

# 2019 AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY SURVEY REPORT

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS INTO THE FUTURE OF IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGY

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PRESENTED BY

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# Executive Summary

## OPTIMISM FOR IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGY IS HIGH—BUT BARRIERS TO ADOPTION REMAIN

By the year 2025, immersive technologies of XR—including augmented reality, virtual reality and mixed reality—will be as ubiquitous as mobile devices.

That's the opinion of nearly 9 in 10 respondents from a new survey by global law firm Perkins Coie LLP and the XR Association. The broad feeling of optimism when it comes to the technologies listed above (more commonly referred to as AR, VR and MR) shows the enormous potential of immersive technology as we enter the third decade of the 21st century. Similar to findings from past surveys, however, concerns remain about the quality of user experience and available content offerings, along with the pace of adoption.

"We need to make the hardware more user-friendly," said a U.S.-based consultant working in software development for a startup, who went on to note that cost, comfort and utility all must be addressed. Similarly, one German-based software developer working for an established tech company said, "The VR instrument should be as light as a goggle, without looking like an extra device—something like contact lenses."

Despite some notes of caution, there was strong confidence among survey respondents when it comes to the future of immersive technologies—perhaps stemming from heavy investment activity in the space in late 2018. The survey of 200 startup founders, executives with established technology companies, investors and consultants is the third conducted by Perkins Coie in the past four years, and the 2019 edition was expanded to better track a quickly evolving sector—one in which investors are jumping on board. One investor said that immersive space "will aid in all fields of life."

### INVESTOR: "AN EXCITING TIME"

Investors surveyed said they put more money into immersive technology last year than they predicted in previous surveys—and that they would continue to invest in the coming year, with a focus on software and hardware components. As one investor put it, "It is an exciting time to be living with this type of technology."

To be sure, investment in the space is still somewhat unpredictable—but it surged in late 2018. The fourth quarter saw a spike in global venture capital deal value to \$1.7 billion in AR and VR, about three times the deal value for the same time period in 2017, according to PitchBook. Investment also rose year-over-year, from more than \$2.5 billion in 2017 to \$3.8 billion in 2018. There were slightly fewer total deals in 2018, and many of them were in later financing rounds—perhaps signs that investors are eager to jump in but want surer bets from more mature players.

"The idea of VR and AR as a means of connecting people to the digital world in a much more natural and human way is profound," said Tipatat Chennavasin, general partner at Venture Reality Fund. "It will help everyone benefit from the power of the digital economy. It allows us to redefine computer literacy—we can adapt the computer to the way we think and want to work."



Still, more than one-fourth of respondents (26%) said user experience, such as bulky hardware or technical glitches, was the biggest obstacle to mass adoption of AR technologies. A similar percentage (24%) cited content offerings, such as lack of quality content or the amount of content available, as the biggest obstacle for AR. Similarly, in terms of VR adoption, user experience (27%) and content offerings (19%) were seen as the biggest obstacles to mass adoption.

The pace of adoption is also on the minds of startups. More than two-thirds of respondents (69%) said slow adoption among consumers was the most common concern they heard from potential investors, while 58% felt a lack of an established market for the technology was a barrier for investment.

Startup advisor Shel Israel said that the future of immersive technology will not be with individual consumers—instead, people will consume this tech in a more secondary way, such as in doctors' offices or schools, or even through buying products that were manufactured using forms of immersive tech. "AR and VR are important work tools," he said.

## KEY REGIONS, SECTORS

As the technologies' potential bears out, some geographies and sectors continue to flourish. North America, perhaps not surprisingly, was seen as the top region for investment (62%) and was the region expected to witness the fastest growth in the next five years (57%). But despite the stability of the North American market, the survey found promise for the technologies around the globe. Only 13% of respondents identified the Asia-Pacific region as most promising for investment, but significantly, 18% said it will witness the fastest growth in the industry in the next five years, which represents a 38% spread in the tech-hungry Asian market.

When asked where they expected to see the most investment in the next 12 months, respondents had a diverse set of answers. As was the case in previous surveys, gaming again led the pack for applications with 54% of respondents expecting high investment. Not far behind, 43% of respondents chose healthcare and medical devices. But education, military and defense, and manufacturing and automotive were also all chosen by at least 20% of respondents—an indication of how the space is maturing.

Workforce development also showed particular promise, especially as it relates to XR. When shown the statement, "XR is highly applicable to workforce development at this time," 78% of respondents said they agreed. When then asked about the top workforce uses for XR, there was a connection between providing access to all information in real time and facilitating training and mirroring real-life experiences.

"This stuff is amazing—and it's here to stay," Joshua Alan Young, founder of a creative agency specializing in immersive technology, said. "But it's going to take a few years before it's used in day-to-day life. With VR and AR, it's such a new technology and it's so different that it's going to take a while longer to mature. Investment needs to have a slightly longer view in ROI."

# Key Findings

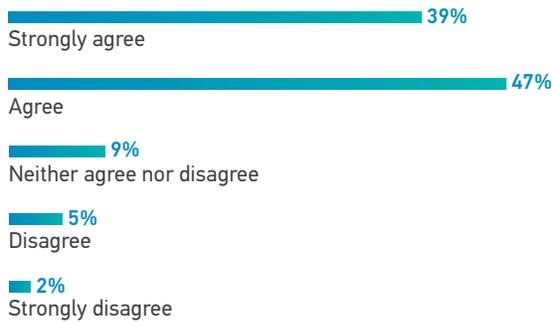
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- The vast majority of respondents think that by 2025, immersive technology will be as ubiquitous as mobile devices in the consumer market, with 39% saying they strongly agree with that statement and 47% saying they agree. Only 7% of respondents disagreed with the statement.
- Respondents found user experience, such as bulky hardware or technical glitches, to be the biggest obstacle for mass adoption of AR (26%) and VR (27%)—but that’s down from last year, when user experience was at 39% for AR and 41% for VR. In 2019, content offerings were also a concern for mass adoption for both AR (24%) and VR (19%), staying similar to the 2018 results for AR (25%) and VR (17%).
- When respondents were asked about concerning legal risks while developing immersive technology, consumer privacy and data security (61%) came out on top. This percentage was up significantly from last year’s survey, when only 44% listed consumer privacy and data security as a concern, most likely from organizations taking important steps to address increased regulation, such as the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation and California’s Consumer Privacy Act. Other top issues for 2019 included product liability/health and safety issues (49%), difficulty in licensing technology and IP (32%), potential infringement of third party–owned IP (30%) and compliance with platform requirements in publishing content (30%).
- 70% of respondents said they anticipate the AR market to surpass the VR market in revenue. When asked when the AR market will surpass the VR market, 81% of respondents predicted it would happen within five years. Both of these results are in line with last year’s findings.
- The highest percentage of respondents monetize or plan to monetize immersive technologies through the sale of products or subscriptions (48%), which dropped significantly from last year’s survey (59%). Other monetization plans for 2019 include charges for additional features or in-app purchases within apps that can be downloaded for free (41%) and revenue from advertising within apps (39%). There is no doubt that producers will have to get creative with their monetization, especially when it comes to in-app disruptions and the potential of artificial intelligence.

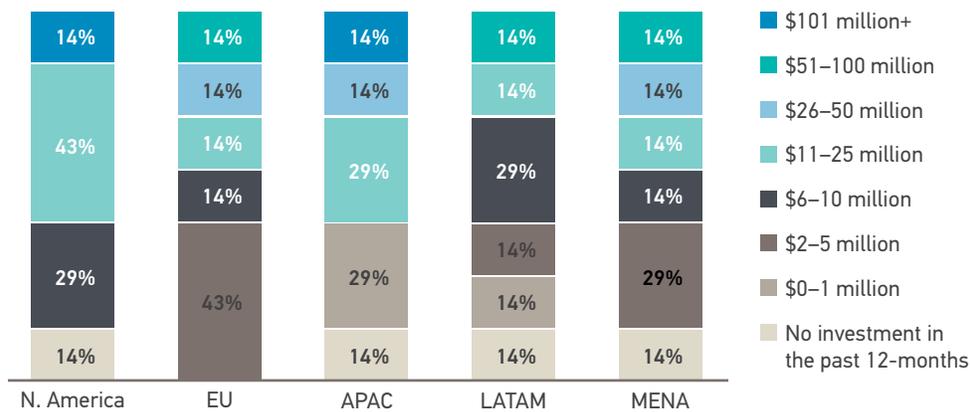
*The survey was completed by 200 respondents. In the charts that follow, some questions do not add up to 100% due to rounding, and some exceed 100% because respondents were invited to select more than one answer. For the full survey methodology and a breakdown of respondent demographics, [see page 22](#).*

# Pervasiveness of AV/VR/MR/XR Is Under Debate

> Please indicate your agreement with this statement: By 2025, AR/VR/MR/XR will be as ubiquitous as mobile devices in the consumer market.

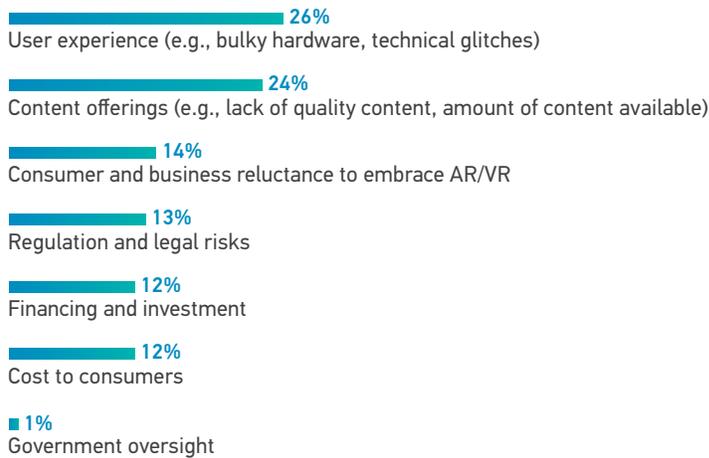


> Investment in the last 12 months:

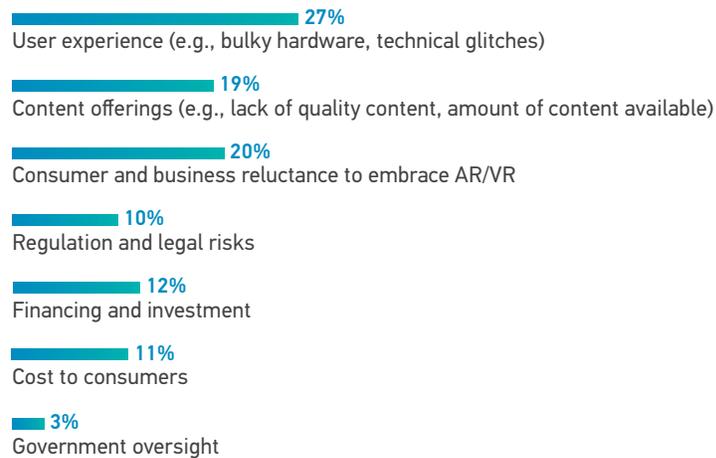


Immersive technology is broadening and is showing its potential across industries. Respondents to our survey overwhelmingly agreed this expansion will continue, noting that immersive technology will be as ubiquitous as mobile devices by the year 2025. This sentiment is in line with the fact that there has been increased investment in the space. *VentureBeat* referred to these investments as “the next computing frontier after the emergence of PCs in the 1970s, the web in the 1990s, and mobile in the 2000s.” The industry is now more than just big glasses; it is less clunky, more integrated and more user-friendly, although more advancements are still necessary.

## > What is the biggest obstacle to mass adoption of AR technologies?



## > What is the biggest obstacle to mass adoption of VR technology?



For AR and VR technologies to become ubiquitous by 2025, there are some obstacles to overcome—the biggest of which is user experience, for example, bulky hardware and technical glitches. Much improvement is still needed to make customers realize that these technologies will be a natural extension of all the tech they use in their daily lives. It is worth noting that user experience was also the top issue in the 2018 survey, but this year its leading position dropped a bit for both AR (39%) and VR (41%).

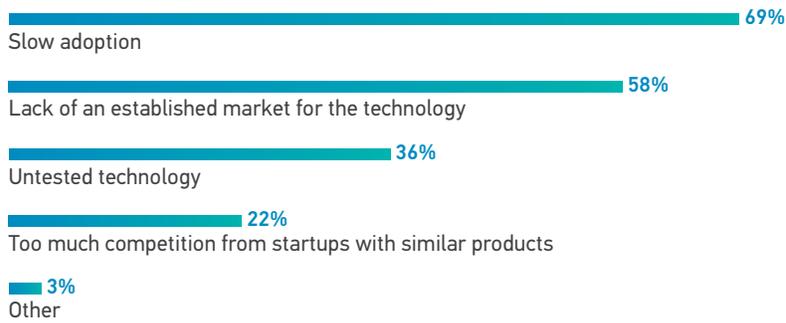
Respondents also noted content offerings as a major obstacle. This shows a disconnect; consumers want to use these technologies if they exist, but immersive technology producers have not been making enough content because, historically, there have not been enough users. Startup advisor Shel Israel thinks that the future of immersive technology will not be with individual consumers—instead, people will consume this tech in a more secondary way, such as in doctors' offices or schools, or even through buying products that were manufactured using forms of immersive tech.

**“With VR and AR, it’s such a new technology and it’s so different that it’s going to take a while longer to mature. Investment needs to have a slightly longer view in ROI.”**

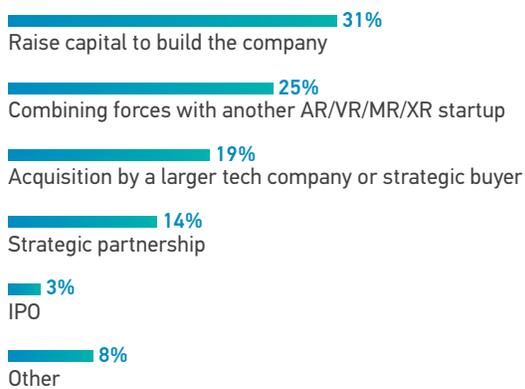
– Joshua Alan Young, founder of a creative agency specializing in immersive technology

The following questions were answered only by startup firms.

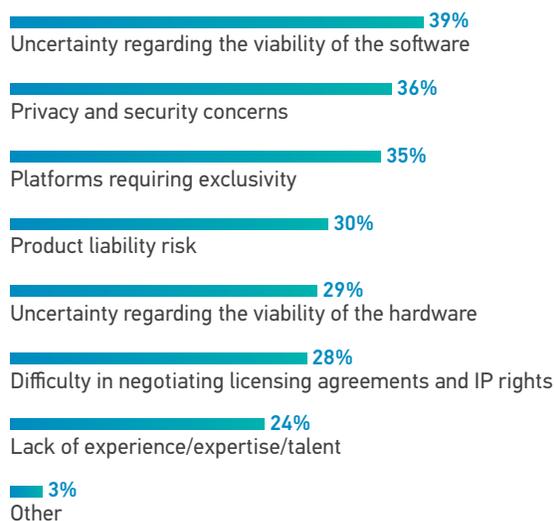
> What are the most common concerns you hear from potential investors in AR/VR/MR/XR startups?



> Which of the following best describes your growth or exit strategy over the next three years?



## > What challenges have you faced in entering into deals with companies developing AR/VR/MR/XR solutions?



When in talks with potential investors, startup firms seem to hear two main concerns: slow adoption and lack of an established consumer market. This implies that widespread adoption may still be a few years away, as products continue to improve and their intended uses become clearer.

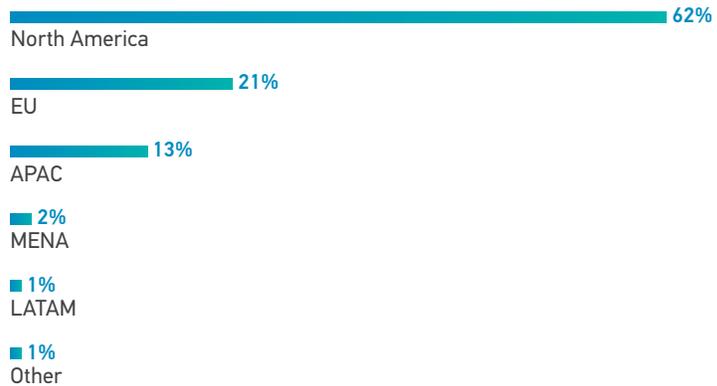
It is also worth noting that startup respondents said that, along with raising capital, their growth/exit strategy for the next three years involves combining forces with another immersive technology startup. Young wasn't surprised by this, as combining forces is a "necessity and a shift in culture." In his experience, there has been a change in tech culture that has allowed for more collaboration and openness, partially ridding itself of the cutthroat, highly competitive nature of the past. "We are now seeing more diversity, teams and different approaches," he said.

"A wide range of high-quality content should be made available to attract consumers. Also, more marketing/promotion needs to be done to spread the word about these technologies and educate people on the benefits they offer to users."

– VR startup founder

# Geographies and Hot Markets

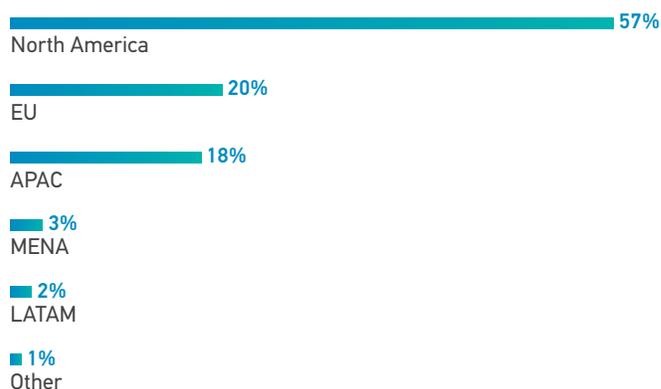
> In your opinion, which region offers the most promising investment opportunities for AR/VR/MR/XR technologies?



“China has a massive middle class that will rapidly adopt this technology.”

– CEO/Founder/President, U.S.-based startup firm

> In your opinion, in which region do you expect to witness the fastest growth in AR/VR/MR/XR in the next 5 years?



North America might reign supreme when it comes to investment opportunities for immersive technologies and the fastest growth expected in the next five years, but there is plenty of potential in other parts of the world.

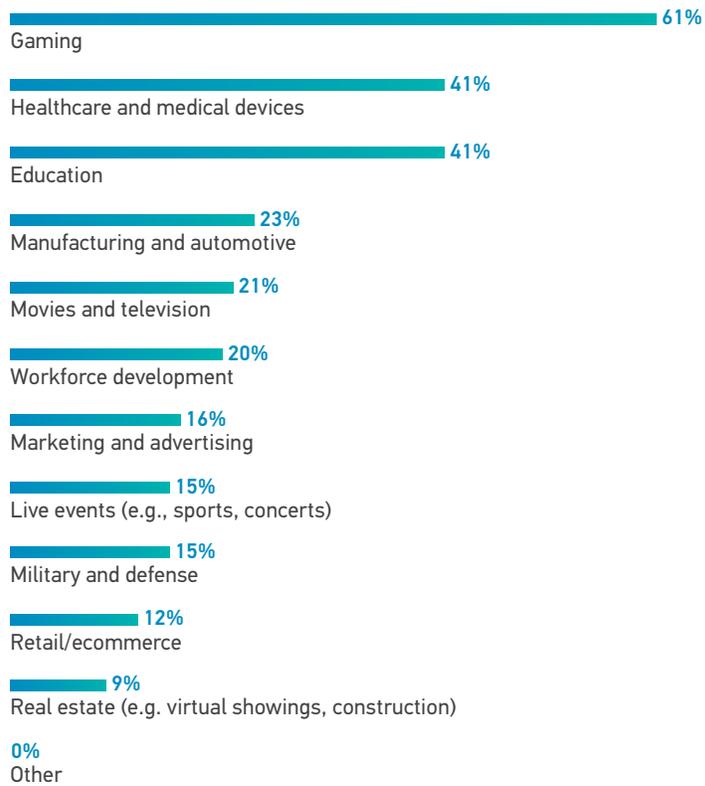
For instance, APAC is not to be overlooked—respondents noted that the sheer population of the countries within the region, along with China’s commitment to the technology, creates a space for growth. One U.S.-based executive working in content development for an established technology firm wrote, “Although the U.S. may be the start of the technology, APAC will be the center of utilization, given the regulations favor the new technologies to be adopted.”

A U.S.-based manager working in content development for a startup firm says that North America, the EU and APAC are actually all connected: “North America tends to build upon Asian advances. We both create advancements in the technology itself, but America applies it in a wider variety of ways, then it goes back to Asia for further development on the tech and creative side. The EU plays a role similar to the U.S., but not quite as much on the tech development.”

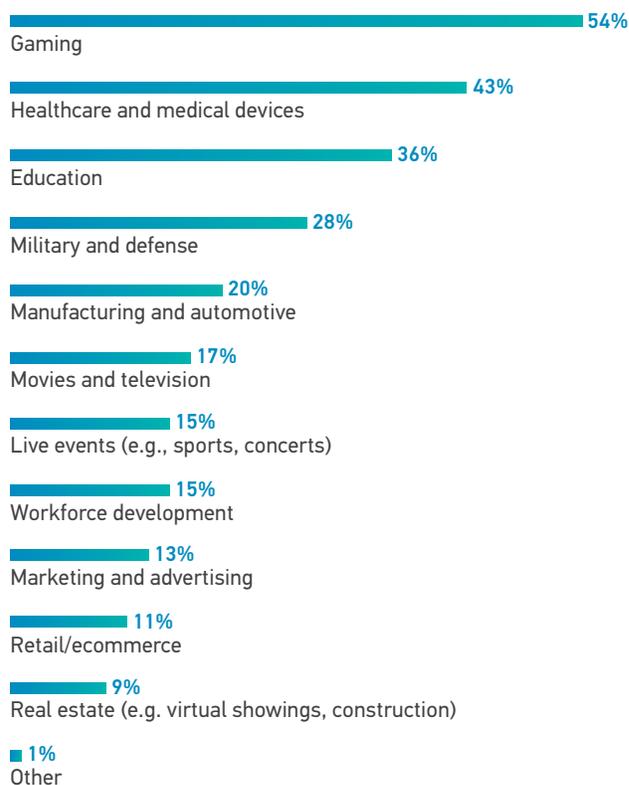
“The ability to scale consumer adoption and push into distribution channels is still easiest in North America.”

– Marketing/Business Development Director of an established Japan-based technology firm

> In which industries do you believe XR is most applicable at this time?  
(Please select up to 3 options)



> In which sectors do you expect to see the most investment directed to the development of AR/VR/MR/XR technology or content in the next 12 months? (Please select up to 3 options)



It is probably no surprise that gaming is once again seen as most promising area of development. But respondents provided a fairly diversified look at promise in other industries, especially with regard to healthcare and medical devices, education, manufacturing and automotive, and military defense.

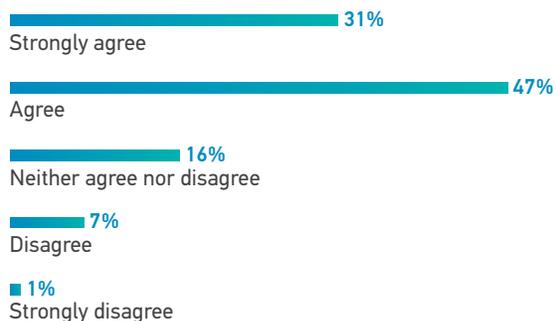
Compared to last year's survey, both healthcare and medical devices (26% in 2018) and education (26% in 2018) saw big increases in the expectation for investment in the next 12 months. Real estate came in at just 9% in 2019—a considerable decrease from last year, when 21% of respondents thought there would be a big investment in this industry.

Education is also a growing area. *EdWeek* recently wrote a recap focusing on the U.S. Department of Education's annual ED Games Expo, noting that "with over 100 educational game titles showcased ... approximately one-fifth of these games featured augmented or virtual reality." But there is a caveat, as the recap noted: "whether or not the K-12 education market will bite on these new game features and styles—and whether they are effective at improving learning—is still up in the air."

The technology is there, but it's unclear how long it will take before broad adoption. Immersive technology growth will continue, startup advisor Shel Israel said, in industries such as healthcare, education and manufacturing.

# Workforce Development Sector

➤ Please indicate your agreement with this statement:  
*“XR is highly applicable to workforce development at this time.”*



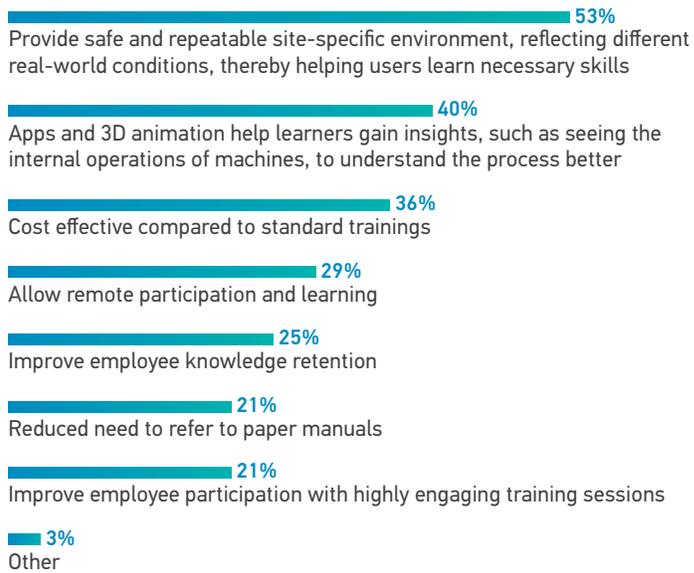
➤ What are the top workforce development benefits of XR?  
(Select all that apply)



When asked specifically about workforce development, respondents believe XR is highly applicable for workforce development—and they also believe in a variety of uses. XR “can help provide experiential learning workers need,” consulting and professional services firm [Accenture](#) wrote in a recent report, citing benefits such as “lower costs, increased employee engagement and the ability to mirror real-life situations.” Some industries have already embraced XR, such as energy, industrial, manufacturing and construction, according to Accenture. Other uses, such as medical training for students, retail training and outside sales rep training, are still in the exploration phases.

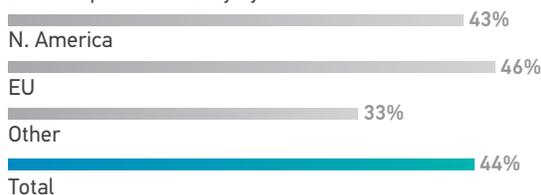
The first wave of XR in the workplace has been with training to make people more productive, said Tipatat Chennavasin, general partner at Venture Reality Fund. But he thinks there will eventually be more to XR than just training. “When XR really reaches its full potential is when it’s not training people to be productive in the real world, but when they are productive in the virtual world,” Chennavasin said, citing the designing of cars as an example.

> How do you believe AR/VR/MR/XR technologies can most effectively address challenges in health and safety training situations?

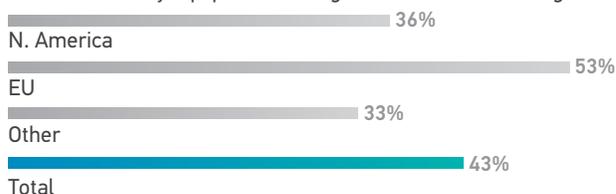


➤ Which of the following challenges do users of AR/VR/MR/XR technologies face relating to health and safety training situations? (Select all that apply)

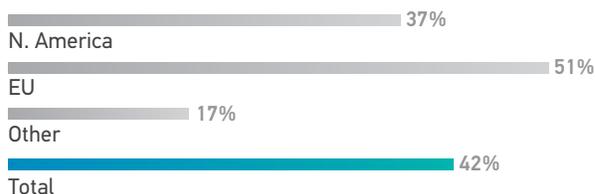
Late adoption/hesitancy by older workers



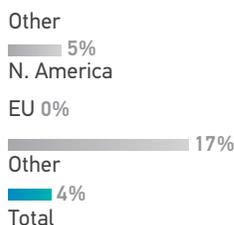
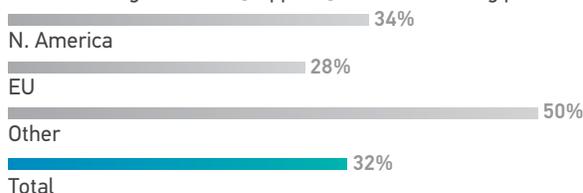
Time consuming as mock training sessions need to be conducted by technicians and concerned staff to avoid any equipment damage or other issues during real training sessions



Side effects such as simulator sickness



The technologies cannot [supplant] standard training procedures



One aspect of workforce development is health and safety training. Respondents found that providing safe and repeatable real-world conditions as well as apps and 3D animation to help learners gain insights to be the top ways immersive technologies can be used to effectively address challenges.

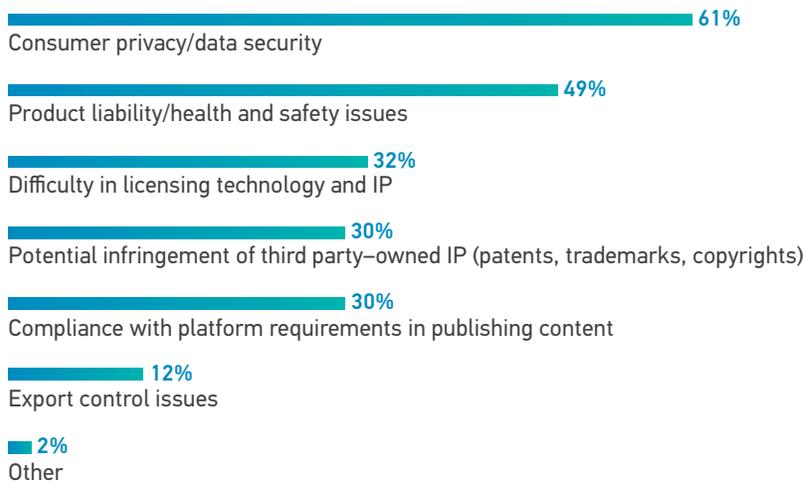
Caterpillar Safety Services recently launched [Cat Safety VR](#) for workforce training purposes so that “learners are immersed into a virtual jobsite and the experience is so realistic the learner’s brain captures the training like a memory, creating greater retention than traditional learning.” The company’s [VR safety kit includes](#) a gaming laptop configured to run the Cat Safety VR program and HTC VIVE virtual reality system, which can be used to learn safe behaviors on a job site.

Another example for training is [GibLib](#), where users can watch surgical procedures from medical centers around the world. Applying this further, these immersive technologies are also beginning to be used in the actual operating room like with [Proprio](#), which lets surgeons augment their perception in real time, Chennavasin said, as well as [Vicarious Surgical](#), who are using surgical robots being controlled by people in VR, ensuring that procedures are done with the utmost precision.

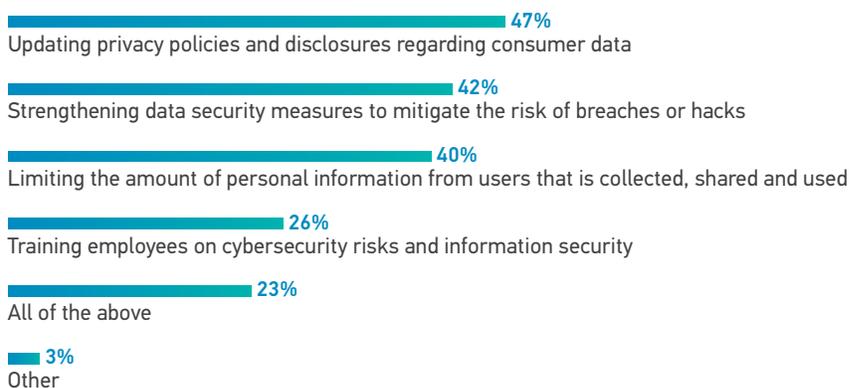
# Top Legal Risks

*The following questions were answered only by startup firms, established tech companies, advisors and outside consultants*

➤ Which of the following legal risks are of concern to your organization in developing AR/VR/MR/XR technology or content? (Select all that apply)



➤ What steps has your organization taken to address privacy and data security concerns with AR/VR/MR/XR technologies? (Select all that apply)



> Which of the following intellectual property issues do you feel are most likely to drive disputes and litigation in the AR/VR/MR/XR industry? (Select all that apply)

 56%  
Trademark and copyright disputes (e.g., use of copyrighted images/text or trademarked products/services in a virtual world)

 50%  
Patent litigation (e.g., infringement lawsuits over AR/VR-related)

 37%  
Trade secret claims (e.g., confidential business information acquired by a competitor or third party by a former employee or other improper means)

 32%  
Rights of publicity (e.g., laws protecting the economic interest of brands/people portrayed in a virtual experience)

 1%  
Other

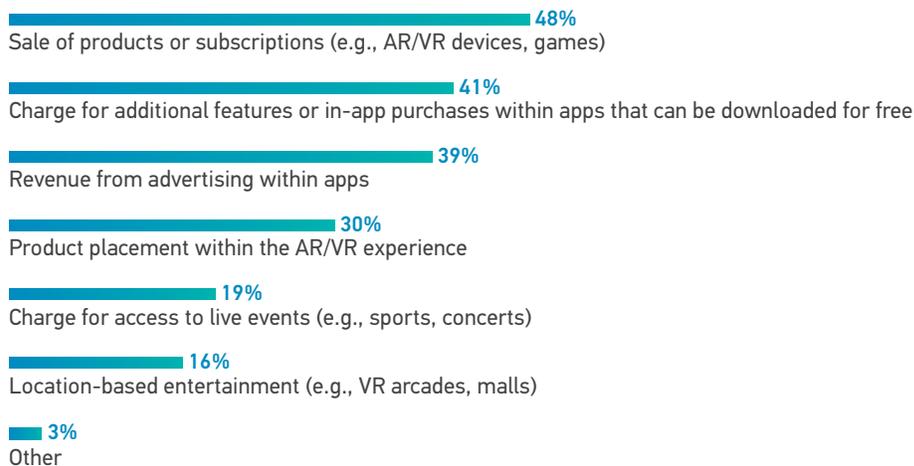
It is no surprise that consumer privacy (47%) and data security (42%) top the charts for legal risks concerning immersive technology organizations. Amid headlines about data security as well as new regulations, like the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation and the California Consumer Privacy Act, companies are thinking more and more about how to use their data and how to protect it. When compared to 2018 survey results, data security increased from 44% to 61%.

Companies have responded to these new regulations and privacy concerns in various ways, with updating privacy policies and disclosures regarding consumer data (47%) being their top step to address concerns. But other approaches didn't fall far behind. Companies are also strengthening data security measures (42%), limiting the amount of personal information that is shared (40%) and training employees about risks (26%).

# Means of Monetizing Technology

The following questions were answered only by startup firms, established tech companies, advisors and outside consultants

➤ How are you currently monetizing—or how do you intend to monetize—AR/VR/MR/XR products or services? (Select all that apply)



Sale of products or subscriptions remained in the top spot for monetizing technology, although it dropped from 59% in the 2018 survey. Additionally, in 2019, there was a much higher percentage of respondents who are or intend to charge for additional features or in-app purchases within apps that can be downloaded for free (41%) and gain revenue from advertising within apps (39%).

In-app advertisements are sometimes considered intrusive, but it seems that, based on respondent sentiment (39%), they are becoming more common.

It is no doubt that producers will have to get creative with their monetization, especially when it comes to in-app disruptions. One potential solution is through artificial intelligence, as a recent *Entrepreneur* article notes: “AI & Machine Learning (ML) provide deep insights about each user, which enables the developer to track revenue expectation from an individual. This revenue generation happens over in-app advertising and IAP. Having a fair idea of the lifetime value of a user puts the developer in control of his monetization models.”

“People have unrealistic expectations of what VR games and experiences should cost.”

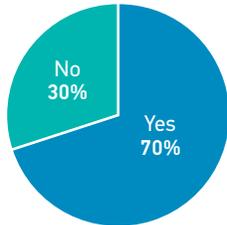
– Joshua Alan Young, founder of a creative agency specializing in immersive technology

“I am hoping AI will make contextualized ads more of a reality. How we make money is unresolved and AI is the most promising solution I see.”

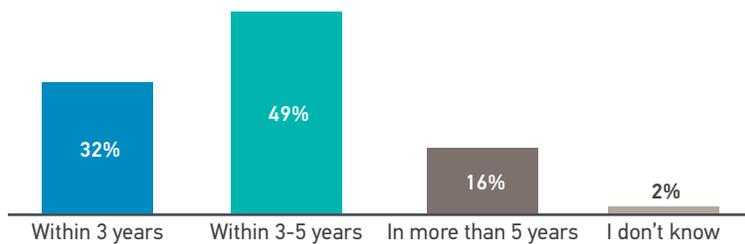
– Shel Israel, startup advisor

# Additional Findings

➤ Do you anticipate that the AR market will surpass the VR market in revenue?



➤ When do you expect the AR market to surpass the VR market in revenue?



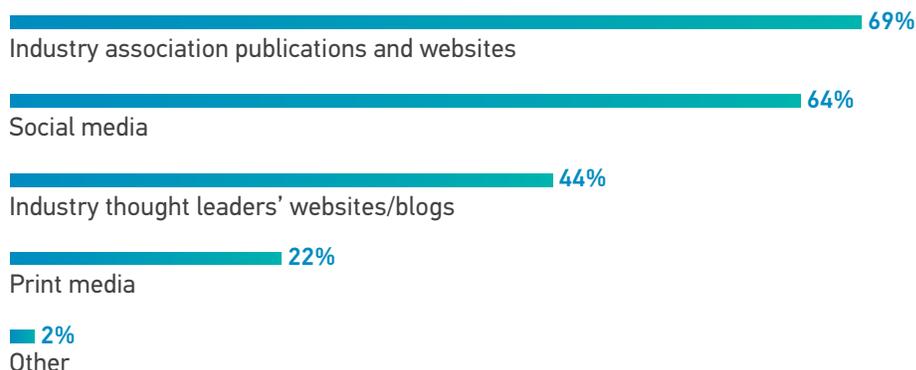
Excitement about immersive technologies has come from some of the biggest names in technology. “I think AR is that big, it’s huge,” said [Apple CEO Tim Cook](#). “I get excited because of the things that could be done that could improve a lot of lives and be entertaining. I view AR like I view the silicon here in my iPhone—it’s not a product per se, it’s a core technology. But there are things to discover before that technology is good enough for the mainstream.”

With two years having passed since Cook’s 2017 remark, respondents still seem to share his optimism, as the vast majority think AR will surpass VR in revenue within the next five years. Currently, C-suite executives are equally interested in both AR and VR, according to [CB Insights research](#).

“Big tech companies like IBM, Dell, Apple, Google and Microsoft are all pumping millions into AR research and development.”

– Chief Technology Officer, established U.S.-based tech company

> From which sources of media do you currently obtain news on AR/VR/MR/XR technologies? (Please select top two options)



These findings regarding media sources indicate that the immersive technology industry “gets it”—they think these tools are important and will continue to be important—but there is still a lag in traditional print media. Reporters may not yet know how to cover these trends or how to frame them, despite the fact that the industry itself is covering them dynamically.

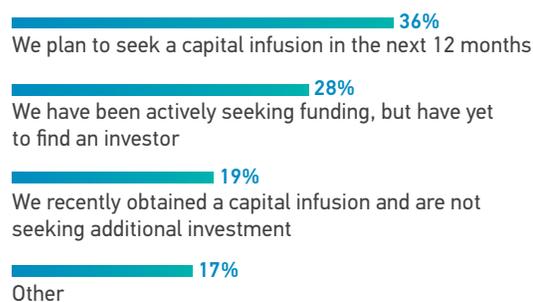
More mainstream media and social media will begin to cover the immersive technology industry once the applications become less training-oriented and more ingrained in various industries’ day-to-day work, Chennavasin said. “I think that is the more interesting, compelling story,” he said.

*The following questions were answered only by startup firms.*

> What is the current state of your company’s funding?

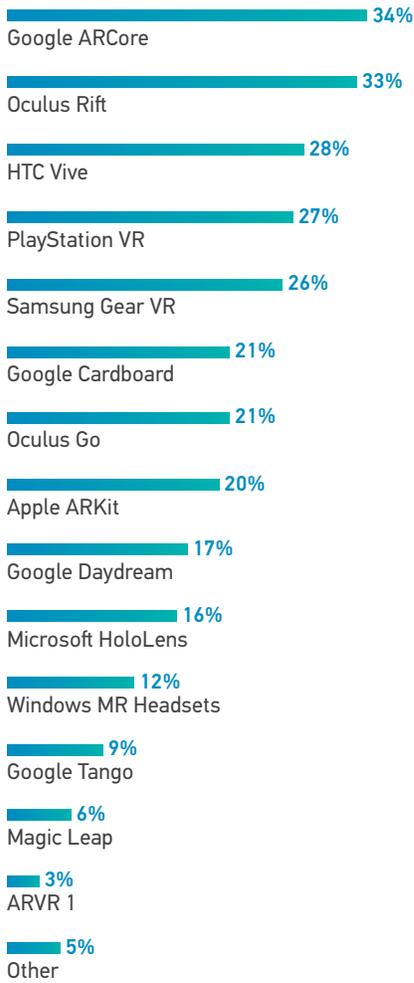


> What is the current status of your efforts to raise capital?

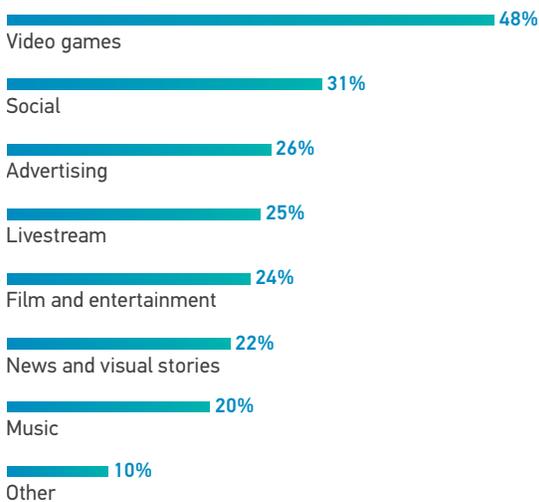


The following questions were answered only by startup firms and established tech companies.

> Which platform(s) are you currently developing for? (Select all that apply)



> If your organization is creating content for AR/VR/MR/XR, what type of content are you currently developing?



# Methodology and Demographics

In early 2019, 200 respondents completed Perkins Coie and the XR Association's Augmented and Virtual Reality Survey via an online survey tool. The results were tabulated, analyzed and released in March 2019. Due to rounding, the results for some questions may exceed 100%.

More than half of the respondents (57%) held C-level or VP titles (e.g., CEO, president, owner or chief technology officer). Individuals completing the survey came from a variety of industries, with gaming (19%) and software for business (18%) among the most prominent. The breakdown of respondents is as follows:

- Executive within an established technology company (68%)
- Founder/executive of an AR, VR or MR startup (18%)
- Adviser/outside consultant (7%)
- Policymaker/government (4%)
- Investor (4%)

> Respondents identified their primary area(s) of focus as the following:

 **41%**  
**Virtual Reality (VR):** Immersive multimedia experiences simulate a physical presence in a real or imagined world and allow the user to interact in that world.

 **28%**  
**Augmented Reality (AR):** A physical, real-world environment is overlaid by computer-generated content.

 **26%**  
**Mixed Reality (MR):** The real and virtual worlds are merged to create an environment where physical and digital objects coexist and interact.

 **6%**  
**XR:** An umbrella term that encompasses AR, MR, VR, and other forms of alternate, expanded, or immersive reality applications, including those not yet invented.

# About the Study Authors



The XR Association represents headset and technology manufacturers across the broad XR industry, including Google, HTC VIVE, Facebook and Oculus, Samsung, and Sony Interactive Entertainment. Promoting the dynamic global growth of the XR industry, the XRA supports responsible development and adoption of XR technology with best practices, dialogue across stakeholders, and research. The XRA is the leading resource for researchers, policymakers, and industry partners across the XR industry.

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