

Mark Zuckerberg says Meta wants to 'introduce AI agents to billions of people'

Meta sees "an opportunity to introduce AI agents to billions of people in ways that will be useful and meaningful," CEO Mark Zuckerberg told investors today.

While he was vague about how exactly Meta will add generative AI to its apps, Zuckerberg gave the most detailed preview yet during the company's earnings call for the first quarter of this year, when it reported \$28.6 billion in revenue and a record 2 billion daily users of the Facebook app, beating Wall Street's estimates. Meta's profit for the quarter was \$5.7 billion, a 24 percent decrease from the same time last year.

"We're exploring chat experiences in WhatsApp and Messenger, visual creation tools for posts in Facebook and Instagram and ads, and over time video and multi-modal experiences as well," Zuckerberg said on the earnings call. "I expect that these tools will be valuable for everyone from regular people to creators to businesses. For example, I expect that a lot of interest in AI agents for business messaging and customer support will come once we nail that experience. Over time, this will extend to our work on the metaverse, too, where people will much more easily be able to create avatars, objects, worlds, and code to tie all of them together."

"We are no longer behind in building our AI infrastructure"

With the distraction of the company rebrand and Zuckerberg's focus on the metaverse, Meta initially dragged its feet on building the infrastructure it needs to support these kinds of

AI features, leading it to spend billions of dollars on rehauling its data centers in recent quarters. Today, Zuckerberg said that “we are no longer behind in building our AI infrastructure” and teased that generative AI products will be released in the coming months.

The unprecedented success of OpenAI’s ChatGPT has made generative AI the tech trend *du jour*, with Google, Meta, and smaller players like Snap now racing to build competing applications. While Meta released an AI language model called LLaMA to researchers earlier this year, it has yet to debut anything resembling ChatGPT in a way that is widely accessible.

It sounds like that won’t be the case for much longer. Zuckerberg said today that generative AI is “literally going to touch every single one of our products” and hinted at how the technology could specifically speed up WhatsApp’s nascent customer support business. “Once you light up the ability for tens of millions of AI agents acting on their behalf, you’ll have way more businesses that can afford to have people engaging in chat,” he said.

While Meta may be pivoting to AI like the rest of the industry, it isn’t giving up on the metaverse, according to Zuckerberg. He said the “narrative that has developed that Meta is moving away from the metaverse” is “not accurate,” as evidenced by the planned debut of the next Quest VR headset later this year. Meta’s Reality Labs division reported a net loss of \$4 billion last quarter, and the company said it expects “operating losses to increase year over year in 2023.”

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