

The Future of Business in Pittsburgh

June 2022

Schell Games' Jesse Schell speaks with Mark Zuckerberg about the future of AR & VR

Jesse Schell, the founder and CEO of Pittsburgh-based [Schell Games](#), recently joined Mark Zuckerberg, the co-founder & CEO of Meta (formerly called Facebook) on a video conversation to discuss how their companies are collaborating to build the future of augmented and virtual reality.

Founded in 2002, Schell Games is the largest full-service education and entertainment game development company in the United States and has created connected physical toys as well as games and virtual experiences for mobile platforms, mixed reality, desktop, and more. Some of their innovative and award-winning projects include the I Expect You To Die franchise, Happy Atoms, Until You Fall, and some of the most popular interactive theme park attractions in the world.



Meta co-founder & CEO Mark Zuckerberg in conversation with Schell Games' Jesse Schell

During their conversation, Schell and Zuckerberg discussed how mixed reality is going to change the future of gaming, work, and fitness. In particular they discussed how forthcoming headsets (Project Cambria and beyond) will be able to blend AR and VR experiences, toggling back and forth between the two when necessary.

Schell Games is currently working on the VR version of the mega-hit online multiplayer social deduction game Among Us, which exceeded 100 million downloads in 2020 and has inspired YouTube and TikTok content that has been viewed billions of times. It is slated for release towards the end of 2022.

You can find the full conversation between Mark Zuckerberg and Jesse Schell on [Zuckerberg's Facebook page](#).

Pittsburgh continues to advance in global startup ecosystem ranking

Pittsburgh has moved up 10 places and is now ranked 13th in a list of "Top 100 Emerging Ecosystems" which was released as part of Startup Genome's 2022 Global Startup Ecosystem Report (GSER), a 382-page report which analyzes data on over three million companies, nearly 300 ecosystems, and survey data from more than 10,000 startup executives across the globe. The report cited an above-average number of exits, including IPOs of [Duolingo](#) and [Aurora](#), as part of the reason for Pittsburgh's rise. Startup Genome also highlighted the Pittsburgh region's clusters focused on robotics, advanced manufacturing, and life sciences.

According to Jake Loosararian, the founder and CEO of Pittsburgh-based [Gecko Robotics](#), Pittsburgh's broad leadership in technology is a reason for this success. "We're the robotics capital, but we're also leaders in software, biotech and biomanufacturing, and consumer internet. For a fast-growing startup, Pittsburgh is a great place to be for the core reasons outlined by GSER: the concentration of tech talent, the intensive support for R&D, and our affordability and livability," he says.

Pittsburgh's rise from #23 to #13 in the course of a year is a significant increase, but there is strong optimism that Pittsburgh will rise even more in the coming years. You can find additional coverage of this from [InnovatePGH](#) and [Pittsburgh Inno](#), or find the full report from [Startup Genome](#).



Pittsburgh continues to rise in the ranks of global startup ecosystems.

Pittsburgh Business News and Updates

- Duolingo launches revamped app for easier language learning
(<https://www.cnet.com/tech/services-and-software/8-changes-duolingo-is-making-for-easier-language-learning/>)
- OtterTune raises \$12M to automate database maintenance
(<https://venturebeat.com/2022/05/13/ottertune-raises-12m-to-automate-database-maintenance/>)
- Apollo Neuroscience taps new CTO with experience at Apple, Facebook
(<https://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/inno/stories/news/2022/05/11/apollo-neuro-new-chief-technology-officer.html>)
- Men's cosmetics company Stryx appears on ABC's Shark Tank
(<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20220513005004/en/Stryx-Appears-on-ABC%E2%80%99s-Shark-Tank>)
- Astrobotic and NASA test their lunar lander and rover system
(<https://technical.ly/startups/astrobotic-nasa-lunar-lander/>)
- University of Pittsburgh spinout BioSystics uses "Digital Twins" to advance precision medicine
(<https://www.post-gazette.com/business/bop/2022/06/06/university-pittsburgh-digital-patient-twins-d-lansing-taylor-biosystics-peter-ellis-oncology-business-of-pittsburgh/stories/202205310060>)



About Ryan

Ryan O'Shea is a JETRO Investment Advisor focused on connecting Japanese companies to opportunities in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is the host of Future Grind, a podcast that explores the ethics and impact of emerging science and technology, and also works with the Pittsburgh Robotics Network. In 2017, Ryan co-founded an artificial intelligence startup that was named a Top 10 team in the IBM Watson AI XPRIZE. Ryan has represented NASA and CalTech's Jet Propulsion Laboratory as a Solar System Ambassador and serves both as a World Economic Forum Global Shaper and an ambassador for Pittsburgh AI. He is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh & serves on the boards of multiple non-profit organizations.