

THE FUTURE OF VIRTUAL REALITY

When we think about a new reality constructed in the future, VR plays a great role in stimulating these emulations to create an experience similar to our reality at hand or one completely different than the world we see on a daily basis.

That the potential is now increasingly clear is what makes VR so exciting. These technologies, although clunky, are at a similar stage to the cinema in the early twentieth century, or TV in the 1930s: it's a new type of media – even a new way of seeing the world.

At the same time, VR needs to get past these 'fun' visions to become a ubiquitous technology. Over time, virtual rollercoaster rides and space missions will not be enough to sustain VR, even if they do provide a gripping source for journalists' writing about such a dry subject as technology. VR headsets will be mostly an enterprise play for the next few years, and will remain bulky and unattractive to most consumers.

To make the leap from gimmick to transformative mainstream technology, VR may need to be a little less exciting and a bit more useful.

One increasingly potential area for VR is training. By using headsets, companies can standardize training, and make it easier for their staff to learn in-house, cutting costs for travelling, trainers and lost productivity. In 2018 Walmart said they were using more than 17,000 Oculus Go headsets in stores to train staff on a new technology and customer service. Besides they were using VR to test whether their workers had middle-management skills. The company explained that because VR made training more like an experience it improved retention of new knowledge - their test scores increased up to 15%.

Another example is a research project at Imperial College Healthcare Trust in London. During the research they were using Microsoft's mixed-reality headset to plan plastic surgery, identifying which tissue and veins can be used in reconstructive operations. Indeed, healthcare is becoming a rich area for VR experimentation, with everything from VR projects to tackling social anxiety to AR for training doctors.

While the technology is vastly superior to that 20 years ago, there are still significant limitations. VR headsets are still too heavy (many come with weighty backpacks), which makes them hard to use over long periods, and too expensive

and too complicated for a casual user. Even worse, to get the best graphics you're still required to be tethered to a PC.

We are witnessing a curious tendency: the world of UI is moving towards getting rid of accessories that stand between the user and content –a mouse and keyboard. The gestures on a tablet are one step forward in this direction. Now users can interact seamlessly with 2D interfaces on the screen, simply using their fingers.

Virtual reality has come a long way in a short time, and it's still advancing at a rapid rate. It shows a lot of promise for the future as it gives an immersive experience for a user. Thus businesses may leverage this key feature and take a step further in their product and services advancement.