VR Events: Do's and Don'ts for Making Great First Impressions

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VIRTUAL REALITY DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE
MARCH 18–19, 2019 | #GDC19

Introductions

Melissa Swanepoel **Patrick Curry**

FARBRIDGE

MASTER WORKS

JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

VRDC

VIRTUAL REALITY DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE

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My Virtual Armenia

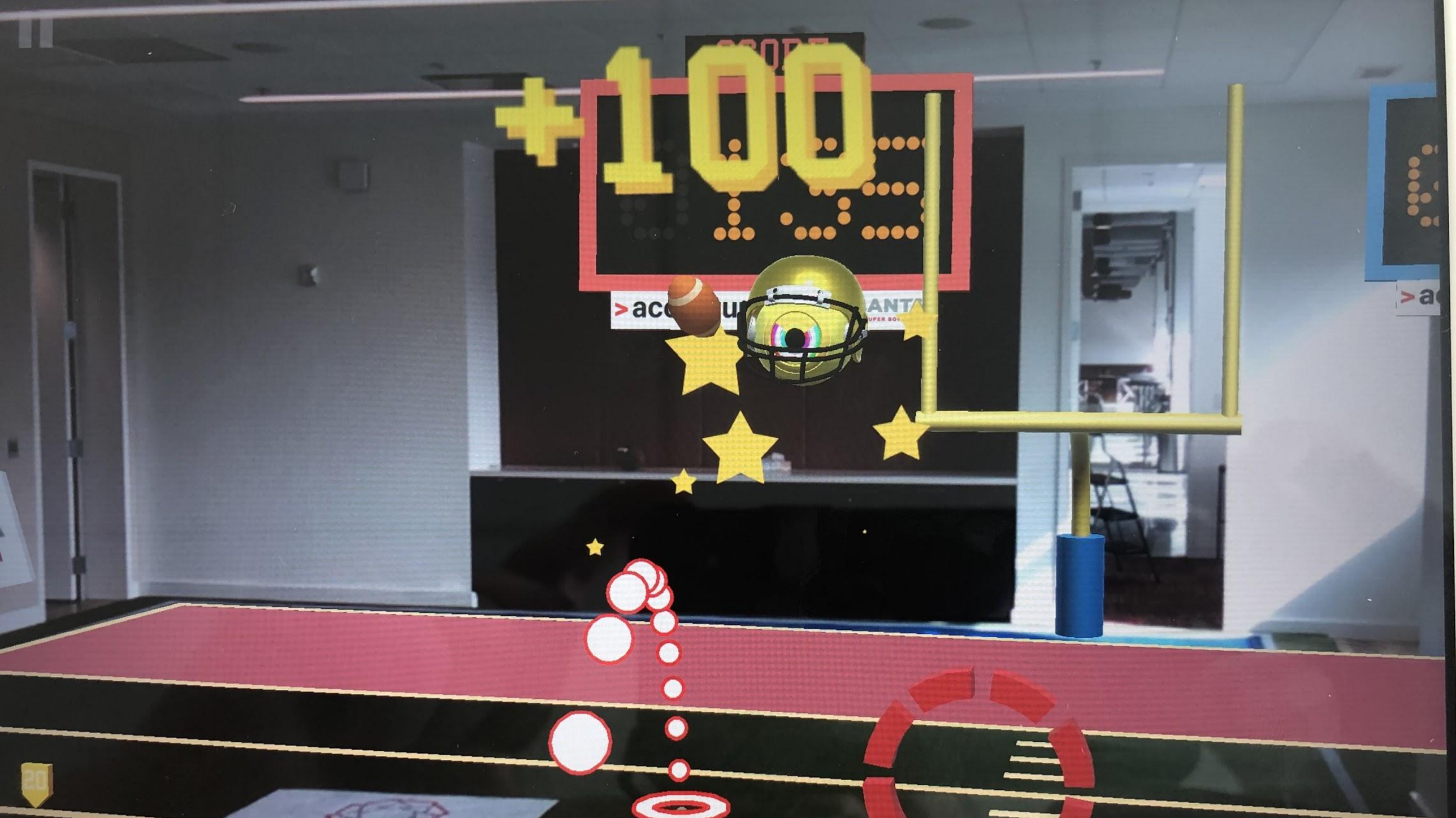
USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Smithsonian Institution

My Armenia CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM PROGRAM

FARBRIDGE

CYARK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Our Event Experience

VR Austin Jam

Smithsonian FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL

RTX

FANTASTIC ARCADE

SXSW

F8 FACEBOOK DEVELOPER CONFERENCE

Why Live VR Events?

- People want to try VR!
- VR is still too expensive.
- Controlled environment makes for great 1st try.
- Social setting is ideal for sharing stories, photos, memories.

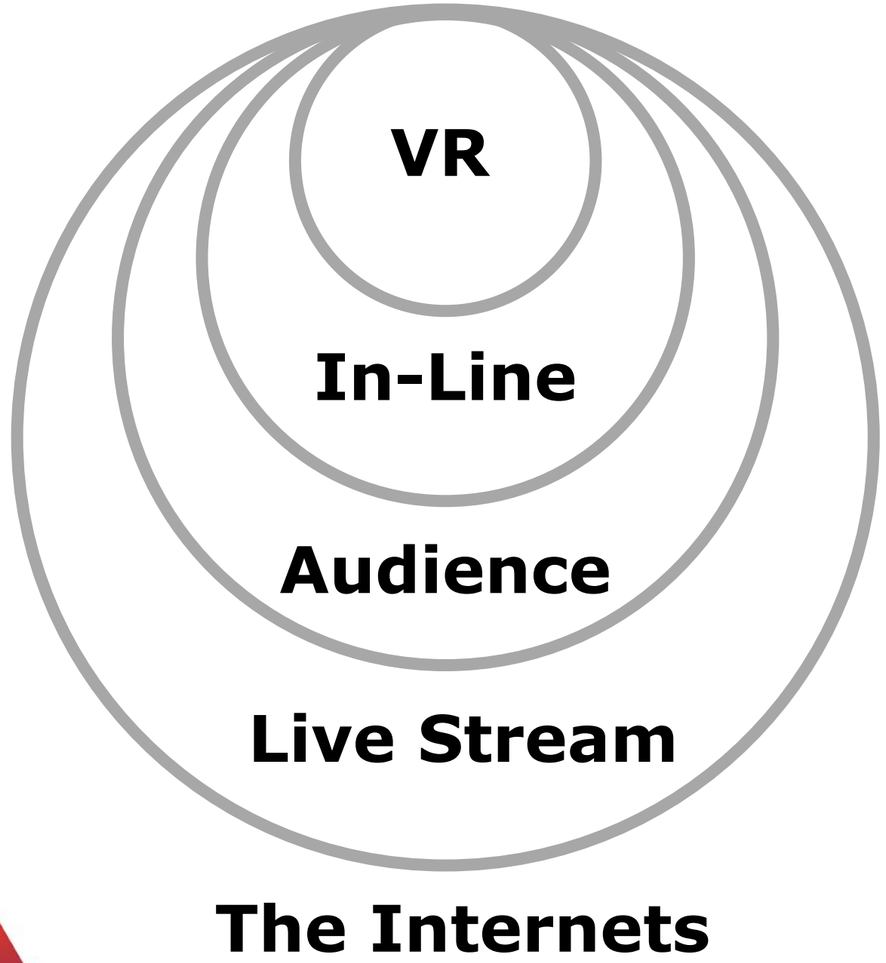
Three Things to Design

1. Virtual Reality Software
   In the headset...

2. Physical Space Setup
   In the headset and out...

3. Emotional Experience
   Out of the headset!

Multiple Audiences to Consider



VIRTUAL DESIGN

Everyone is New to VR

- We have to design for the broadest audience possible.
- Ease-of-use and accessibility more important than ever before.
- Make it easy to have fun.
- Make it look fun -- and easy for a novice to show off.

Keep it Short and Sweet

- Less than 10 minutes.
- The more physical the VR, the shorter the ideal sesh.
- Look to Beat Saber -- no songs over three minutes!
- A short experience keeps the line moving.
- Bad experiences happen.

Design for Inclusivity

- Ambidextrous controls.
- Consider players of multiple heights and sizes.
- Standing and seated play.
- Swipe-to-turn as alternative to room-scale.

Design for Inclusivity: Part 2

- Reach-assist pays dividends!
- Makes movement less fiddly.
- Less bending down to pick stuff up off the floor.
- Still very intuitive for players.
- Use an in-universe conceit: robot arms, The Force, etc.

PHYSICAL DESIGN

VR’s Unique Space Needs

Nice to Have:
- 10x10’ per player

Bare Minimum:
- 5x6’ per player
- 4 players in a single
- 20x6’ tracked space

Tracking Setup

- Every venue has very different tracking considerations.
- Windows, reflective surfaces, time-of-day can all mess you up.
- Other competing VR/AR devices or a Roomba will also getcha.
- Arrive early and be flexible.

Design for Spectating

- Show off what's happening in VR for everyone else.
- The larger the TVs and projector screens, the better.
- Reserve room for live and virtual camera operators.

Technical Gear

Non-Technical Gear

Life-Saving Gear

Keep it Clean

- Swap and clean face masks after each session.
- Give face masks time to dry -- so have 2+ masks per headset.
- Wipe controllers and ear-phones between each use.
- Don’t hide the cleaning process -- people need to see it happen.

EMOTIONAL DESIGN

Make the Line a Feature

- Lines grab attention.
- But use line time wisely!
- Let them watch and learn.
- Time to sign a waiver or a mailing list.
- “On deck” area lets players form teams or strategize.

Player Assistance via “Squires”

- We assign a “squire” to each player to help them into and out of VR.
- Squires have to be helpful, knowledgeable, and friendly.
- We try to take fear and potential embarrassment out of trying VR.

Take Care of Your Staff

- Recruit and pay rad people.
- Schedule overlap for breaks.
- Rotate roles: line duty, squire, spectator camera.
- Get insoles or standing pads.
- Lots of water bottles!
- Keep your staff informed and connected.

Calls to Action

- Give players a memento
- Photos and videos
- Mailing lists
- Social media hashtag
- Follow-up interviews

Key Takeaways

- If you make or sell VR, get good at events.
- You're not just designing for "the player" anymore.
- Be flexible and resourceful when on-site.
- Always bring your own gear (and extras)!
- Clean your gear often and in front of the audience.
- Never trust the Internet or wifi.
- Give people something to remember.

THANK YOU!!!

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