

CSCI 420 Computer Graphics  
Lecture 25

## Virtual Reality

History of Virtual Reality  
Flight Simulators  
Immersion, Interaction, Real-time  
Haptics

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## Virtual reality

“computer-simulated environments that can simulate physical presence in places in the real world, as well as in imaginary worlds”



U.S. Navy personnel using a VR parachute trainer  
Source: Wikipedia

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## Virtual reality

- One of the “hottest” R&D areas today
- Applications
  - medical training, future surgery?
  - interior design, civil engineering
  - videoconferencing
  - exploration of future worlds
  - ethics, philosophy, psychology, who am I, and what are we?



Source: NASA

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## Virtual reality is a “hot” topic today

- Many startup companies
- Games
- Film
- Design (create 3D models, animations in VR)
- Social networks



Oculus VR

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## 14 grand challenges in engineering (by the US National Academy of Engineering)

- Make Solar Energy Economical
- Provide Energy from Fusion
- Develop Carbon Sequestration Methods
- Manage the Nitrogen Cycle
- Provide Access to Clean Water
- Restore and Improve Urban Infrastructure
- Advance Health Informatics
- Engineer Better Medicines
- Reverse-Engineer the Brain
- Prevent Nuclear Terror
- Secure Cyberspace
- Enhance Virtual Reality
- Advance Personalized Learning
- Engineer the Tools of Scientific Discovery

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## History of virtual reality

- 50+ years of history



Link Trainer, 1929  
(over 500,000  
pilots trained)



Source:  
Microsoft

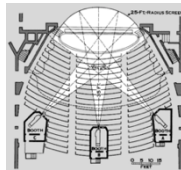
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## Cinerama

- Expand movie-going experience by filling a larger portion of the audience's visual field
- Required special cameras to film
- Proved too costly to be embraced by most commercial theaters



1950s



Source: Wikipedia

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## Cinerama



How the west was won, 1962 (John Ford)

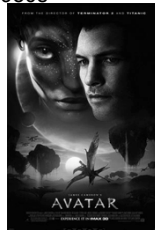
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## Virtual reality and film

- VR heavily influenced by film techniques
- Hollywood, from early 1950s



1982



2009

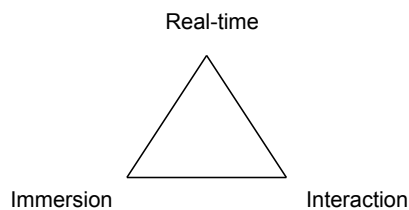
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## Avatar (2009)



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## The virtual reality triangle



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## Immersion

- The feeling of "being there"
- User becomes part of the simulated world
- Rather than the simulated world being a feature in the user's world



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## Interaction

- Possibility of moving in the virtual space and manipulate objects
- Without it, illusion breaks down quickly

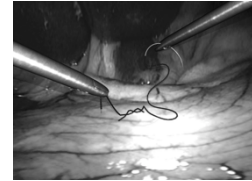


World of Warcraft

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## Real-time

- Actions should immediately affect the world
- Computers must simulate the world
- Huge computational burden
- Large computer science challenges

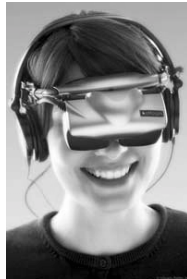


Virtual suturing  
Source: Surgical Science

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## Head-mounted displays

- Requires **rapid** update rates (min 30 fps, preferably 60 fps)
- very fast tracking and redisplay
- short lag times
- no noticeable delay between movement and production of correct visuals
- if these are not satisfied => **simulator sickness**



Source: Atticus Graybill of Virtually Better, Inc.

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## Cave

- Project 3D CG into a cube with displays surrounding the viewer
- Coupled with head tracking systems (and other tracking systems e.g. hand)
- Usually surround audio feedback
- Viewer explores virtual world by moving and interacting in the virtual environment



Source: Dave Pape

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## Augmented reality

- Enhances your reality with graphics, haptics, sound



Source: bestofmicro.com, cultofandroid.com

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## Virtual reality "hardware"



Source: Dave Pape



Source: Mario Tama, Getty Images



Source: VirtuSphere

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### Flight simulators

- Key driving force of virtual reality technologies
- US Air Force, NASA
- Friend/foe identification
- Targeting/threat information
- Optimal flight path



Source: NASA

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### Flight simulators

- Must manage and render the virtual world
- Shadows and textures
- Motion and force feedback
- Professional flight simulators are still very expensive (millions of \$)



Thales flight simulator  
Source: Wikipedia

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### Train simulation



Fujitsu train simulator (2008)



### Tank simulator

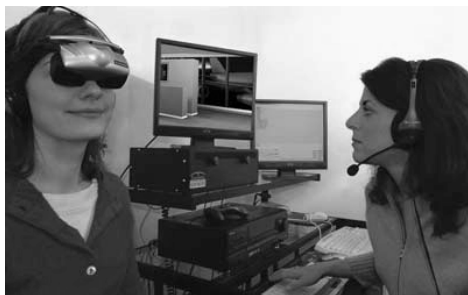


Stryker armored vehicle simulator

Source: Jason Kaye, U.S. Army

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### Application in medicine: Phobia treatment



Source: Virtually Better, Inc.

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### Application in medicine: Phobia treatment



Source: Virtually Better, Inc.

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## Application in TV and sports

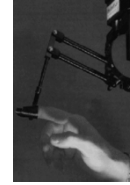


First-down line  
Source: SporTVision

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## Haptic interfaces

- hap-tic ('hap-tik)  
adj.  
Of or relating to the sense of touch; tactile.



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## Force-feedback rendering



Phantom 3-DoF device  
(Sensable)



Force-feedback  
mouse  
(Immersion)

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## Force-feedback rendering

Barbič and James 2007

## Simulation in games



Silent Hunter 4 (Ubisoft)

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## Virtual reality in games



Source: Colin Anderson

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## Discussion

- Can we simulate anything?
- What is reality?



## Why virtual worlds?



Leontopodium alpinum  
Source: appolonio&battista

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