



ORIGINAL

Internet search trends about the Metaverse

Tendencias de búsquedas en internet sobre el Metaverso

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: the metaverse phenomenon is vast and continuously grows and develops. Knowing what position the metaverse has been occupying as a theme on the web allows us to achieve precise results on information needs.

Objective: to characterize the Internet search trends on the metaverse from 2020 to 2022.

Methods: a retrospective longitudinal descriptive study was carried out on Internet searches for the term “Metaverse”. The research was carried out with the support of the Google Trends tool.

Results: the interest on the web for the metaverse was high as of October 2021. A tendency to decrease interest in the subject is observed. China was the country with the most significant interest; the term I had the most relationship within searches was “non-fungible token”.

Conclusions: It can be concluded that the term generated a high interest that has decreased, in line with the slow reception that technology is having.

Keywords: Search Interest; Internet; Metaverse; Search Trends.

RESUMEN

Introducción: el fenómeno metaverso es amplio y está en continuo crecimiento y desarrollo. Conocer qué posición ha estado ocupando el metaverso como temática en la web, permite alcanzar resultados precisos sobre las necesidades de información.

Objetivo: caracterizar las tendencias de búsquedas en internet sobre el metaverso, en el período del 2020 al 2022.

Métodos: se realizó un estudio descriptivo longitudinal retrospectivo sobre las búsquedas en internet del término “Metaverse”. La investigación se realizó con el apoyo de la herramienta *Google Trends*.

Resultados: el interés en la web por el metaverso fue elevado a partir del octubre del 2021. Se observa una tendencia a la disminución del interés por el tema. El país con mayor interés fue China y el termino que he tenido más relación en las búsquedas fue “Token no fungible”.

Conclusiones: se puede concluir que el término generó un alto interés que ha decrecido, en consonancia con la lenta acogida que está teniendo la tecnología.

Palabras clave: Interés de Búsqueda; Internet; Metaverso; Tendencias de Búsqueda.

INTRODUCTION

With the announcement by Mark Zuckerberg at the Facebook Annual Connect Conference on October 28, 2021, the change of stage that this social network would undergo due to the incorporation of the companies linked to this social network into the world of the metaverse caused a significant impact in the global media.

At that time, the metaverse was predicted to lead the internet to another development phase.^(1,2)

Different definitions have been coined for the metaverse. It can be defined as a new virtual world where people can interact and participate in experiences in an unreal environment using virtual representations called Non-Fungible Tokens (NFT).⁽³⁾

Metaverse is a three-dimensional virtual world where avatars represent users and participate in political, economic, social, and cultural activities. The metaverse is used in the sense of a virtual world based on the daily life of people with the coexistence of the real and the unreal.⁽⁴⁾

It is considered a unified and interoperable space that will bring together existing virtual worlds.^(5,6,7) The metaverse phenomenon is broad and is in continuous growth and development, which is why new definitions and concepts are raised based on the added technological components and their functionality.⁽¹⁾

Adopting the metaverse on a global scale implies achieving more excellent knowledge about it due to its applicability to the most diverse sectors of today's society. In this sense, this article proposes to characterize the Internet search trends on the metaverse, from 2020 to 2022.

METHODS

A retrospective longitudinal descriptive study of Internet searches on metaverse between 2020 and 2022 was carried out. The study was carried out with the support of the Google Trends platform (<https://trends.google.es>).

The study included in the population the total number of searches carried out between 2020 and 2022 for the specific term “Metaverse”. The term was used in English for a more general scope worldwide.

The study variables were: search volume; relative search volume (VRB), which consists of the normalized number between 0 and 100 of search interest, country, and related search terms.

The data was downloaded and processed in Microsoft Excel. Statistical methods were used for time series studies: relative change of groups of values to determine the variation in time of a variable and exponential smoothing: to forecast future values.

RESULTS

The searches carried out on the web on the metaverse did not have considerable value until 2021, specifically, the four months from September to December. With the mathematical method of the relative change of extreme values, it can be verified that the average number of searches by quarters of 2020 increased by 241 % compared to the average by quarters of 2021.

The most significant searches were conducted between January and February 2022. Search interest reached its maximum value in VRB in October 2021 and the first months of 2022. As of March 2022, interest in this topic decreased; it has had a slight downward trend since then (figure 1).

The forecast for May 2023 indicates that search interest may decrease to a value of 5. The confidence interval of 95 % confidence is too broad in this case, so there is no reliable probability that the forecast will hold compliance (figure 1).

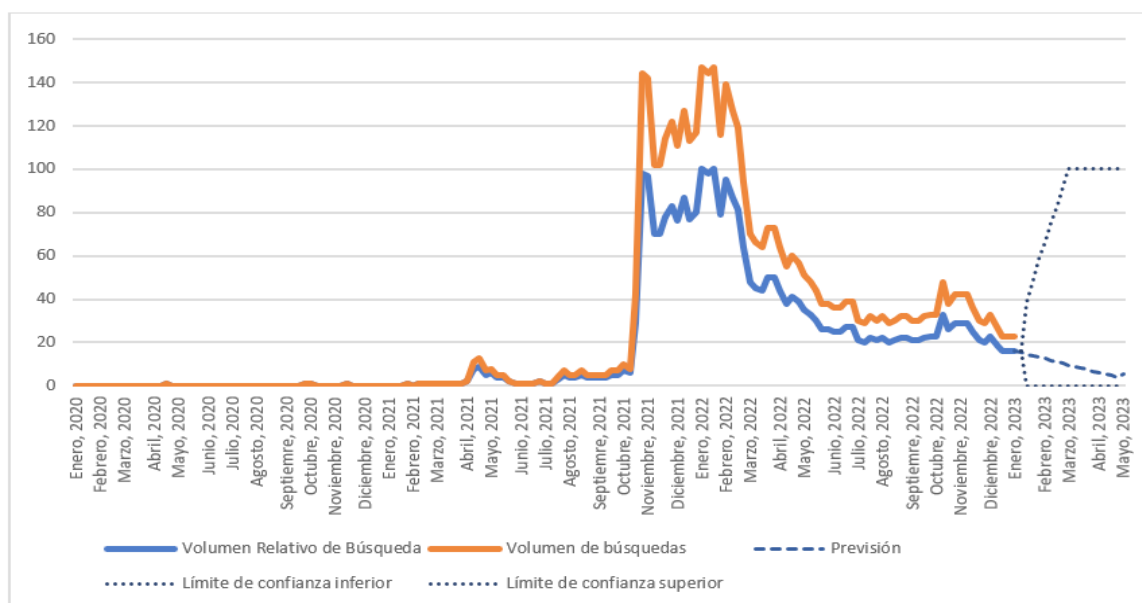


Figure 1. Google search for the term “Metaverse”

Regarding the geographical distribution of search interest, higher values were observed regionally in European, North, and Central American and Oceanic countries. In a more isolated way in South America, Asia, and Africa (figure 2).

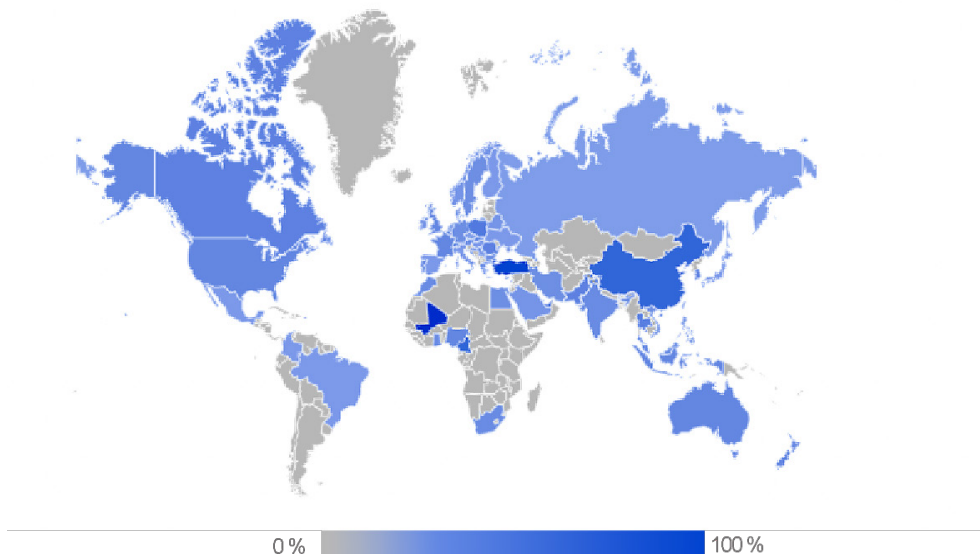


Figure 2. Search interest worldwide

China stands out with an interest of 100, seconded by Singapore (87) and Turkey (72) (figure 3).

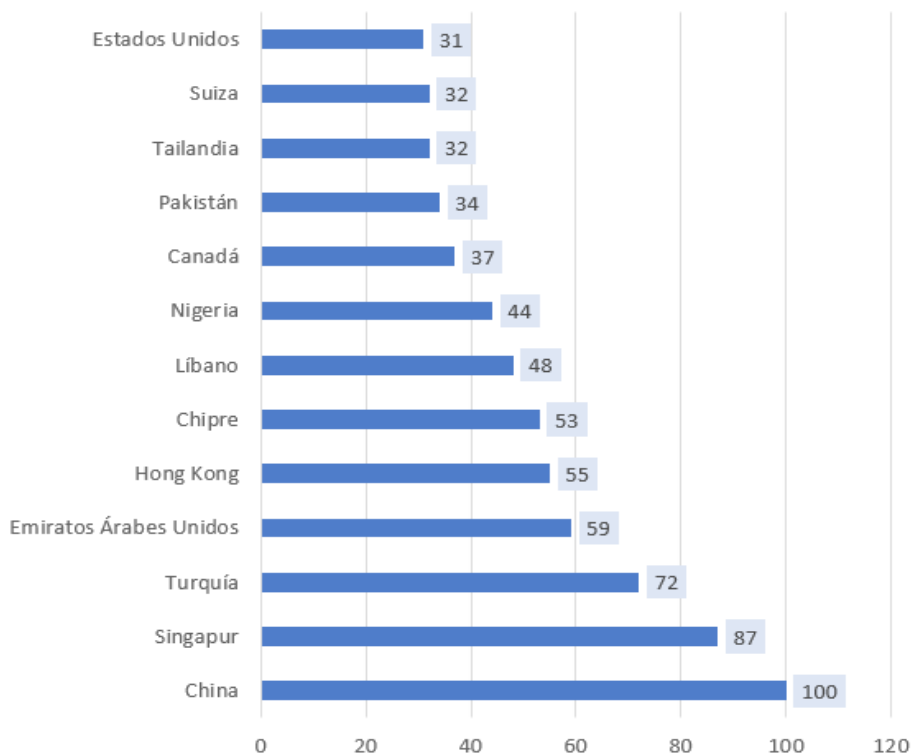


Figure 3. Top countries with search interest greater than 30 %

Of the metaverse-related terms, the fastest-growing search interest was “non-fungible token”. The search term “Mark Zuckerberg” also stood out as one of the fastest-growing in popularity (figure 4).

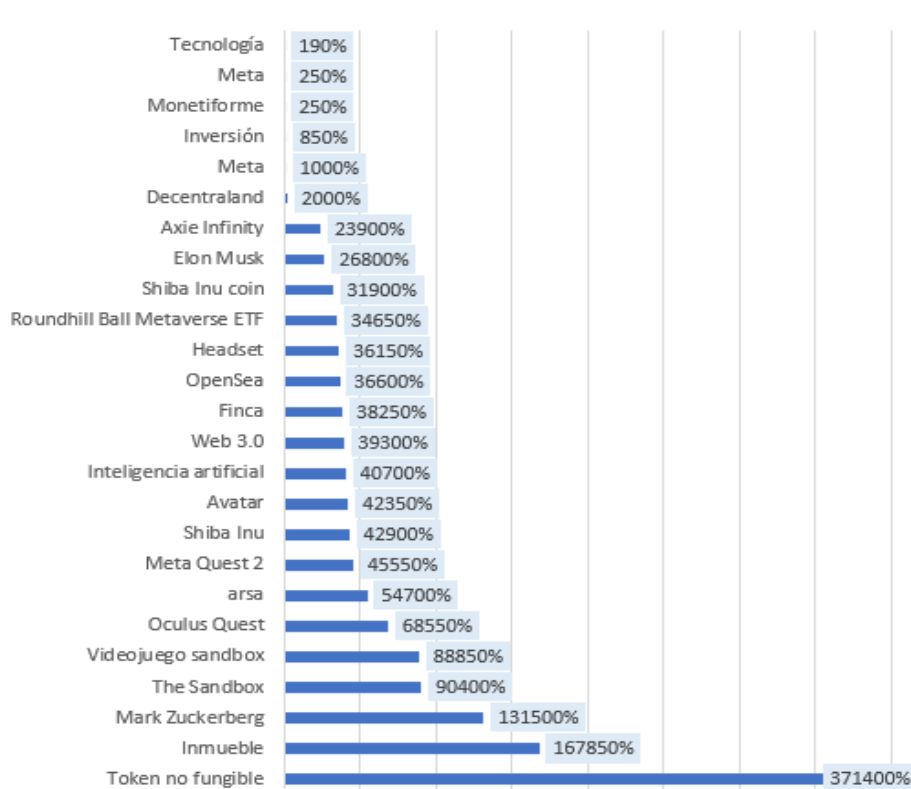


Figure 4. VRB Growth of Related Search Terms

DISCUSSION

Interest in the metaverse in Internet searches was unleashed in a pronounced way in October 2021. It is logical if one considers that it was at that stage that Zuckerberg's pronouncement was made public. According to Garzón-Quiroz⁽¹⁾ and Dowling⁽⁸⁾, this could also generate a speculative impact on financial interests worldwide, especially in the initial stages of this type of project. It is, therefore, understandable that there is a greater demand for information on the subject.

An informetric study on searches on YouTube in the same period reflected a similar behavior, where the phenomenon was almost non-existent in the media until the mentioned date.⁽¹⁾ There was agreement with the values observed in the present study.

However, interest in this topic has been detrimental. The literature suggests that the generalization of the metaverse is taking place slowly, similar to what happened with the Internet in its early years. It will take innovative apps to get people interested in visiting the metaverse frequently.⁽⁹⁾

Regarding the countries where this technology has aroused the most significant interest, an article has reported that, of the European countries, France occupies the first position among the interested countries. Together with the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany, and Belgium, they complete the countries with the most significant interest in the subject.⁽⁹⁾

On the other hand, according to Torres⁽¹¹⁾, China and the United States are the countries that have filed patent applications related to the metaverse. In correspondence with what has been stated in the present study, it is evident that China has been the country most interested in the metaverse at the level of web searches. On the other hand, although the United States appears among the most interested, it only reaches 31 % of interest.

NFT (No Fungible Token, or Token No Fungible, in Spanish) was the most significant interest in searching for information about the metaverse since the beginning of the period. Despite this, an article by Minter⁽¹²⁾ reveals that this term has lost user interest. The reduction was 74 % from January to May 2022.

CONCLUSIONS

Search trends on the metaverse carried out on the Internet between 2020 and 2022 were characterized. It can be concluded that the term generated a high interest that has decreased, in line with the slow reception that technology is having.

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FINANCING

None.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

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