

***Reddit
Hot Take:***

Love Goes Virtual

How Virtual Reality is creating faster and deeper bonds while dating, but cannot replace in-person chemistry.



TL;DR

Redditors are turning to virtual reality to find **love**. They're forming **faster, deeper bonds** by doing the things they love, *together*.

But they can't stay in the metaverse forever - love needs to find solid ground.



Marketer Implications:

In an increasingly lonely world, people are looking for ways to connect. Here's how brands can organically weave into the new landscape of virtual dating:

- 01. Authentic Self:** *A person's avatar is a visual representation of their chosen identity. Enable VR enthusiasts to show up to first dates in the most authentic version of themselves, from highly custom clothing options, props, and bodies.*
- 02. Fandom Love:** *There is no greater bond than shared fandoms. Unite possible matches with activities, events, or settings based on their favorite IP. Star Wars® lovers can pod race or the Nintendo® obsessed can wander Peach's castle together.*
- 03. Date Night:** *The whimsy and magic that comes from VR dates are due to the full immersion in their setting. Do not leave any stone unturned when designing the perfect world or activity for people to experience together, ensuring that people get lost in the magic.*



NOW

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT AVATAR

TREND SUMMARY: *By giving singles in VR all the control, from avatar appearance to whimsical dates, faster and deeper romantic connections are possible.*

The popularity of dating in the metaverse is on the rise, with many finding love. Being the master of your appearance avatar - social anxiety and poor self-esteem melt away - allowing your personality to shine. With insecurities put on the back burner - connections begin with verbal intimacy and communication, rather than *immediate* physical chemistry.

Along with this newfound confidence comes deeper and *faster* connections. Multi-sensory immersive dates that enable two people to experience a shared interest together are a researched recipe for chemistry. Do you love astronomy? Let us float through the stars together.

Fostering verbal communication and customized shared experiences make VR an unlikely - but successful - matchmaker.

1. GlobalWebIndex, US, Q4, 2021. *Versus general Internet population.

2. SOURCE: Reddit Internal Global, 2022, Virtual Reality Interest Group. 4/16/21 - 10/13/21 vs 10/14/21 - 4/11/22

3. Match.com, "Singles In America", 2021. <https://www.singlesinamerica.com/>

4. Razorfish & VICE, "The Metaverse: A View from Inside", 2022.

+125%

Single redditors are more likely to want to engage in the metaverse to **meet new people** ¹

+249%

increase in redditors mentioning **"dating"** within VR interest group in the last 6 mo.²

**Metaverse
Matchmaking**

83%

Of US singles want **emotional maturity** in a partner over physical attractiveness³

40%

Gen Z Gamers **gain self-confidence** from the metaverse⁴



Redditors will flock to the inherent relationship-building benefits of VR to address their dating woes

Redditors are more likely to use online dating platforms if they facilitate the following:



Personalization



Joint Activities



More Match Choices



Better People Vetting

More than other social platforms



r/VRchat

Nice date spots?

Are there any good worlds to take a guy on a date in the quest 2 version?

Romantic spots, fun activities, etc.



If you both like detective games plus very beautiful views it's Luminescent Ledge. there's a world as well where you can fish out constellations then throw them up into the sky and it's beautiful and romantic too.



Sky Camp by Roctopus is something I've used before. Camp fire, some tents. There's a floating boat travelling around the map which is good to have a long conversation on.



Starfarer is a train going through space, it has a great comfy atmosphere



My gf took me to some places with like shooting stars and floating candles it was really nice, you can get some cool pictures too from that.



THE ORIGIN:

ESCAPE TO VIRTUAL REALITY

Months of strict global COVID lockdowns restricted the ability to spend time with anyone outside their immediate social circles. Extroverts and introverts alike longed for opportunities to *go out* and meet new people.

Virtual Reality headsets were the perfect gateway to new and exciting worlds that evaded the risks of a global pandemic. Isolated people were able to re-engage in normal activities where meeting new people is almost required - concerts, bar-hopping, and virtual house parties.

Meeting people from across the globe was not the only benefit, they were able to save time and money while doing so. No more \$15 cocktails or 45-minute train rides.

The most open-minded even found ... Love?

From: Perpetual Lockdown To Global Dance Parties

1. "IDC, Global AR/VR Headset Market Quarterly Tracking Report, Q4 2021"
2. GlobalWebIndex, US, 2021.
3. Reddit Internal Data, Global Mentions, 2019-2022. Month of Mar. 2020 vs Month of Mar. 2022

+92%

Increase in **VR headset sales**
YoY ¹

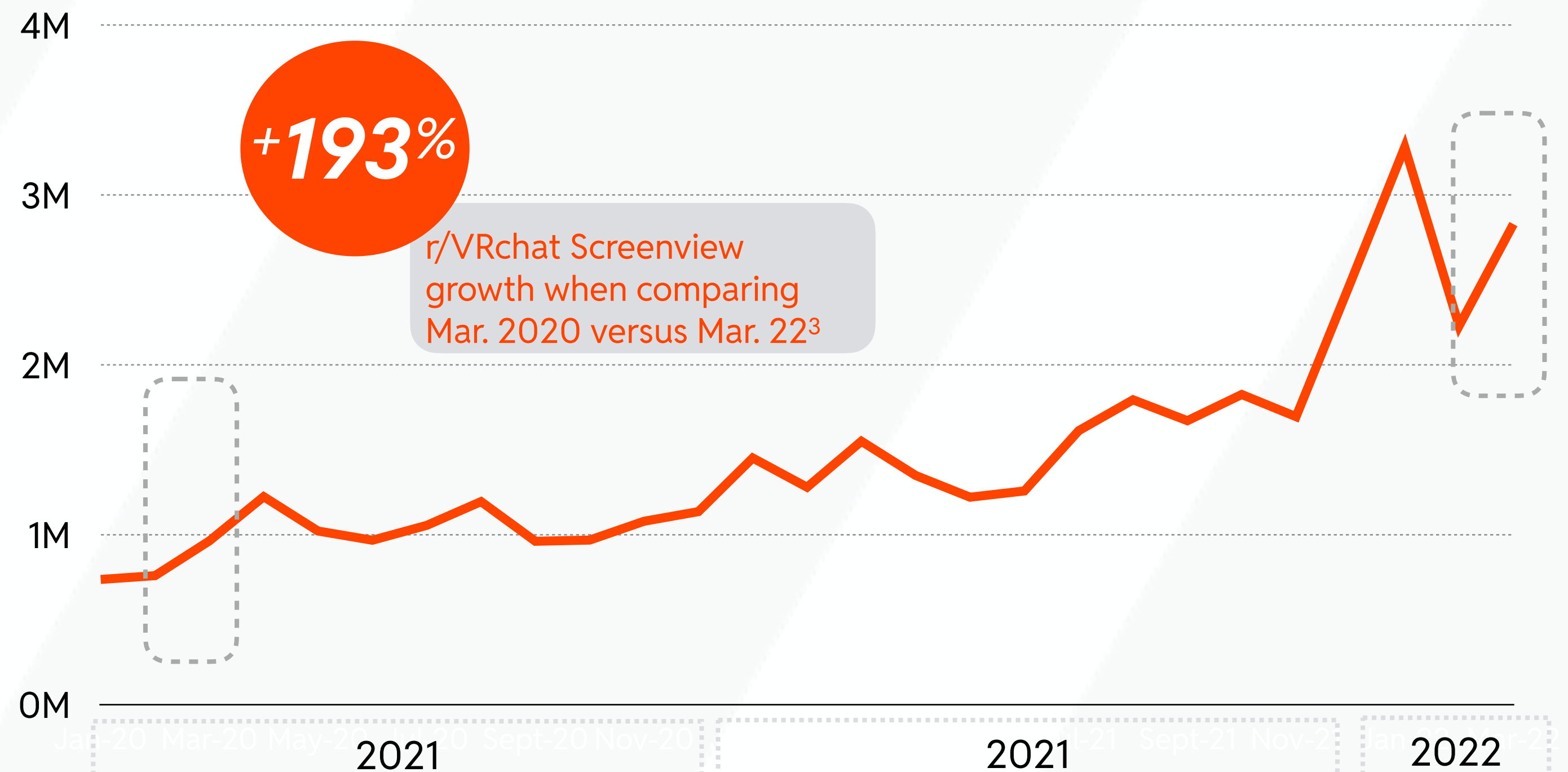
42%

Of Redditors prefer to **spend their time online** rather than reality

2x

Redditors are twice as likely to be interested in "**joining the metaverse**" vs. Gen Pop ²

r/VRChat Screenviews



The widespread global lockdowns of 2020 & 2021 exasperated a growing epidemic ... loneliness.

Simultaneously, the popularity of VR headsets increased...

1 in 3

Americans reported feeling high frequency of **loneliness** in 2021 ²



1. eMarketer, "US AR VR Users", 2022.
2. Harvard, "Loneliness in America", 2021.



NEXT: AN EVOLVING TREND

TRUE LOVE: VIRTUAL & REALITY

Love may have been found in the metaverse, but they can't escape reality forever. Translating an exclusively online relationship into a balanced physical and virtual relationship is imperative to avoid heartbreak.

Success stories come from couples who made long-term plans to physically be with their partners. Couples need to experience physical intimacy and nonverbal communication to ensure they can last past the honeymoon phase. Only then can love truly last.

That doesn't mean they cannot weave in larger-than-life VR dates. Research shows that having shared interests as a couple is a recipe for a happy partnership, and VR offers new ways for partners to experience those together.

Even for the VR non-believers, exploring limitless and whimsical worlds can strengthen any relationship.

<5mo.

Avg. length **long-distance** relationships will last¹

64%

Of couples with **shared interests** believe this helps their marriage succeed ²

-41%

Redditors are **less likely** to describe their romantic relationship as **“traditional”**³

r/VRchat

[Discussion] Any couples who met in VRchat?



I met my ex in VRC. We were together for about 6 months before breaking up sadly due to the long-distance and due to our living situations at the time.

There wasn't hope any time soon to move in (there were other issues as well but oh well).

We met up twice though, once in my country and once in his and it was great while it lasted.

1. Long Distance Relationship Statistics 2021, <https://www.longdistancerelationshipstatistics.com/>
2. Geiger, A.W., & Livingston, G. (2019, February 13). 8 facts about love and marriage in America.
3. GlobalWebIndex, US, 2021. *Versus General Internet Population.



WANT TO HOLD MY HAND?

*“Research evidence tells us that the presence of **intimacy** in our lives — feeling understood, accepted and cared for — strongly influences our overall **physical and emotional well-being**.*

*Intimacy builds from many sources, including the quality of a partner's responsiveness during conversation, the presence of empathy, acts of kindness and generosity, plus — and this is often overlooked — the **ongoing experience of physical touch**.”*

— Family Institute Organization, Northwestern University



IT IS THE START OF SOMETHING NEW

r/VRchat

How does dating in vr chat differ from real life?

I've always wondered this, and as the title says is there any difference in romantic experiences or dating in vr chat compared to in real life (other than physically apart). I've always had the assumption that relationships in the game don't last long.



There's definitely a difference between those two... and how long they last really depends on the couple. The only way it could possibly work out is if they intend on meeting each other IRL one day. I met my fiancé in VRChat and I moved in with him a few weeks ago. ❤️



You're looking at an avatar with limited expressions, not a real person. Apart from that dating can be pretty fun :)



I'd say dating in VR chat is fine for going with someone you are already dating in real life to change things up or someone you plan on meeting up in real life with if you want something a bit more unique and socially distanced for a first date. Don't go down the path of dating in VR solely, that way lies pain



FUTURE

IMMORTAL

From meeting like-minded new friends to finding the love of their life, redditors are some of the first to see VR's potential to improve their social life.

The parallel evolution of VR and AI technology will open social possibilities beyond people still living. What if you could spend time with loved ones... even after they've passed on?

The ability and lure to immortalize yourself through AI analyzed behaviors and mannerisms is possible in the not too distant future. Rather than replaying old videos and voicemails to feel the *presence* of loved ones who have passed, it will be possible to spend time and create new memories with them.

This new social possibility is a double-edged sword. Being able to spend time with those dearest to us, even in death, could at first serve as a nice balm to grief. Or at worst, lure people away from having more balanced social lives with the people still here on earth.

1. Reddit Internal Global, Family & Relationships Interest Group, 4/16/21 - 10/13/21 vs 10/14/21 - 4/11/22
2. Reddit Internal Global, Mar 2020 vs. Mar 2022 in r/GriefSupport

+80%

increase in mentions of **miss her/**
his presence in the last 6 mo ¹

+201%

increase in screen views to
r/griefsupport 2020 vs 2022²

r/metaverse

Bring back the dead

What about bringing dead people back alive in the metaverse? Would it be possible? Make a 3D scan of people place the 3d scan in the metaverse and be able to see your beloved one who passed away.

Even more, maybe we are able to add their voice from recorded sound files before they pass away. What are your thoughts?



It will be like a sophisticated NPC with the skin and voice of the person and an AI that will learn from all his/her data input during his/her life, generating conversations and reactions from it.



WANT TO HOLD MY HAND?

*“What if we get 10-20 plus years from now ... loved ones who had an avatar of themselves in the metaverse... they pass away [and] their profile **continues to live on in the metaverse...***

*... You can go in there and communicate with their avatar in some kind of **legacy mode.**”*

— Redditor, r/metaverse



Thanks!

Want to Learn More?

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