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META

Virtual reality has promised us the future for years, but let's be honest, strapping a sizeable lump of technology to your face has never been the most appealing part of the experience. Meta thinks it has finally found a better way. Introduced in September (but overshadowed by other launches) Meta VR Glasses, are a rather ambitious new take on virtual reality that packs a personal cinema, gaming console, immersive sports arena and multi-screen workspace into a pair of glasses weighing just 100 grams. Yes, really!

After more than a decade developing VR technology, Meta is taking a significant step away from the traditional headset. Gone are the bulky straps and hefty hardware, replaced by something that looks considerably more like a pair of oversized spectacles. An accompanying pocket-sized compute puck, connected via an optical tether, takes care of the processing power, battery and storage, keeping the weight off your face. The result is a device five times lighter than the Meta Quest 3, designed to be worn comfortably for hours while allowing you to remain aware of your surroundings through open sides and full-colour passthrough.

Underneath those rather unconventional frames sits a 5K Infinite Display, built using micro-OLED panels delivering an impressive 37 pixels per degree. Compact pancake lenses provide the clarity needed for everything from blockbuster movies to reading tiny text across multiple virtual screens. Dolby Vision brings vibrant colours and punchy contrast, while Dolby Atmos spatial audio is built directly into the frames. Power comes courtesy of Qualcomm's new Snapdragon Reality Elite processor, with the separate puck providing up to three hours of continuous high-resolution media playback and 45W fast charging. Interaction is equally futuristic, with Meta AI integrated directly into the operating system. Rather than reaching for a controller, you can use your eyes, natural hand gestures or simply talk to the glasses. Opening applications, searching for content, rearranging your workspace or starting a film should all feel remarkably intuitive.

Entertainment is clearly one of Meta's biggest selling points. The VR Glasses are the first device to receive IMAX Enhanced certification, opening the door to an impressive catalogue of 3D films and immersive cinema experiences. Disney+ subscribers will be able to enjoy titles including The Avengers and Black Panther in 3D, while the Disney Immersive Cinema app, developed with Industrial Light & Magic, promises to transport viewers into familiar cinematic worlds. Tatooine, Avengers Tower and even the Scare Floor from Monsters, Inc. are among the environments on offer.

There is plenty for sports fans, too. Meta is partnering with ESPN, MLB, NBC Sports, TNT Sports and UFC to deliver more than 100 immersive live sporting events each year. Imagine watching a football match with an 180-degree view and feeling as though you're sitting right beside the pitch, without having to remortgage the house for the privilege.

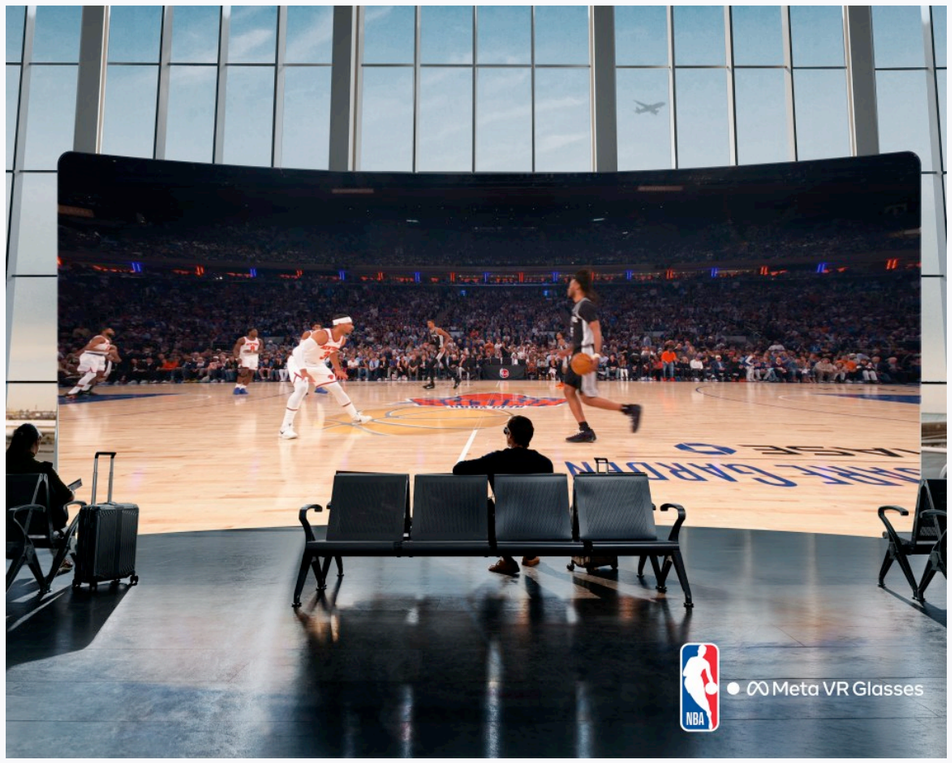
But Meta isn't stopping at entertainment. The glasses can transform any desk or flat surface into a virtual keyboard and touchpad, allowing you to create a private, multi-screen office wherever you happen to be. Whether you're working from a coffee shop, travelling on a train or enduring another long-haul flight, your workspace can travel with you. More than 75 games will be available at launch with hand-gesture controls, alongside hundreds more through Xbox Cloud Gaming.

Perhaps most intriguing is hologram calling. Using a photorealistic digital





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representation of yourself, complete with real-time facial expressions and reactions, you can appear in front of the person you're calling. Compatible with services such as WhatsApp and Zoom, it promises something considerably more personal than the usual video-call window.

Of course, there is one rather important comparison to make: Apple's Vision Pro. Apple's premium spatial computing headset has always been an impressive technological showcase, but its £3,499 starting price puts it firmly in luxury territory. Meta is taking a rather different approach, with its VR Glasses launching at $1,299.99 in the US, making the entry price less than half that of Apple's offering. That's a substantial difference, particularly when Meta is promising a similarly ambitious combination of entertainment, productivity and immersive experiences, albeit in a dramatically lighter form factor. UK pricing has yet to be confirmed.

Meta VR Glasses are expected to arrive in Spring 2027, and while they won't exactly be an impulse purchase, they could represent a significant shift in how we think about virtual reality. If Meta can deliver on its promises, the days of wearing what looks like a futuristic diving helmet to enjoy a bit of VR entertainment might finally be numbered.

MUSE



Meta is giving artificial intelligence a rather unexpected new look, and it's one that wouldn't feel out of place hanging from your keys or sitting alongside a collection of 1990s Tamagotchis. Meet the Muse Charm, a pocket-sized AI companion designed to bring the company's Muse assistant out of your smartphone and into the real world.

Unveiled by Mark Zuckerberg during Meta Connect 2026, the Muse Charm is certainly one of the more unusual gadgets to emerge this year. Resembling a chunky little smartwatch without the strap, or perhaps a modern-day digital pet, the device features a roughly 2-inch OLED touchscreen with a customisable animated character at its heart. Users can personalise their virtual companion, changing its appearance, outfits and voice, giving the whole experience a distinctly playful feel. Think Tamagotchi meets the AI age, only this time your digital companion can actually do something useful.

The idea behind the Charm is straightforward: make Meta's Muse AI assistant instantly accessible without having to reach for your phone, unlock it and open an app. A built-in fingerprint sensor allows users to activate the device and start chatting with Muse using their voice. Multiple microphones and built-in speakers handle the conversation, while front and rear cameras allow Muse to interpret its surroundings, analyse visual information and assist with tasks. It also supports photo and video capture, music and video playback, with USB-C providing the charging connection.

Unlike many smart accessories that rely heavily on a smartphone connection, the Muse Charm is designed to have its own connectivity, including 5G and Wi-Fi. This means it should be capable of keeping you connected to your AI companion while out and about. Meta is also reportedly planning to include up to 12 months of complimentary 5G data through Verizon, although the details of any UK equivalent remain unclear.

And what exactly can Muse do? Rather than simply answering questions like a conventional chatbot, Meta is positioning it as a personal AI agent capable of helping with everyday jobs, from managing emails and arranging travel to researching topics and carrying out online tasks. The Charm provides a dedicated way to access those capabilities, making AI feel less like an app and more like a little assistant that accompanies you throughout the day.

Pricing is beginning to emerge, too. Reports suggest Meta is considering a price of around $300 although UK/AU pricing has yet to be confirmed. The company is targeting a December release, just in time for Christmas.

Of course, whether we really need another device demanding our attention is another question entirely. Nevertheless, the Muse Charm is an intriguing experiment in making AI more personal, accessible and perhaps even a little lovable. Whether it becomes an everyday essential or simply an expensive digital pet remains to be seen, but one thing is certain: the humble keyring is getting a very modern upgrade.



Gaming is becoming an increasingly expensive hobby, and the days of waiting for a console to become cheaper as it gets older seem to be well and truly behind us. Whether you're a PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo or PC gaming fan, the cost of getting into the latest generation is heading in the wrong direction. And with Rockstar's long-awaited Grand Theft Auto VI finally arriving, the timing couldn't be more expensive.

Sony has pushed PS5 prices up significantly, with the standard model now costing £569.99 in the UK, while the Digital Edition sits at £519.99 and the PS5 Pro a rather hefty £789.99. Across the other side of the world, Australian gamers are feeling the pinch too, with recommended prices reaching AU$999.95 for the standard PS5, AU$919.95 for the Digital Edition and AU$1,399.95 for the Pro. Microsoft hasn't been shy about increasing its prices either, with the Xbox Series X reaching approximately £670 in the UK and AU$1,099 in Australia. Even Nintendo's relatively new Switch 2 has received a price increase, moving to AU$769.95 in Australia.

So what's going on? One of the biggest culprits is the soaring cost of RAM and memory storage. The explosion in artificial intelligence and the enormous data centres needed to power it have created unprecedented demand for memory chips. Manufacturers are increasingly prioritising lucrative AI contracts, squeezing supply and pushing component prices upwards. Unfortunately, those costs are finding their way into our living rooms, with console manufacturers passing an increasingly large share of the bill on to consumers.

And it's not just the traditional console manufacturers feeling the squeeze. Valve's Steam Machine, its ambitious living-room gaming PC designed to bring the flexibility of PC gaming to the television, has also been caught in the memory crisis. Originally expected to offer a more affordable alternative to a traditional gaming PC, the rising cost and limited availability of RAM and storage have pushed its eventual UK starting price to £879, with the 2TB model costing £1,149. Valve has openly acknowledged that its original pricing ambitions were no longer viable, while component shortages have also restricted the number of machines available. It seems even the mighty Valve isn't immune to the AI industry's appetite for memory.

The Steam Deck hasn't escaped either. Its OLED models have received substantial price increases, while availability has been affected by component shortages. Perhaps more surprisingly, the second-hand market has gone rather bonkers. In the UK, pre-owned Steam Deck OLED models have been spotted at CeX for more than their new retail prices, with a 512GB model listed at £700 against a new price of £649. That's quite a turnaround for a device that was originally celebrated for making portable PC gaming more affordable. Suddenly, holding on to your Steam Deck could prove to be a rather shrewd investment.

But there's another factor adding fuel to the fire: GTA VI. With millions of players eager to experience Rockstar's latest open-world epic, demand for Sony's more powerful PS5 Pro surged. Stock has become increasingly scarce in the run-up to launch, with retailers struggling to keep the console on their shelves.

Things have become particularly ridiculous in the US, where GameStop has been listing pre-owned PS5 Pro consoles for as much as $1,399.99, with special editions reaching $1,499.99. That's right, a second-hand console costing considerably more than a brand-new one. GameStop has even reportedly acknowledged that the higher pre-owned pricing is intentional. It seems the combination of limited supply and GTA fever has created a rather lucrative opportunity for retailers.

The irony is that just when gamers have one of the biggest reasons in years to upgrade, the price of admission has never been higher. With memory costs remaining a concern and demand showing little sign of slowing, we may need to rethink what constitutes a reasonable price for a games console. Perhaps the most expensive part of playing GTA VI isn't the game itself, but getting hold of the hardware to play it.

WHO NEEDS VR?



While Meta, Apple and Samsung continue to grab the headlines with their increasingly ambitious augmented and virtual reality glasses, one company has been quietly carving out a rather interesting niche of its own. VITURE may not have quite the same marketing muscle as the tech giants, but its latest Pro 2 XR glasses deserve some attention. Rather than promising to turn the world around us into a digital playground, VITURE has concentrated on something arguably much more practical: putting a huge, high-quality screen right in front of your eyes.

The Pro 2 represents a significant evolution of the company's portable display concept, combining Sony Micro-OLED technology with its latest UltraClarity 3.0 optical system. The result is a pair of surprisingly lightweight glasses, weighing just 63g, capable of projecting a virtual screen equivalent to an enormous 146 inches when viewed from four metres away. Each eye receives a Full HD 1920 x 1080 image, with a refresh rate of up to 120Hz, a 50-degree field of view and an impressive perceived brightness of up to 1,600 nits. In other words, this isn't simply a gimmicky little screen for watching the odd YouTube video.

Connect them to a compatible USB-C smartphone, laptop or handheld gaming device and you have an instant personal cinema. Fancy watching a film on a long-haul flight without bothering the person sitting next to you? No problem. Want to enjoy your Steam Deck games on something considerably larger than its built-in display? Simply plug in and play. The glasses even feature integrated open-ear spatial audio, so there's no immediate need to reach for a pair of headphones.

VITURE has also paid considerable attention to comfort, something that can easily be overlooked when manufacturers become obsessed with display specifications. The slimmer frame, interchangeable nose pads and adjustable fit make the Pro 2 more accommodating for longer viewing sessions. There's also independent built-in diopter adjustment for each eye, covering prescriptions from 0 to -5.0D, meaning many short-sighted users can enjoy the experience without prescription inserts. An SGS A+ eye-care certification adds further reassurance.

For those wanting to go beyond simply mirroring a display, VITURE's SpaceWalker software introduces spatial features, including the ability to position virtual screens in your surroundings using three degrees of freedom (3DoF). This is particularly useful when working with a laptop, allowing you to create a more expansive virtual workspace without carrying an additional monitor. Compatibility with devices such as the Steam Deck and Nintendo Switch 2 also makes the Pro 2 an interesting proposition for portable gaming, although some consoles require VITURE's additional docking accessories.

Of course, these aren't quite the fully fledged augmented reality experiences promised by the likes of Apple Vision Pro or Meta's latest smart glasses. You won't be interacting with holographic furniture or pinning virtual windows around your living room. But perhaps that's precisely why the Pro 2 is so appealing. VITURE isn't trying to reinvent how we interact with technology; it's simply making our existing devices considerably more enjoyable to use.

In a market increasingly obsessed with artificial intelligence, cameras and futuristic AR experiences, it's refreshing to see a company concentrating on getting the basics right. The price is not bad either with the displays avaiale starting £379.00/AU$

AI SCANDAL



The artificial intelligence revolution has a rather uncomfortable Achilles' heel, and it comes in the shape of a computer chip. While the likes of OpenAI, Google and Microsoft race to develop increasingly sophisticated AI systems, much of the technology powering that progress relies on one company: NVIDIA. And that level of dependence is beginning to raise some serious questions about the future of the industry.

At the centre of it all is NVIDIA founder and CEO Jensen Huang, arguably one of the most influential figures in modern technology. His company has become the dominant supplier of the powerful graphics processors used to train and run today's AI models. Its CUDA software ecosystem is equally important, providing the tools and infrastructure developers have come to rely upon. In short, NVIDIA isn't simply selling computer chips; it is supplying much of the infrastructure.

However, Huang himself has recently become the subject of an extraordinary corporate drama. Following revelations surrounding personal relationships and allegations involving an individual suspected by US intelligence of having links to Chinese espionage, Huang resigned as CEO on the 12th November. NVIDIA appointed CFO Colette Kress as interim CEO and began looking for a permanent replacement.

Yet, in a remarkable turnaround, NVIDIA's board unanimously reinstated Huang on the 23rd November, following support from figures including US President Donald Trump. The board said discussions with Huang and input from senior US government officials had satisfied it that his return posed no national security risk. An independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding his departure remains ongoing. His return may reassure investors, but it also raises uncomfortable questions about corporate accountability and political influence over one of the world's most important technology companies.

NVIDIA's enormous influence has also placed it firmly in the middle of an increasingly uncomfortable geopolitical battle between the United States and China. Washington has introduced restrictions on the export of advanced AI processors, concerned that access to this technology could accelerate China's military capabilities and technological ambitions. Huang has previously argued that overly restrictive policies could ultimately benefit Chinese competitors by encouraging the development of domestic alternatives.

The risks extend well beyond international politics. NVIDIA's dominance creates a significant vulnerability for the entire AI industry. If chip supplies become restricted, manufacturing is disrupted or export controls tighten further, companies developing AI could face higher costs, delayed projects and reduced access to the computing power they desperately need.

There is also the question of competition. When so much of the industry depends on a single supplier, innovation can become constrained by that company's technology, pricing and development priorities. Smaller AI companies and independent researchers may find themselves increasingly disadvantaged, unable to compete with the enormous financial resources required to secure the latest hardware.

Perhaps the biggest lesson is that the future of artificial intelligence isn't simply about developing cleverer algorithms or building larger language models. It is also about ensuring that the infrastructure supporting these technologies remains secure, accessible and competitive.