

VR Demo Best Practices

Recommended procedures for facilitating demos



Overview

This document will discuss best practices for facilitating VR demos. Demos are a critical tool for demonstrating product functionality and collecting user feedback.

Demo Facilitator

It is beneficial to assign non-users, known as Demo Facilitators, to oversee a demo. Their responsibilities may include:

- Recording observation data
- Starting software applications
- Supervising the user's experience
- Managing physical hardware setup

A Demo Facilitator should always be aware of the user's safety and continually observe the user for warning signs such as:

- User fatigue
- Proximity to obstacles
- Decline in user comfort
- Leaving the Physical Area

Virtual Area Boundary Markers

While immersed inside VR, the user should remain within the Physical Area at all times to reduce the risk of bodily harm or equipment damage. Overtime, the user may forget where specifically they are located in their Physical Area. The following should be explained to the user beforehand.

Some experiences may include visual markers on the virtual floor to inform the user of their current location. This allows the user see where they are currently located in relation to the physical area boundary. Not all experiences contain visual markers.

Fortunately, SteamVR has a feature named "Chaperone" that provides a common system across all SteamVR experiences. While wearing the HMD, the user will see a set of virtual lines or a fence that marks the borders for both the Physical and Virtual Areas. Moving past these lines indicates the user is exiting the configured Physical Area.

Communicating with the User

Once the user puts on the HMD and potentially headphones, it will become increasingly difficult to communicate effectively as the user's attention is more focused on the experience. It may be helpful to preface each experience with a brief explanation on the following:

- Interaction mechanisms: the input and movement systems
- Objectives: the goal or outcome
- Conditions: the setting and objects that allow for interaction

If the goal of the demo is to collect feedback on a product, consider asking the user to think out loud. In those situations, it may also be beneficial to minimize directions to observe how the user explores the experience.

Disruptions

External interactions with the outside world may pull the user out of the experience, cause bodily injury, or damage equipment. Avoid touching the user in most circumstances but provide assistance when necessary. Inform the user beforehand to reduce the risk of a negative reaction.

Other examples of disruptions may stem from:

- Outside sound
- Noticing the cable
- Loss of device tracking* (HMD, controllers, etc.)
- Interaction with real world objects that are not in the virtual experience

*Note: this may stem from bystanders blocking the tracking equipment.

Cable Management

Depending on the user's expertise level, cable management may be required. Watch the user's initial movements to determine if they are capable of managing the cable personally. Common signs are instinctively stepping over or untwisting themselves from the cable.

Other users may need external cable management assistance. The simplest method is to personally guide the cable as needed. Observe both the user and the VR experience simultaneously; watch for indications that the user may be approaching a constricting situation such as tripping over the cable or becoming tangled in the cable.

The most common method is to manually reposition the cable such as lifting it over the user's head or under the user's feet. It may be helpful to inform the user of the intention and any required cooperation. This may become unnecessary as the user's understanding and comfort level increases. Many users are eventually capable of personally managing cables without external assistance.

HMD Hygiene

HMD hygiene is vitally important for shared hardware setups such as showroom floor demos. Refer to the VR Equipment Setup - HTC Vive white paper for recommended cleaning techniques.

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