



Metaverse, AI, and Robotics: A Glimpse into the Future of Finance

As tools like artificial intelligence (AI), virtual and augmented reality, and advanced robotics continue to evolve at a rapid pace, many professionals across industries find themselves playing catch-up in an effort to understand the near-term and long-term impacts of these technologies on both their work and day-to-day lives. Are the increasing capabilities of modern AI systems something to be feared or received with open arms? How will interacting in the so-called “metaverse” make the real world a better place? What would a meaningful relationship between a human and a robot actually look like?

To address these critical questions, particularly as they relate to the increasingly complex worlds of modern finance and insurance, Egon Zehnder’s Directors Development Program held a session for the participating board directors titled “Metaverse, AI, and Robotics: A Glimpse into the Future of Finance”. Leading the discussion was **Harsha Kikkeri**, a former engineer for

Microsoft Robotics and founder and CEO of HoloSuit, the world’s first full-body motion tracking suit with an ever-expanding variety of innovative and potentially transformative use cases.

Here are the top takeaways from the conversation:

Defining the Problem

To understand the dynamic interplay between any set of complex technologies, it’s critical to first identify and understand the particular problem they’re attempting to solve, as well as how each individual tool stands to contribute to the solution.

When it comes to the metaverse, AI, and robotics, Kikkeri pointed to the growing need to create an accessible digital infrastructure to reduce or entirely eliminate the limitations of physical space and time. More specifically, Harsha’s vision for the future is one in which human beings can teach and learn any skill regardless of their physical location.

“It’s about combining the physical and digital aspects of experience,” he said. “Instead of typing to an AI chatbot and expecting an answer, you can actually visualize the answer and even move around and interact with holographic, 3D representations of real physical objects and spaces [in the metaverse].”

This concept has in fact already been brought to life in a variety of areas, including electrical and tactical training, agriculture, rehabilitation, heavy equipment training, and even in the controlling and training of robots at the International Space Station. To help cultivate a better understanding of how this technology actually works in practice, Kikkeri introduced attendees to his own innovative solution, HoloSuit, explaining its novelty and potential through a series of impressive real-world use cases and even videos demonstrating the suit’s existing capabilities in action.

What is HoloSuit?

Developed by Kikkeri and his team after his departure from Microsoft Robotics, HoloSuit is a full-body motion tracking suit with haptic sensors which leverages AI to create a holographic representation of the wearer, either in the metaverse or projected in a real-world environment, or to control the physical movements of a robot in real-time. Even in its earliest iterations, HoloSuit allowed a disabled person to move about freely in the form of a robot during a trip to the White House to meet President Obama and was even used by Google CEO Sundar Pichai to deliver a TEDx talk when he was unable attend the event in person.

Over the years, HoloSuit was built out to include an expanding variety of different technologies, including its own metaverse-based digital infrastructure in which people from all over the world can interact. Complete with different environments designed to help people acquire a specific set of skills or knowledge, “Hollow Lands” fuses the digital metaverse with real robots, objects, and people holographically superimposed onto the real world.

As one can imagine, the potential use cases here are virtually endless, whether it’s helping people learn recreational skills like athletics, providing safe virtual environments to perform medical experiments, or optimizing production and manufacturing skills through interaction with holographic factories or agricultural landscapes, to name only a few. In fact, Kikkeri’s technology is already being utilized by General Electric for factory training and in military settings to simulate a variety of operations and combat scenarios.

As for the utilization of such solutions in the finance and insurance industries, Kikkeri noted that while these areas are typically slower to adopt new technologies—and rightfully so, given regulatory barriers and the need to prove maturity—the possibilities remain equally expansive, and in fact the combined use of AI, robotics, and the metaverse could very soon come to redefine how we think about banking and credit in the digital age.

Banking in the Metaverse

Given that the world of finance is already embedded in almost everything we produce and interact with across industries, it arguably benefits the most from the use of rapidly advancing technologies.

From delivering efficiency optimization and improved risk reduction to more intelligent, data-based approaches to lending and insurance, we could very well be on the precipice of a significant and positive transformation.

For example, Harsha points out how AI use cases are already being developed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of customers seeking loans. Similarly, tools like digital and biometric identification help us vastly improve processes around security and fraud detection. However, by taking these concepts a step further using technologies like the HoloSuit alongside virtual objects and environments, the possibilities of what can be accomplished in the finance and insurance spaces expand considerably.

One specific example Harsha provided was the ability to conceive of a new way to issue credit using a combination of metaverse infrastructure and digital currencies, such as WorldCoin. Created by Sam Altman, founder and CEO of OpenAI, WorldCoin is a form of currency tied directly to the unique identity of its owner. According to Harsha, this could help solve the problem of issuing micro-loans for short-term educational programs and skill building. More specifically, a

currency like WorldCoin could be issued and spent exclusively in the metaverse, allowing each activity and interaction to be immediately authenticated.

In the realm of insurance, the potential use cases for a technology like the HoloSuit are potentially even more transformative. For example, doctors in the U.S. frequently acquire malpractice insurance to protect against potential accidents that happen under their care, and insurance providers often require evidence that a doctor has been trained in a certain way. Using the HoloSuit, a doctor could perform various operations safely on a virtual patient—represented as a holographic AI avatar—providing insurance agencies with comprehensive, visualized proof of the doctor’s training and capabilities.

Beyond more efficient lending and risk-reduction, this technology also has significant implications for the future of everyday banking. For example, just as soldiers can leverage the HoloSuit to simulate and learn from interactions on the battlefield, bank employees can be trained to interact with and deliver optimal service to different types of customers. Moreover, this same process can be applied in the context of insurance agents, who can practice on AI avatars to learn how to deal with a variety of complex insurance claims.

Importantly, Kikkeri was careful throughout his presentation to remind us that each of these use cases involve an active collaboration between humans and technology, as opposed to a surrender of our will and operations to intelligent machines. Nothing could be more important than trust in the realms

of finance and insurance, and these technologies not only preserve that distinctly human ability to build trust, but actually may provide an opportunity to enhance it.

“Instead of being scared by these technologies,” he said, “we should be asking how we can collaborate with robots and AI to actually make the world a better place.”

Overall, Harsha painted the portrait of a future in which powerful technologies like AI, the metaverse, and robotics break

down the limitations of our physical world, leading to new and exciting possibilities in finance, insurance, and far beyond. But most importantly, he showed that despite widespread misunderstandings and even fear around the implications of certain technological advancements, when we acknowledge the potential and insist on leveraging these tools for the greater good, there’s no reason they can’t be instrumental in our efforts to leave this world much better than we found it.

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