

Microsoft Mesh for Teams Delivers Metaverse Meeting Experience



The world fell apart, and business adapted. Employees have by and large adjusted to collaborating over distance. And the technology that powers that collaboration continues to evolve in powerful ways. Earlier this month, for example, Microsoft announced Mesh for Teams which delivers a metaverse meeting experience designed to improve connections and productivity.

Strengthening Teams by Bridging the Gap between Physical and Digital

While workplaces have transitioned relatively well to remote and [hybrid work](#), the switch has brought significant challenges. Employees miss the more casual hallway encounters and the opportunity to read body language from across the room. And they tire of constant meetings that place them eternally in front of a camera or talking to a screen full of static pictures.

Enter the metaverse. Gamers have grown comfortable operating in the cybersphere, moving their avatars through digital worlds and interacting with digital representations of real people. Mesh for Teams takes that idea and applies it to business, bringing colleagues together in the same virtual room in a way that feels more present.

Mesh aims to accomplish this with personalized avatars interacting in immersive spaces. Simulating a physical meeting in a virtual space evens out the playing field, reducing the disparity between in-office and [remote workers](#).



Personalized Metaverse Meeting Avatars

As a first step, Mesh for Teams will allow users to join meetings using a personalized avatar. This gives a more expressive option for users who prefer not to be on camera but still want to project themselves as engaged. Initially, the program will use audio cues to drive animation in the form of facial animation and hand gestures.

As the technology develops, Microsoft hopes to bring its AI technologies to the game. With AI, the camera will be able to read head movements and expressions, which the avatar will mimic. This will allow participants to feel and appear present, regardless of their physical location.

Immersive Spaces

A second key component of Mesh for Teams involves immersive spaces. These digital spaces will resemble physical locations such as conference rooms and even less formal spaces like networking lounges. And they will provide another opportunity for collaboration, in addition to chats, video calls and in-person meetings.

When Microsoft first releases Mesh for Teams, it will include a variety of pre-built immersive spaces for different purposes. In time, organizations will have the ability to build their own customized metaverses within Teams.

For instance, a team could create its own conference room, posting a project list on one wall, a whiteboard on another and product prototypes on the table. Virtual spaces can be designed as digital twins of their physical counterparts or with a décor and amenities entirely their own.

The Best of Mesh and Teams for a Metaverse Meeting Experience

Announced in March, Mesh is Microsoft's metaverse platform that allows users to experience shared holographic experiences. By combining Mesh with Teams, organizations can leverage the powerful office productivity features of [Microsoft 365](#) in a much more connected and personal way.

The combination brings a new level of immersion to critical collaboration. Colleagues from multiple locations inhabit the same shared space. Driven by animated avatars that resemble their human counterparts, the experience brings a level of spontaneity and personality that developers hope will spark creativity.



Connect from Anywhere with Mesh for Teams

While mixed reality may not live within the comfort level of all workers, users will have the ability to access Mesh from any device with a Mesh-enabled app. This includes HoloLens 2 and VR headsets, but also includes mobile phones, PCs, and tablets. This means users can connect from any location without purchasing new equipment.

Microsoft indicated that users will be able to access Mesh-enabled metaverse meeting capabilities in Teams early in 2022. Rollout will begin with personalized avatars and continue with standard, pre-built immersive spaces. Over time, customized immersive spaces and AI capabilities will drive more robust collaborative features.

[Contact the Microsoft experts](#) at Messaging Architects to learn how to get the most out of Microsoft Teams using Mesh and other new productivity features.