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# Posthuman Aesthetics: Colour, Comfort, and Consumer Acceptance in Extended Reality

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***Abstract***

*This article examines the evolution of posthuman aesthetics in extended reality (XR) technology marketing through analysis of visual representations from early Metaverse media imagery (2021-2023) to contemporary XR brand campaigns (2023-2024). Using qualitative visual content analysis and systematic colour palette extraction, the research investigates how technology companies strategically deploy colour, recurring themes, and environmental context to facilitate consumer acceptance of human-technology integration. The analysis reveals a fundamental shift from cold, synthetic posthuman imagery toward aesthetic modulation strategies that pair minimal, high-tech product visuals with warm, tactile environments when humans appear. This transformation reflects the emergence of "Cozy Tech" aesthetics, a design approach that domesticates advanced technologies within familiar contexts, while simultaneously grappling with uncanny valley effects that arise from artificial human representations.*

*Through analysis of 46 marketing images from Apple Vision Pro and Meta Quest 3/3S campaigns, contextualized against earlier Metaverse media representations, this study demonstrates how visual culture serves as a critical mediator in society's negotiation of posthuman transformation. The findings reveal that contemporary extended reality marketing employs deliberate aesthetic softening to reframe posthuman embodiment as comfortable evolution rather than alienating rupture, suggesting that successful technological adoption requires not merely functional innovation but the emotional work of making the unfamiliar feel familiar. This research contributes to understanding how colour, comfort, and visual design actively shape consumer acceptance of emerging technologies that fundamentally alter human experience and embodiment.*

**Keywords:** Posthuman Aesthetics, Extended Reality, Cozy Tech, Colour Design, Consumer Acceptance, Apple Vision Pro, Meta Quest, Uncanny Valley.

## Introduction

Visual representations of emerging technologies function as cultural mediators, shaping public understanding and acceptance of digital experiences and futures through carefully orchestrated aesthetic choices. The evolution of extended reality (XR) technologies, from early Metaverse concepts to contemporary spatial computing devices, offers a compelling case study in how colour, comfort, and visual design influence consumer acceptance of posthuman technological integration.

The Metaverse concept, coined by Stephenson's (1992) Snow Crash and popularized by Facebook's Meta rebrand in 2021, initially promised fundamental transformation of human interaction, commerce, and embodiment. By 2023, as public enthusiasm for "the Metaverse" waned amid technological limitations and cultural resistance, technology companies began strategic

recalibration of both discursive and visual approaches.

As Hayles (1999) and Haraway (1991) have demonstrated, such technological integration represents a posthuman transformation that challenges traditional conceptions of human embodiment and agency, necessitating new frameworks for understanding human-technology relationships. This shift reflects broader recognition that successful posthuman integration requires not merely technological innovation but careful aesthetic mediation of emotional and cultural acceptance.

Contemporary extended reality marketing, exemplified by Apple's Vision Pro and Meta's Quest 3/3S campaigns, appears to employ markedly different visual strategies than earlier Metaverse representations [1-3]. Initial observations suggest these companies may be shifting away from futuristic aesthetics toward more familiar, domestic visual contexts. This apparent transformation in marketing approaches raises questions about how visual design choices mediate consumer acceptance of posthuman technologies and whether new aesthetic strategies are emerging to address potential barriers to adoption.

This study examines the evolution of posthuman aesthetics in extended reality marketing through analysis of visual representations across two distinct phases: early Metaverse media imagery (2021-2023) and contemporary XR brand visuals (2023-2024). It addresses three critical questions:
1. How did early news media representations of the Metaverse establish a constrained visual vocabulary for posthuman futures?
2. How do Apple and Meta, as dominant extended reality actors, strategically deploy colour and recurring themes to position human-machine interaction?
3. How does the emergence of "Cozy Tech" aesthetics reconfigure the emotional legibility of posthuman embodiment, and where do uncanny valley effects still emerge despite these efforts?

This study examines how technology companies use visual design strategies in extended reality marketing to facilitate consumer acceptance of posthuman technologies. While previous research has explored narratives and technology adoption, posthuman embodiment in digital contexts, and user experience in virtual environments, less attention has been paid to the specific design choices that mediate public reception of human-technology hybridization [4-11]. Through qualitative visual content analysis of marketing materials from major XR companies, this research investigates how visual culture shapes collective negotiation of technological transformation.

## Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### Posthumanism and Embodied Hybridity

Posthuman theory challenges the centrality of the autonomous, rational human subject, instead embracing the entangled, networked, and technologically co-constituted body [9]. Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari's (1989) 'becoming-other' and Pepperell's (1995) 'posthuman condition,' the framework explores not what comes after the human, but what it means to be human, representing a shift from a 'man-centred' universe toward broader understandings of human experience. The central questions, what does it mean to be human and what are we becoming, emerge from this expanded perspective on human identity and embodiment. In examining how XR marketing imagery negotiates these questions, this article draws on two key frameworks that specifically address the visual and technological dimensions of posthuman transformation.

Hayles (1999) in How we became posthuman identifies three waves of posthuman transformation through cybernetics: homeostasis (1945-1960), focusing on human-machine system regulation; reflexivity (1960-1980), emphasizing the blending of physical and virtual realms; and virtuality (1980-present), exploring the transgression of human and non-human boundaries through biotechnology integration. Hayles' concept of waves illustrates how technological advancement continuously transforms and intensifies our understanding of what it means to be human. Complementing this framework, Haraway's (1991) Cyborg Manifesto posits the cyborg as a figure that collapses traditional binaries: human/machine, physical/virtual, organic/synthetic. For Haraway, the posthuman subject is inherently hybrid, partial, situated, and entangled in technological apparatuses. This theoretical perspective informs readings of contemporary tech imagery where users appear as transitory figures within a techno-material continuum - neither fully human nor fully digitized.

### Visual Narrative and Cultural Framing

Visual representations of emerging technologies do not merely reflect innovation; they shape and direct socio-cultural expectations. As Hauskeller and colleagues (2015, p.4) notes, images of posthuman futures function as "thought experiments," rehearsing possible modes of being and becoming through visual abstraction. Dolata and Schwabe (2023, p.2) emphasize that popular media is "vital for the reception of the Metaverse" as it impacts "collective sensemaking and adoption of technologies." While their analysis focuses primarily on written discourse and narrative framing, visual storytelling operates through different mechanisms - working at the level of immediate aesthetic impact and embodied response rather than rational argumentation.

In contemporary XR technologies, visual storytelling carries particular power because interfaces are inherently visual and spatial. How they integrate into domestic and bodily space matters significantly for cultural acceptance. Visual narratives built through colour, composition, and recurring themes work to normalize human-technology integration, positioning users not just as consumers of technology, but as cyborg participants in emergent hybrid realities.

### Colour, Affect, and Cozy Tech

Colour functions as a fundamental component of affective communication in visual media. As O'Connor (2020) demonstrates, colour choices in digital interfaces influence perception, emotion, and spatial experience. Cool tones typically convey control, professionalism, and distance, while warm tones evoke familiarity, intimacy, and comfort. Contemporary tech companies deploy colour strategically to build trust and emotional proximity within otherwise alienating technological environments. The centrality of colour in achieving these affective goals is particularly evident in the emergence of "Cozy Tech" aesthetics.

Edelkoort's (2023) concept of "Cozy Tech" demonstrates how colour functions as the cornerstone of a broader aesthetic shift

toward soft, tactile, and emotionally grounding design elements. This design approach centers warm neutrals and muted pastels, and textures that evoke natural materials. While Cozy Tech originated in interior and product design, it has increasingly permeated tech company visual branding, particularly when products are positioned within domestic spaces or in relation to human users. This aesthetic transformation signals both a discursive and affective recalibration of technological representation. Whereas earlier digital aesthetics prioritized sterility and abstraction, Cozy Tech suggests that posthuman integration must now appear emotionally accessible rather than merely "futuristic." Yet this pursuit of emotional accessibility through familiar visual elements creates its own challenges.

The pursuit of such familiarity, however, invokes Freud's concept of "das Unheimliche" and its contemporary manifestation in the uncanny valley effect. The uncanny emerges from the unsettling juxtaposition of familiar and foreign elements - something that appears human-like yet reveals its artificial nature, generating discomfort through near-but-not-quite resemblance to authentic human experience [12]. Tech companies must navigate this delicate balance, employing design strategies that achieve emotional resonance without triggering uncanny responses that could undermine user acceptance.

## Methodology

This study employs qualitative visual content analysis (Figure 1) to examine the evolution of posthuman aesthetics across two distinct image corpora, selected for their prominence in shaping visual narratives of human-technology interaction.

### Corpus Selection

Corpus 1: Metaverse Media Imagery (2021-2023) Drawing from a previous analysis of 439 images from international media outlets, this corpus covers the rise and decline of Metaverse discourse. Images were collected during peak periods: October 2021-January 2022, following Meta's rebrand, and January-April 2023, during public scepticism phase [13].

Corpus 2: Tech Brand Visuals (2023-2024) This corpus, which forms the primary dataset for this study, includes 46 images (23 each from Apple and Meta) sourced from product launch pages and promotional videos for Apple Vision Pro (June 2023) and Meta Quest 3/3S (October 2023/October 2024). Images encompass both product-only renderings and lifestyle imagery featuring human subjects.

### Analytical Framework

The analysis combines image-based thematic coding with systematic colour palette extraction using the RAL Design System plus, a meta colour system for measuring colour in three dimensions. This comprehensive system consists of a total of 1.825 colours and composes 7-digit colour codes based on hue (numerical value on a 360-degree colour wheel), lightness (numerical value between 0 and 100), and chroma (numerical value between 0 and 100). Shortened to HLC, this system closely aligns with human perception. The RAL Design System plus was selected for its standardized approach to colour classification, which provides consistent and reproducible colour identification across diverse visual materials. Unlike subjective colour naming systems, RAL's systematic numerical coding enables precise cross-referencing and comparative analysis while maintaining industry-standard colour accuracy that is widely used in design and manufacturing contexts.

Rather than extracting only the five most dominant colours per image, this research employed a hierarchical colour analysis approach, categorizing colours into main, secondary, and accent roles within each image. This tripartite classification system offers greater analytical precision by distinguishing between colours based on their functional importance rather than mere prevalence. Main colours establish the primary visual foundation; secondary colours provide supporting visual structure; and accent colours deliver focal emphasis. This approach reveals how tech companies strategically deploy colour hierarchies to guide user attention and construct affective experiences, providing insights that purely quantitative dominant-colour extraction would obscure. This hierarchical method enables comparative palette profiling across thematic categories while maintaining sensitivity to the intentional design choices that characterize contemporary tech visual communication.

The visual corpus for this analysis consists exclusively of official marketing materials from Apple's Vision Pro and Meta's Quest 3/3S launch campaigns. Images were manually selected from promotional videos and press release materials produced directly by Apple and Meta for their initial product introductions. This focused selection strategy ensures that the analysed visuals represent each company's deliberate and strategic presentation of their product vision, rather than third-party interpretations or user-generated content.

By concentrating on official launch materials, the study captures the companies' intentional visual rhetoric at the critical moment of market introduction - when brand messaging, aesthetic choices, and affective appeals are most carefully constructed and strategically deployed. This corpus represents the distilled visual essence of how each company positions its XR technology within broader cultural contexts, making them ideal for analysing the intersection of colour, affect, and technological representation in contemporary tech marketing. Images were grouped into four recurring thematic categories to systematically analyse how colour functions across different representational contexts within XR marketing. This categorical approach enables the identification of patterns in colour deployment that might be missed by treating all promotional imagery as homogeneous. By organizing visual materials according to their primary communicative function, whether showcasing technical capabilities, domestic integration, user experience, or product aesthetics, the analysis can reveal how companies strategically modulate their colour palettes to align with specific messaging objectives and target different aspects of consumer appeal.

The four thematic categories resulting from this process are as follows:

1. Device-only images: Products shown in isolation
2. Human-device interaction: Users wearing devices
3. Phygital overlays: Augmented reality interfaces layered onto physical spaces including and excluding human presence
4. Full immersion: Complete virtual immersive experiences including and excluding human presence

Special attention was given to how colours and their propor-

tions, analysing how these elements shape atmospheric tone, spatial dynamics, and the emotional legibility of technological futures. The colour analysis employs both a cross-brand and cross, thematic comparison to examine how visual approaches differ between Apple and Meta while also tracking variations across different campaign themes.

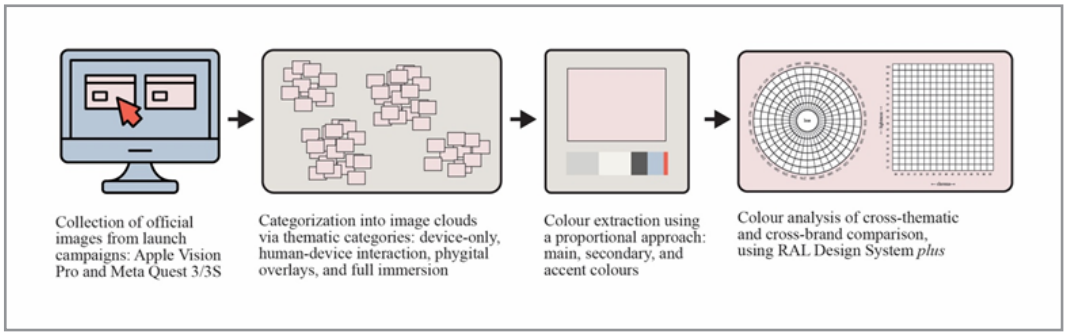


**Figure 1:** Flow chart of the four-step analytical process

## Results

### Early Metaverse Visual Representation (2021-2023)

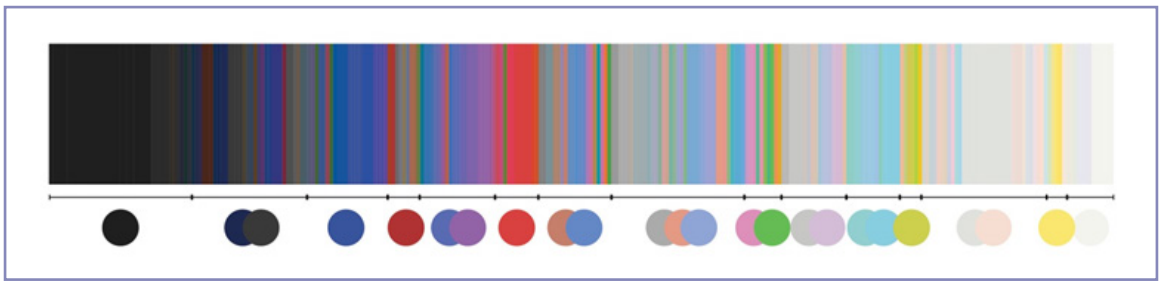

**Figure 2:** Metaverse Media Colour Palette Distribution (2021-2023)

Early Metaverse news media imagery established a consistent chromatic pattern during the peak hype period (2021-2022), following Facebook's Meta rebrand. Editorial imagery featured diverse visions ranging from virtual avatars in digital fashion to headset-wearing users and speculative phygital environments where humans coexisted with cyborgs, holograms, and robots. This visual narrative conveyed both fear and acceptance of human-technology fusion, reflecting the complex cultural negotiations surrounding Metaverse adoption and aligning with research by Dolata and Schwabe (2023) indicating that initial hype does not automatically translate into widespread technology adoption. Regardless of specific content, these images shared a remarkably consistent chromatic approach.

A clear visual vocabulary emerged: greyscale foundations served as neutral backdrops, punctuated by vibrant accents - blues, reds, greens, and purples appearing as glowing UI elements and holographic projections (Figure 2). This aesthetic was cold, synthetic, and highly controlled, establishing a visual code for technological futurity while simultaneously depicting users' transformation into posthuman entities. The imagery revealed two key adoption barriers: technological shortcomings that failed to meet hyped expectations, and the necessity for cultural change in how societies embrace new technologies.

By early 2023, as discourse fragmented amid growing scepticism, what might be called "posthuman palette v1.0" had crystallized with limited emotional range, suggesting immersion and power but little intimacy or warmth. The imagery functioned as a cultural mirror requiring audiences to recognize themselves within posthuman visions, emphasizing that technology adoption is not an isolated act but a continuous cultural process. As with previous technologies - press, radio, television, smartphones - the Metaverse's acceptance depends on whether society feels comfortable with the vision presented and its implications for transforming human life [14]. Media representations serve as crucial catalysts for cultural change, with underlying concepts persisting through technological developments like Apple's Vision Pro and Meta's Quest, even as they evolve beyond the original Metaverse visions of Stephenson or Zuckerberg.

### Tech Brand Visual Evolution (2023-2024)

The period between 2023 and 2024 marked a pivotal moment in consumer XR technology, with Apple's Vision Pro launch in February 2024 and Meta's Quest 3/3S release in October 2023 and October 2024 representing the first mainstream attempts to position extended reality devices as essential domestic technologies rather than niche gaming peripherals. Apple introduced the term "spatial computing" to distinguish its approach from traditional VR paradigms, emphasizing seamless integration with existing digital workflows and physical environments. Meta, building on its established VR ecosystem rooted in the aspirational concept of the Metaverse, promoted "mixed reality" capabilities that blur the boundaries between physical and digital spaces, positioning the Quest 3/3S as a bridge between social gaming and practical applications. Both launches were characterized by unprecedented marketing investment and visual campaigns that moved beyond technical specifications to focus on

lifestyle integration and emotional appeal. The following visual analysis examines their marketing visuals across four categories: isolated product shots, human-device interactions, phygital overlays showcasing AR capabilities, and full virtual immersion scenarios. Each reveals distinct strategic approaches to positioning digital experiences in consumers' lives [15].

**Device-Only Visuals**

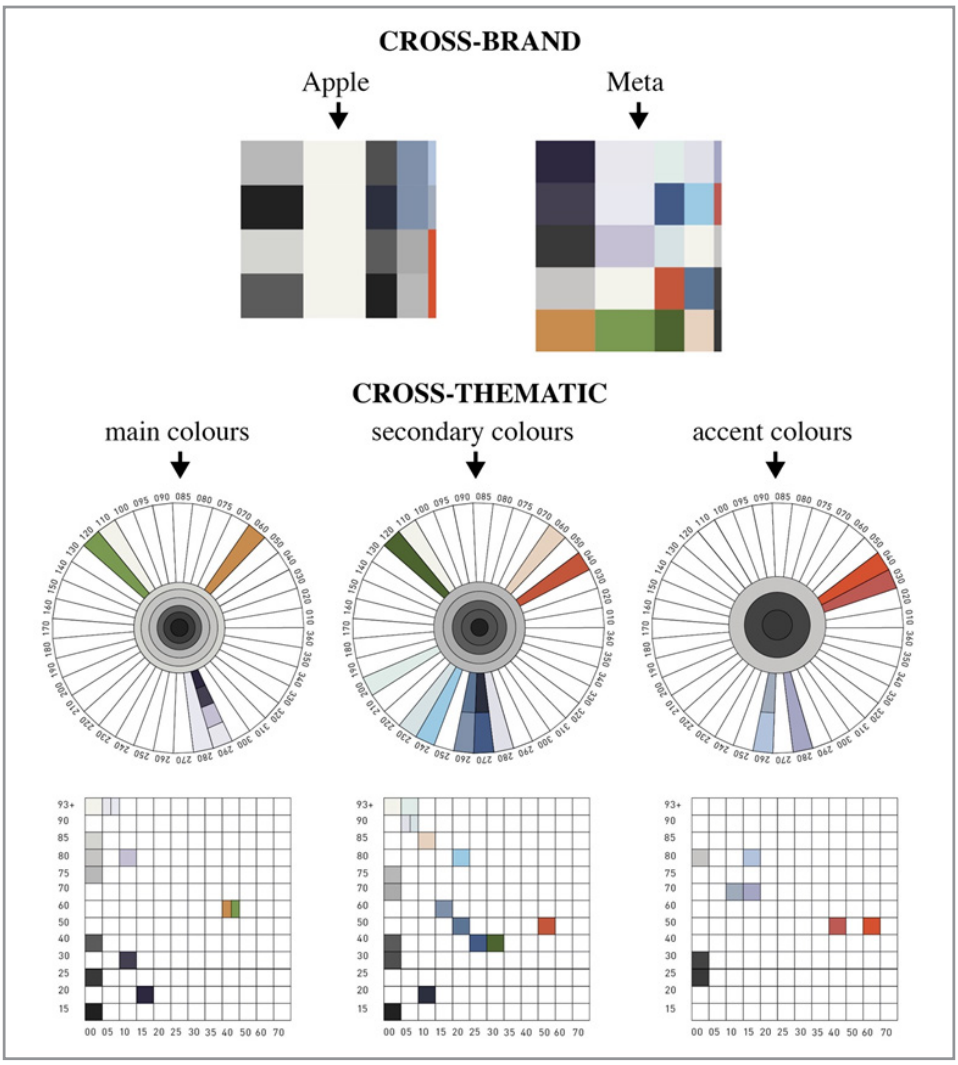


**Figure 3:** Colour analysis of device-only images

This category of launch images examines devices presented in isolation, positioning them as technological objects rather than lifestyle accessories. These devices function as tools for users to achieve an immersive experience. Apple uses greyscales and soft blue lighting as secondary colours against white backgrounds as main colour, showcasing the black screens of the device as their primary visual element. This creates serene futurity aligned with their design ethos of restraint and control. In accent colours, blues are repeated throughout, with occasional reddish-orange pops featured in the product design. Meta's Quest 3/3S visuals employ similar minimalism but with a wider range of greenish and blue pastels, creating a slightly more playful sci-fi aesthetic. Meta includes one exception of a warmer, more lifestyle-oriented presentation that introduces human warmth (Figure 3).

Both approaches reinforce the devices as advanced "functional machines," using corporate futurist palettes that prioritize technological identity over human connection. This colour strategy reflects a deliberate attempt to establish technological credibility through visual restraint, positioning XR devices within familiar paradigms of premium consumer electronics rather than experimental novelties. The predominance of cool tones and neutral palettes aims to normalise these face-worn computers by making them visually resemble familiar consumer electronics, reducing potential consumer anxiety about wearing devices that fundamentally alter what users see and experience.

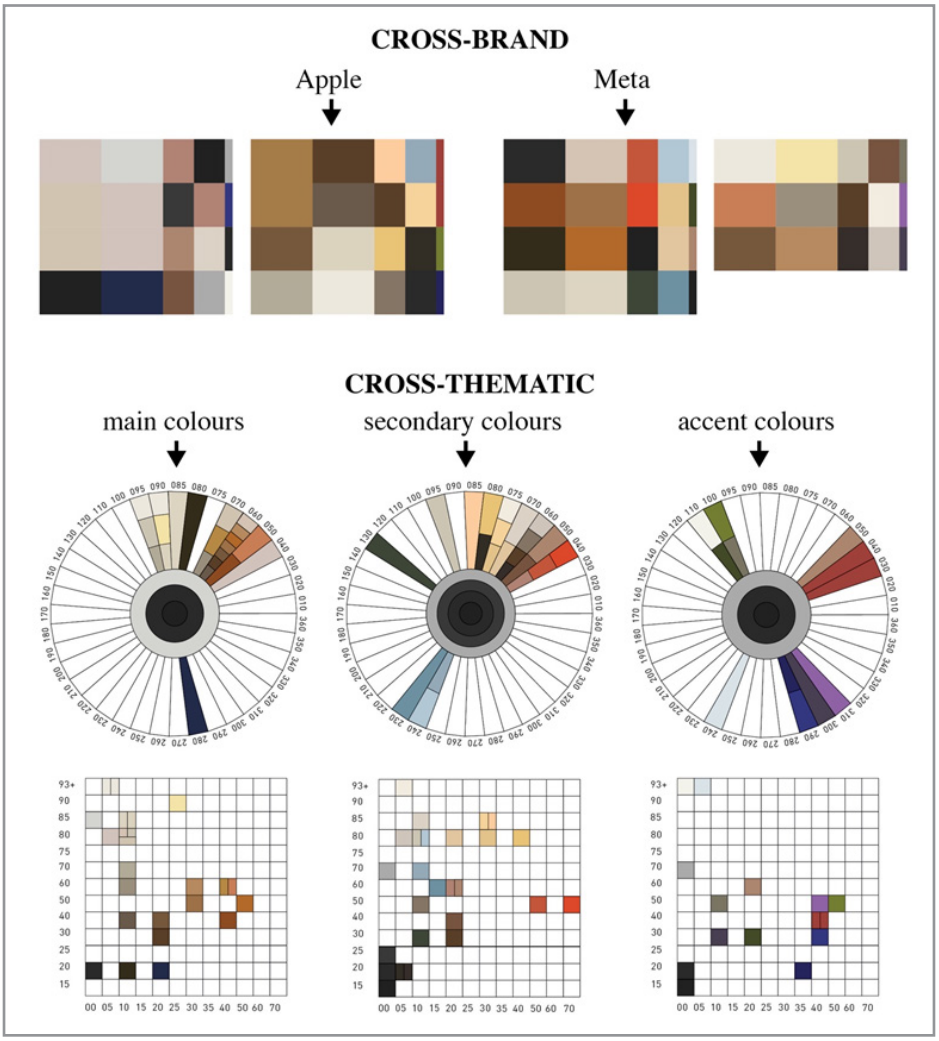


**Figure 4:** Colour analysis of human-device interaction

This thematic category of images typically depicts users wearing XR devices that cover their eyes and function as gateways into virtual environments. Significantly, the virtual worlds that users experience remain invisible to external observers, highlighting the inherent challenge of visualizing immersive experiences that exist primarily within the user's perception. This representation challenge leads both companies to focus on the external, physical moment of interaction rather than the internal, digital experience [16].

To address this challenge, Apple creates carefully orchestrated domestic environments. Their lifestyle visuals situate users in softly lit spaces featuring beige furniture, neutral-toned wooden surfaces, and cream-coloured walls with strategically visible textured materials. The device's cool tones remain constant but appear proportionally small and visually cushioned by surrounding neutrality and warmth, creating calculated aesthetic hybrids that render futuristic hardware emotionally palatable through a sophisticated colour palette, as shown in Figure 4.

Meta employs a similar strategy but with notably different energy levels. Their images introduce warmth through rustic wooden floors, warm-toned furniture, and cosy yet vibrant environmental elements that ground headsets in everyday life. Where Apple emphasizes tranquillity, Meta frequently combines cosy environments with excitement, e.g., gestures, open body language, active poses, suggesting comfort and dynamism can coexist, resulting in a more playful colour palette, as visualised in Figure 4.

The chromatic analysis reveals the consistency of this approach across both brands. In both companies, the settings produce warm colour palettes where main colours range between hues 40 to 95. Warm hues also dominate the secondary colours, though with increased chroma and occasional cool countering colours. Intense colours, reminiscent of early Metaverse imagery, only return in accent elements. When human users appear, the aesthetic register shifts dramatically from device-only presentations, as previously dominant greys and cold tones are softened by warmer ambient lighting, natural materials, and earth-toned palettes. This modulation marks a visual pivot from abstract technological prowess to emotional and sensory integration [17].

This visual strategy reflects deeper questions about human-technology relationships. XR headsets represent a more radical version of human-machine integration, functioning as interfaces that enable users' sensory systems to experience virtual worlds, thereby extending organic human capabilities and fundamentally altering perception of reality. Drawing from Haraway's (1991)

cyborg concept, these devices challenge traditional boundaries between human and machine, creating hybrid interconnections that expand identity beyond fixed categories. The headset becomes an extension of the organic body, facilitating what Haraway describes as fluid, multi-layered identities that characterize posthuman existence.

Yet the marketing visuals carefully manage this transformation through what Hayles (1999) terms homeostasis - the system's ability to maintain internal stability despite external changes. The warm, domestic environments function as stabilizing elements that counterbalance the radical technological integration occurring within the user. While users undergo profound internal transformations, for instance, inhabiting virtual avatars, navigating digital worlds, experiencing alternative embodiments, the external visual presentation emphasizes continuity and comfort. This aesthetic homeostasis allows viewers to process the posthuman transformation as evolution rather than rupture.

**Digital Overlays**

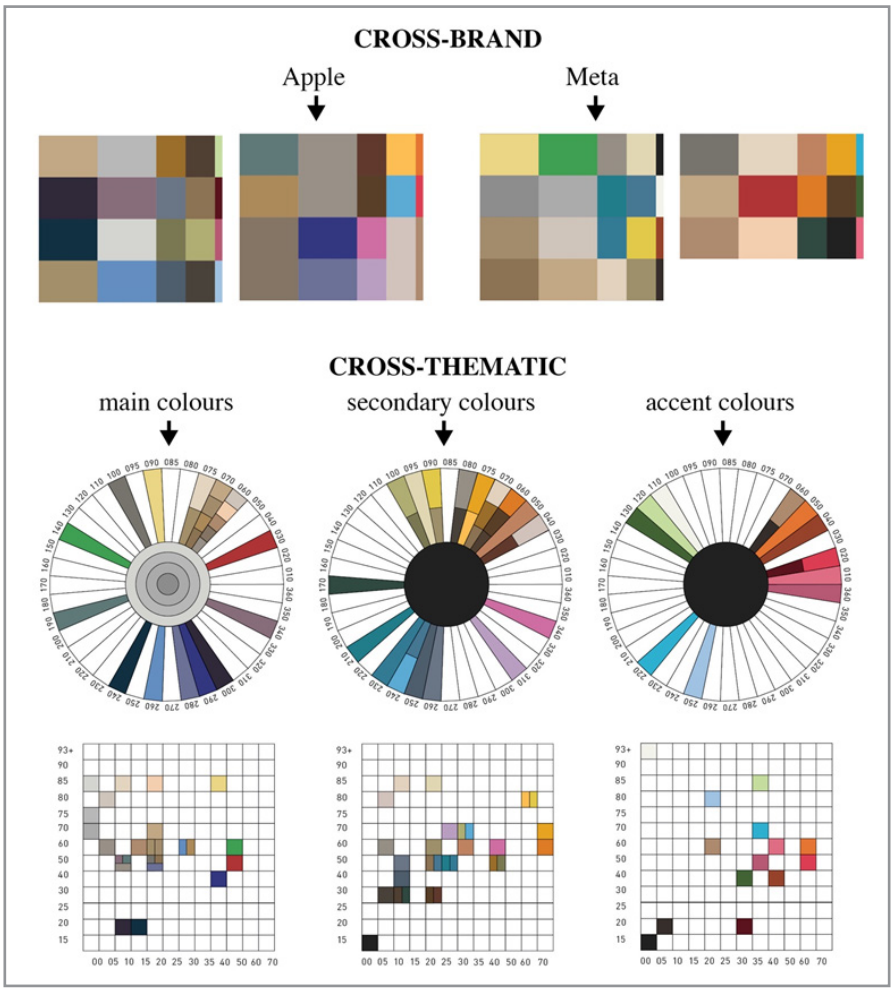


**Figure 5:** Colour analysis of digital overlays

Moving beyond isolated devices and human interactions, the digital overlay category reveals how both companies visualize the augmented reality experience itself. When depicting devices in active use through digital overlays both companies introduce distinct chromatic approaches using contrasting, luminous elements that create visual distinction between reality and synthetic additions. Unlike previous categories' external perspectives, these visualizations attempt to depict the user's actual augmented view, clearly indicating how devices enable extended reality experiences [17].

The technical approach centres on overlaying the physical world with augmented graphic elements that provide contextual information, navigation guidance, or interactive games within the user's view (Figure 5). Apple's Vision Pro overlays emphasize subtlety: translucent floating windows, UI frames, and contextual application views positioned at eye level. These additions preserve spatial realism, integrating comfortably within ambient space while maintaining chromatic coolness. Apple alternates between images including human silhouettes and overlay-only views. Meta's overlays favour more vivid presentation through brighter gaming settings with enhanced hues and digital dashboards in which the human stays present. Gaming elements and additional virtual characters frequently appear, establishing clearer virtual presence that emphasizes engagement over seamless integration.

This shift toward augmented visualization dramatically expands the chromatic palette. While many main and secondary colours remain in warm, soft hues, the range now spans the entire colour circle, incorporating both darker tones and more vibrant saturations. This expansion peaks in accent colours, which predominantly feature high-chroma pinks, reds, oranges, greens, and blues - a marked departure from the restrained palettes of

previous categories. These visualizations represent what Hayles identifies as the second wave of posthumanism: reflexivity. The images depict users wearing devices while showcasing immersive experiences that blur boundaries between physical and virtual realms, where "the tissue of the body becomes almost physically intertwined with that of the virtual surrounding it inhabits through immersion" [10]. This transformative process challenges conventional notions of materiality and embodiment by creating spaces that encompass "materiality on the one hand, information on the other" [7].

The images effectively communicate posthuman concepts by placing humans within phygital worlds, suggesting reality's transformation into hybrid spaces where physical and virtual boundaries become increasingly indistinguishable. The deliberately stylized quality of these physical settings may facilitate seamless integration by reducing perceptual gaps between digitally mediated environments and virtual overlays, echoing Konsa's (2008) observation that "one of the most evident characteristics of the contemporary world is the disappearance of borders between what is natural and what is artificial" (p.1).

Yet this technological integration produces its own visual contradictions. While attempting to normalize human-machine hybridization through familiar domestic settings, the promotional images exhibit unsettling qualities that contradict domestication efforts. This issue, which is also present in the human-device interaction category, becomes even more pronounced in these augmented overlays. Physical environments in both categories appear over-processed, creating hyperreal qualities where supposedly "natural" spaces feel artificial and staged. Lighting appears too perfect, surfaces too smooth, and human interactions too choreographed, generating uncanny effects where the familiar becomes strange. This inadvertently reveals fundamental tensions between authentic human experience and technologically mediated representation, resulting in visual rhetoric trapped in an uncomfortable middle ground that mirrors the ontological uncertainty of posthuman existence itself.

**Full Immersion Experiences**

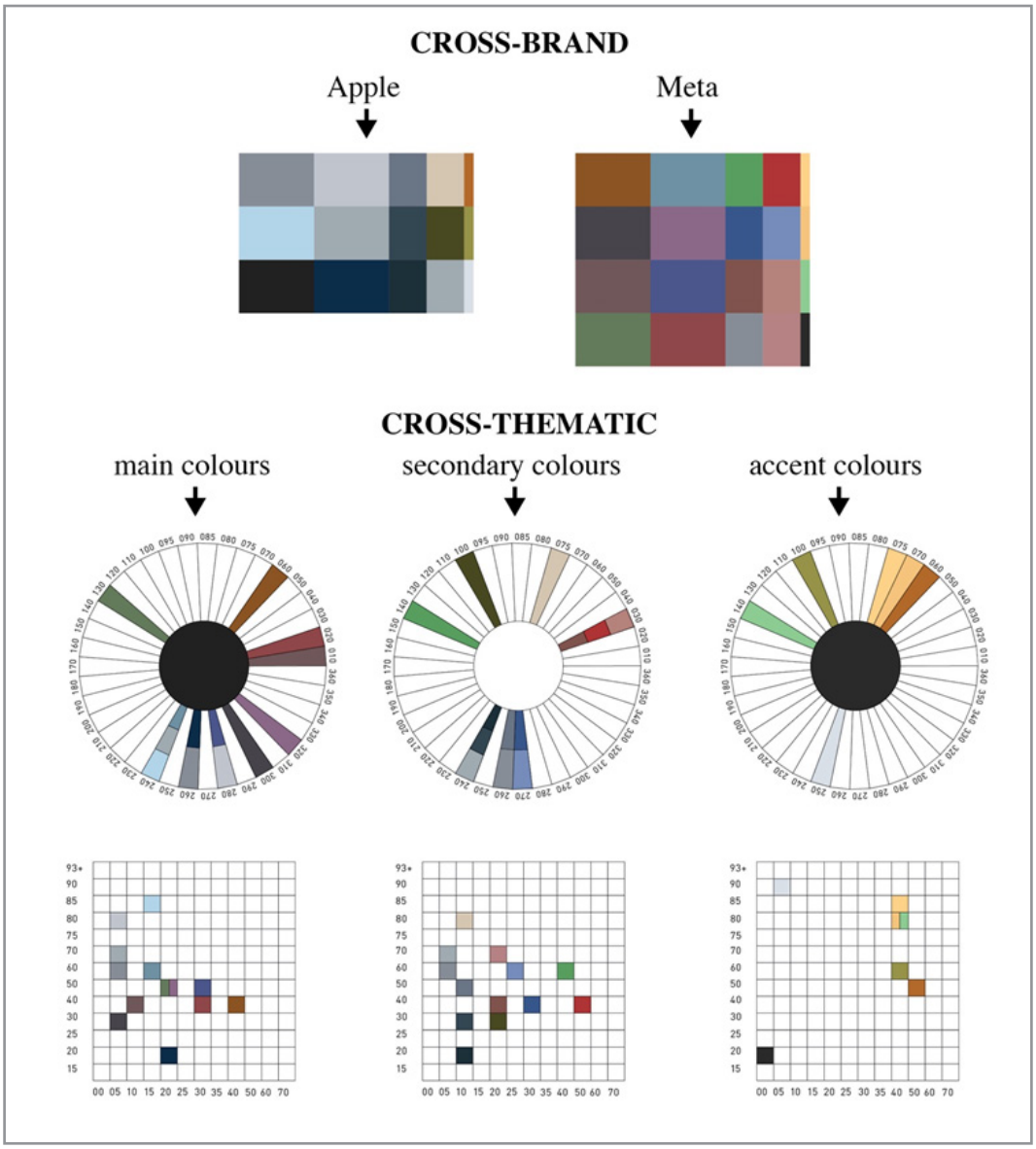


**Figure 6:** Colour analysis of full immersion

In depicting complete virtual environment engagement, brand differences become most apparent (Figure 6). Apple refers back to the more minimal colour palette of device-only images, with blues alongside greyscale in main and secondary colours. Greens provide natural undertones, while warm accent colours maintain the human element introduced in previous categories. Significantly, Apple removes humans from full-immersion imagery entirely, showcasing actual device views featuring nature imagery with less saturated, natural colour scopes that counter futuristic themes of excessive human-machine integration. This represents intensified technology integration within comfortable boundaries - humans retain biological integrity rather than becoming fully merged with technological systems [18].

Meta takes the opposite approach, predominantly placing humans within virtual worlds while they still wear devices as gateways back to physical reality. The colour palette features mid-range brightness with mixed secondary and main colours spanning greens, reds, blues, and violets, while accent colours serve as lighter or more intense focal points. This approach aligns with cyborg theory by placing humans in gaming settings, yet notably avoids the radical posthuman transformations of earlier Metaverse visions featuring humans merging into robots or coexistence amongst holograms and robots.

This moderated approach appears strategically designed to enhance accessibility. Rather than dramatic posthuman leaps, these full immersion experiences feel manageable: calm for Apple, playful for Meta. Apple additionally prepares users through incremental ecosystem updates, introducing liquid glass aesthetics in the iOS26 update on familiar devices like the iPhone to bridge toward Vision Pro's spatial computing interface. Both companies emphasize technology's benefits while highlighting virtual environment possibilities, prioritizing user comfort over radical transformation.

These representations constitute a pre-stage of posthuman evolution. Applying Haraway's (1991) cyborg theory, technology remains external rather than biologically integrated - users can remove devices, maintaining separation between human and machine. Within Hayles' (1999) framework, users embody new identities, develop altered spatial perceptions navigating between physical and virtual environments, and adopt hybrid cognitive processes blending embodied experience with digital information processing. This virtuality demonstrates how technological interactions reshape human bodies, identities, and self-understanding, prompting critical interrogation of boundaries governing human-nonhuman relationships. The visual narrative fosters awareness that humans are not detached from non-human entities but intricately intertwined - raising the fundamental question: what exactly are we becoming?

## Discussion

### The Cozy Tech Paradigm Shift Aesthetic Softening of Posthuman Hybridity

The visual analysis reveals a fundamental reframing of posthuman aesthetics within contemporary technology marketing. Earlier Metaverse narratives emphasized synthetic abstraction, creating a decontextualized aesthetic. Colour palettes of greys, blacks, whites, and saturated digital hues supported visions of human-machine fusion that remained speculative rather than situated within recognizable lived experience. These representations pushed Hayles' (1999) posthuman waves to extremes, depicting humans as physical cyborgs coexisting with robots, holograms, and artificial entities in fully synthetic environments.

Contemporary Apple and Meta visuals demonstrate aesthetic moderation without abandoning hybridity principles. They relocate technological interaction within familiar domestic contexts through warm tones, natural materials, and ambient lighting that reframe human-technology engagement as comforting rather than alienating. Users shift from avatars inhabiting cyberspace to domestic subjects engaging with digital overlays within recognizable environments. This measured approach visualizes the first two posthuman waves, homeostasis and reflexivity, through device interaction and physical-virtual blending, while treating the third wave of virtuality with caution to avoid overwhelming potential users as they may not yet be ready to accept their posthuman cyborg identity [19].

The branded visuals reveal strategic aesthetic modulation rather than singular approaches, carefully orchestrated oscillation between cool minimalism, cosy warmth, and synthetic spectacle. This represents a shift from the limited color palettes of early Metaverse imagery toward richer visual environments that support diverse emotional experiences. When devices appear alone, they remain anchored in high-tech futurism. Once humans appear, visuals soften through tactile materials, earth-toned palettes, and natural lighting. Digital overlays then reintroduce chromatic intensity through colour pops, glowing interfaces, saturated hues-creating tension with environmental softness.
This compositional logic indicates the emergence of maturing posthuman aesthetic discourse. Strategic emphasis has shifted from demonstrating technological transcendence toward normalizing hybrid embodiment. Through deliberate aesthetic modulation, brands engage in preparatory visual conditioning, preparing users for environments where posthuman existence becomes experientially familiar. However, certain imagery generates uncanny responses through inauthentic representations, revealing ongoing tensions between current visual representations and the seamless integration envisioned by technology corporations.

### Cozy Tech as Transitional Aesthetic Strategy

Cozy Tech emerges as more than design trend, functioning as transitional aesthetic mediating between techno-futuristic visions and emotional legibility. Through warm tones, familiar textures, and everyday settings, Cozy Tech visuals normalize hybridity, rendering the posthuman condition approachable and domestically situated. This trend recognizes that successful adoption requires emotional as well as functional acceptance, with color playing a key role through its emotional power.

Building upon Edelkoort's (2023) emphasis on tactility, muted palettes, and sensory well-being, this article extends her concept into visual media analysis, revealing strategic adaptation in marketing communications designed to make users feel comfortable regarding immersive device integration. This approach aestheticizes posthuman transition as gradual, secure, and emotionally grounded, prioritizing user comfort over technological spectacle.

Significantly, Cozy Tech does not reject digital overlays but provides backdrops of trust against which technological augmentation can operate without generating anxiety. While environmental settings embrace domesticity, devices maintain their sleek, functional aesthetic-preserving technological sophistication while embedding them within approachable contexts. Users remain cyborgs within beige environments, warm lighting, and natural textures while interfacing with precisely engineered technological objects. The posthuman condition becomes domestically comfortable through careful design approach that manages technological integration pace while maintaining devices' advanced status.

However, this strategy also can also produce uncanny valley effects, where deliberate construction of familiar environments creates subtle dissonance that undermines intended comfort, revealing ongoing challenges in achieving seamless physical-virtual integration.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

This study's limitation to Western technology corporations may not reflect aesthetic strategies across diverse cultural contexts, potentially constraining broader applicability. Additionally, reliance on video screenshot analysis introduces compositional considerations, though systematic selection protocols ensured representative sampling. Future research should investigate whether this aesthetic softening persists or evolves as posthuman technologies mature. Comparative studies across cultural contexts and non-Western design systems could expand understanding of how visual culture shapes collective navigation toward hybrid futures and contemporary redefinitions of human identity within technological contexts.

A logical extension of this research would involve developing evidence-based design guidelines that practitioners can implement to create more effective visual representations of human-technology integration, bridging the gap between critical analysis and industry application.

## Conclusion

This analysis of visual representations across two distinct phases of posthuman technology marketing, from early Metaverse imagery (2021-2023) to contemporary XR brand visuals (2023-2024), reveals a fundamental transformation in how technological hybridity is aesthetically constructed and culturally positioned. The evolution from rather cold, synthetic posthuman imagery toward strategically modulated visual environments demonstrates the emergence of a carful transitional aesthetic that recalibrates posthuman integration within familiar domestic contexts.

The research findings illuminate the critical role that colour and comfort play in facilitating consumer acceptance of extended reality technologies. The aesthetic softening strategy exemplified by Cozy Tech principles represents more than superficial design evolution; it constitutes a deliberate recalibration that prioritizes emotional accessibility over technological spectacle. By embedding XR devices within warm, tactile environments characterized by earth tones, natural materials, and ambient lighting, contemporary marketing transforms the posthuman condition from alienating rupture into comfortable evolution. The strategic deployment of aesthetic modulation across different representational contexts, device isolation, human interaction, digital overlays, and full immersion, reveals sophisticated understanding of how visual elements guide consumer perception. Rather than employing uniform approaches, both Apple and Meta demonstrate nuanced awareness that different interaction scenarios require distinct visual languages, moving beyond one-size-fits-all futuristic imagery toward strategies that acknowledge the complexity of human-technology relationships.

The transition from revolutionary Metaverse discourse to evolutionary visual strategies, indicates recognition that posthuman transformation may be more effectively achieved through gradual integration rather than dramatic disruption. Contemporary visuals position users not as pioneers entering alien technological territories but as domestic subjects seamlessly incorporating augmented capabilities within recognizable environments. However, the analysis also reveals persistent tensions within contemporary posthuman aesthetics. The deliberate construction of familiar environments often generates uncanny valley effects that betray the very domesticity these visuals attempt to establish. Hyperreal domestic settings and choreographed interactions create visual dissonance that exposes the fundamental challenges of representing authentic human-technology integration, suggesting that the development of mature posthuman visual culture remains incomplete.

This study demonstrates that posthuman aesthetics are not merely reflective of technological development but actively constitutive of cultural acceptance for human-technology integration. The careful orchestration of colour, comfort, and visual context within contemporary XR marketing reveals careful awareness that posthuman becoming requires not only technological innovation but aesthetic choices based in design approach. As extended reality technologies continue evolving toward mainstream adoption, the visual languages that frame these experiences will remain critical factors in determining how successfully societies navigate the profound transformations that define our technological moment.

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