Real Innovators Use VR for Social Good

Gary Radburn • January 11, 2018

Wow. Just wow......

The past year of 2017 has been a phenomenal journey at breakneck speed into the new and unknown. Virtual reality (VR)/Augmented reality (AR) revenue estimates were forecast in the billions for 2017 and sure enough, sales grew and grew throughout the year. In fact, VR headsets passed the milestone of one million headsets per quarter in the 3rd quarter of 2017.

At CES 2018, we made a few VR announcements with new ‘Ready for VR’ gaming desktops and that Dell will now be selling HTC Vive and Meta headsets on Dell.com. Dell Alienware also hosted the Alienware VR Cup National in Las Vegas last week and introduced a new category of eSports with VR gaming.
However, new ways of using AR and VR have emerged to prove that there is a place for this technology outside of 360 videos and shooting zombies that makes it a far more enduring technology than some of the naysayers at the start made it out to be. It has captured the imagination and innovation of a far larger audience in areas where perhaps VR and AR was not even a consideration before it became affordable and accessible. Areas where the prime consideration is for societal good rather than a 'quick buck/pound/insert denomination here' and innovation improves the quality of life for us and future generations to come. Therefore, we find it important to shine a spotlight on our partners that are doing exactly that and have highlighted some trailblazing examples here.

**VR to save the planet**

We’re excited to announce a new VR series with National Geographic Explorer Mike Libecki. Mike has been on more than 75 expeditions to the most remote areas of the planet and at CES, we’ll debut the first two experiences in the series, including *Greenland: Unexplored Earth*. The episode will be available to anyone with a headset starting today. Mike and his team used the power of Dell Precision workstations to create these experiences with the goal of inviting people to join him on these adventures and build a stronger appreciation for the planet, particularly with the growing impact of climate change.

**VR treatment to save war heroes**

Dr. Skip Rizzo, Creative Technologies Institute, University of Southern California, has been using Dell VR-ready PCs to revolutionize rehabilitation practices for soldiers suffering from PTSD, patients that are post stroke or recovering from traumatic brain injury, and for prosthetic use training. He is also working on building VR scenarios to address social and vocational interaction in persons with autism.

**Advancing VR through academia**

Carolina Cruz-Neidra, the world-renowned inventor of the CAVE virtual environment, is currently leading the University of Arkansas Emerging Analytics Center for faculty, researchers, and students to explore advanced applications of VR, mixed reality (MR) and visualization. She’s been using her CAVE VR for applications to advance business, but also to promote computer science work and research in education, including computer science programs in public schools.

**Building the next generation of VR innovators**

Marie Graham is a teacher at the Mount Vernon Presbyterian School in Atlanta, GA. With help from Dell, NVIDIA, Oculus and HTC, she helped introduce a VR lab for students to learn content creation, certifications, and other VR focused curriculum using our Dell Alienware and Precision hardware. These are the kids who will change the world.

There’s much to celebrate in VR innovation, but at the heart are the people using the technology to do amazing things which will leave a greater mark on the world. Whilst there are still many that are skeptical of whether VR will really “take off,” we are looking forward and committed to its potential, particularly the positive impact it could have on our world with the accessibility of technology. Oh, and by the way, 2018 looks like it is going to be another year at breakneck speed for VR/AR so buckle up and join us in the ride ahead!

Hear more from Mike Libecki and Carolina Cruz-Neidra in this video from CES 2018:
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