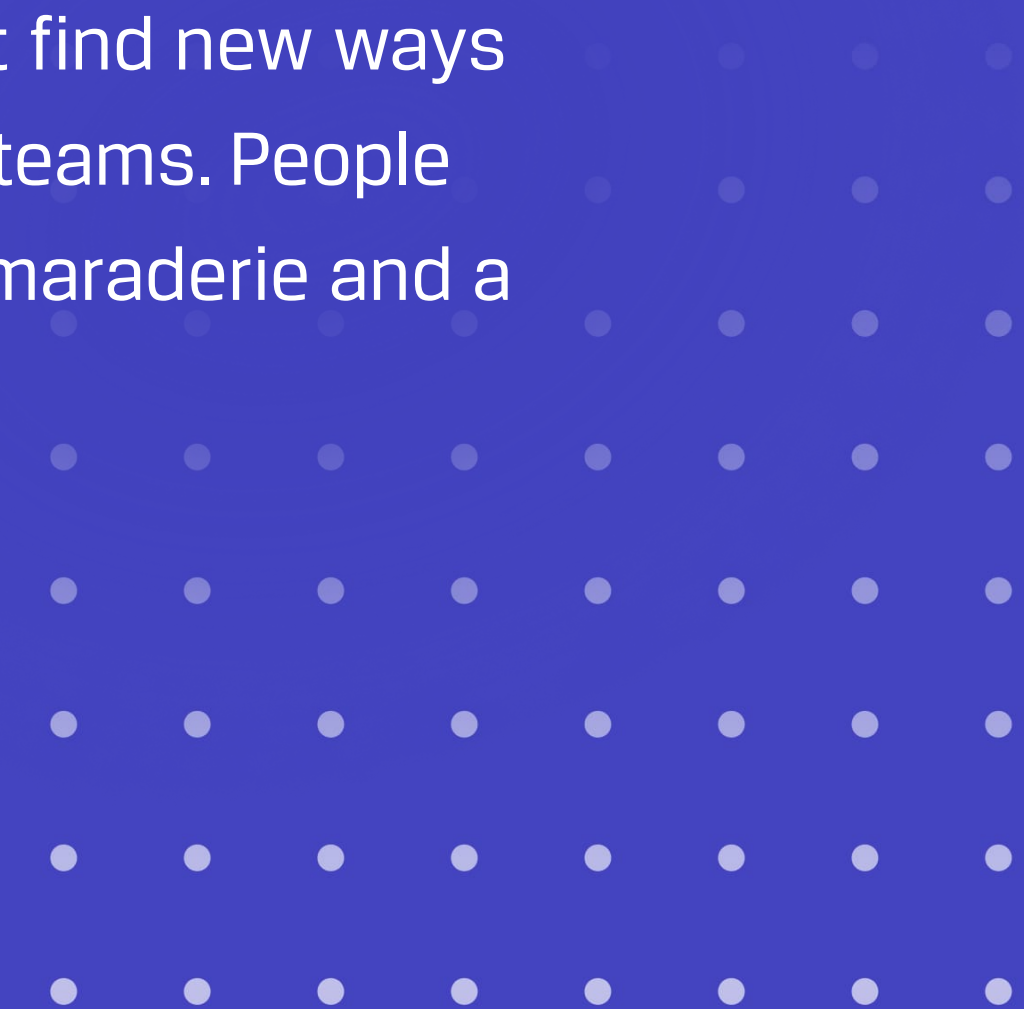
Building Communities not Companies

Business are rapidly changing focus from just building traditional companies to creating communal ecosystems that foster a culture of belonging while delivering meaningful products and services. For example, we are seeing brands begin to define new community spaces in the Metaverse.

Insights from the worlds of gaming and entertainment will influence how to craft compelling spaces that offer of excitement, connection, and fulfillment. Forward-looking companies are learning from human behavior principles and building optimal spaces for thriving virtual societies.

Transcending the Culture of Work

Corporate teams that have successfully transitioned to remote work will continue to embrace virtual connections as the first and primary way work. This reality is challenging employers to ensure productivity while enabling distributed teams feel authentically connected and enriched in this new culture. Without chats in the company kitchen, casual interactions at the office, companies must find new ways to create spontaneous and serendipitous teams. People still desire natural, casual interactions, camaraderie and a warm sense of belonging and social uplift.



Virtual Possessions are Driving New Economies

Systemic tech like cryptocurrency and NFTs are redefining value exchanges with new economies completely contained within new virtual worlds. These economic systems have taken root, and are here to stay. People are buying virtual clothing, cars, art, and other products to improve their digital lifestyle, social status, and community connections. Many consumer brands now consider their virtual world brand as essential to their overall revenue plan as their physical world brand, making virtual products that mirror real-world products a design imperative.

Accessibility and Inclusion in Hybrid Worlds

In the race to innovate, companies will need to consciously balance progress with ethics as new societal norms are defined. With over half of the world's people still lacking a quality internet connection, and unable to afford new technologies, we must ensure innovation and progress is equitable and inclusive. The discipline of ethical design is emerging as critical, and will continue to play an important role in a more conscious approach to immersive virtual spaces.

Authentic, Real World Relationships

While communities will grow and thrive online, in-person (face-to-face) connections will grow to rebalance and complement fully digital interactions. As knowledge workers struggle with digital fatigue we will see a series of reflexive actions intended to rebalance the digital and physical ratio.

We believe that travel interest will expand and casual meetups will become the new "company kitchen" moments. Augmented reality and multi-sensory interfaces will also expand in their ability to attract new users and enrich human interactions via hybrid venues and experiences.

Action Items

1 Companies must build communities that are connected by products or services and their customers who share common interests.

2 Embrace influencers and creators as leaders in product growth and promotion.

3 Facilitate moments that create and enable spontaneous relationship-building online and offline.

4 Balance equity and diversity across distributed communal experiences with user councils and shared insights.

Future-Forward

As the virtual and real-world converge, product design must be more "conscious". Every product must consider the individual, the community, the desired activity or outcome, and the simplest, most intuitive way for technology to support it. This year marks the next level of digital transformation: **The Era of Conscious Experiences**.

We see a strong trend toward meaningful interactions between technology and people. Clunky technology and extra features won't be tolerated by users, who will instead gravitate toward products that seamlessly integrate into their daily activities and objectives. As a result, technology will become more invisible – more humanized.

As technology learns to be more human, companies must evolve their innovation strategies and capabilities to consciously create product experience to support more insightful intelligence, natural immersion, communal systems and personal wellbeing. It will require radical shifts and transformative approaches to prepare for this future.

Conscious Experience Design will guide the path forward in this convergent world. We believe that "conscious" product designers will create breakthrough interactions that redefine how products are bought and sold, how customers and companies interact, and how people find community, a more natural balance, and meaning in a digitally driven world.

Meet Punchcut

Punchcut is a digital product design and innovation company that specializes in Conscious Experience Design. Our team comprises experts in the most advanced technologies and the most forward-looking design vision and methodologies. Our services are architected to spark more mindful future vision, power product design, and fuel team growth for our clients, team members and partners.

For more about [Conscious Experience Design](#), and the unique Punchcut approach, please reach out to engage us for a custom workshop, training session, future vision project or product design service.

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Reading List

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- **Cooperative Intelligence - A Humane Perspective**
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Transition Consciousness, October 2021
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COMMUNAL SYSTEMS

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- **Lesson for Building Online Communities in Web 3**
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- **Decentralized autonomous organizations (DAOs)**
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