Design Fiction in VR. Participation Proposal.

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Abstract

In the VR experiences that we have grown to know today, the user is immersed in a world of someone else's making, and the thrill of discovering what this new world holds has pushed VR forward into considerably being the next step in human entertainment. However, this immersive feature can also be utilised as a research platform in which anyone can create different environments. Together with landscapes, warped laws of physics and even other existing lifeforms, a world building VR experience can become a way to explore different possibilities for what our own planet earth might become.

This paper will explore the idea of using design fiction for research and as an inventive tool for the creation of Artificial Reality experiences that will immerse the user into a depiction of future circumstances.

Author Keywords
Artificial Reality; futurism; transhumanism; world building

Introduction
Design fiction is the practice that bridges our current way of life with future possibilities. The creation of user experiences that suggest how our lives might be in the near or far future help convey the designer's vision to the public, and make these concepts tangible and cohesive.

Similar to the role of science fiction in our lives, design fiction might accurately predict future realities and ways of life and also help us get accustomed to these ideas in due time before they even arrive.

In the face of global calamity, design fiction might be imperative in exploring alternatives for the future. Perhaps how our lives in other planets might be, or what kind of future awaits us in a planet with environmental conditions that differ from what we know today.

Implementation
AR/VR systems in which you can build 3D objects and experiences are already a reality. Rudimentary as it might be, the AR Minecraft game might be the best example for the direction in which the technology is currently going.

However, the technology is still quite outwards-based, in that the user creates changes that only affect the world around them. What would happen if a physics elements was implemented? If a user could emulate the weaker gravitational force on the surface of the moon? A new level of experimentation would take place.

Elements of Change
In the world building experience for this VR system, there would be different levels of change, the initial levels would be time, environment, and physics.

Time would be manipulated at will, and it would be possible to speed up or slow down time and see how the environment develops under the current circumstances.

Environment would range from the flora and fauna to the level of pollution, the relationships between the species living in such environment, and the way in which the natural resources are consumed.

Physics would be an element that in many cases would require a deeper understanding of the fundamental laws ruling our planet and the ways in which they behave depending on the circumstances. The user would have the option to warp such laws and observe the way in which the environment in affected by these changes.

Purposes
The different uses for such an experience could be educational, explorational or merely for entertainment purposes.

What we would need to survive in different environments would no longer be mere speculation, it would be directly put to the test in this VR experience.

Predictions for survival under trying circumstances would be available to the public, and thus, the educational element would take place

This project correlates with the idea of design fiction in that you are allowed to create virtual environments that predict future conditions or the conditions in a distant universe that we might be able to visit someday.

References

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