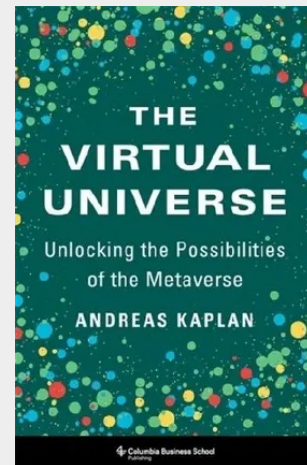


Kaplan

The Virtual Universe

Unlocking the Possibilities of the Metaverse

Will we one day inhabit virtual worlds? From the buzz around Second Life in the early 2000s to Mark Zuckerberg's much-hyped quest for the metaverse, there seems to be a clear pattern. After being touted as revolutionary, virtual worlds fail to meet expectations and fade into obscurity. Yet the dream of an immersive, independent, and interconnected virtual social universe still has the potential to transform the economy, reshape society, and profoundly affect the future of humanity. This book contends that despite shifting trends, the virtual universe remains crucial to the technology of tomorrow—and might arrive sooner than we think. Through vivid examples and detailed case studies, Andreas Kaplan, a pioneering researcher of virtual worlds since the early 2000s, provides a comprehensive examination of the metaverse and its far-reaching implications. He delves into key technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and extended reality and discusses ethical issues around privacy, identity, and governance. Kaplan examines business models, digital ownership, and corporate strategies alongside applications spanning marketing, research and development, human resources, and supply chain management. The book concludes by contrasting potential futures, from utopian promise (the Metaverse) to dystopian peril (the Metaworld) and everything in between. Written in an engaging, reader-friendly style, The Virtual Universe goes beyond the hype—and the doubting—to uncover the true potential of the metaverse.



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