

Using AR and VR to Improve Business Services



🕒 READ TIME: 3 MINS

👥 AUDIENCE: BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

WHAT IS AR & VR?

Augmented reality allows users to superimpose digital information onto the physical world. As the name suggests, it adds something to the reality already around us. A very popular game Pokemon GO is a great example of how AR works.

Contrary to AR, Virtual reality creates a realistic simulated environment which is independent of the physical reality around us. By wearing a VR headset, users get into an immersive experience of a virtual world. Oculus is one such popular VR headset brand. It's also possible to use a smartphone as a VR headset by putting it into a cardboard mount.

As businesses realise the potential of AR and VR, we will see more and more creative uses for the technology. A few business areas where AR and VR can create a huge impact are listed in this article.

MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

AR can help to demonstrate how something would look like in customers' homes like furniture or television while VR can help create interactive and immersive

experiences that leave lasting impressions in target customers' minds.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

AR and VR are proving to be tremendously powerful tools for education and training. It can provide life-like simulations of scenarios which are either too dangerous, too difficult due to availability, or too costly to replicate in the physical world. The immersive nature of VR can provide elevated levels of engagement which are difficult to achieve with traditional methods. AR can project information directly on physical objects which could otherwise be difficult to find out like which device connects to a particular port in a data centre.

RETAIL

AR and VR are being used to create immersive shopping experiences for customers by retailers. Customers get to see a realistic view of how a particular product would look in their homes and thus can make a much more informed decision. Furniture, large home appliances and interior decoration retailers especially benefit from this. This

also helps with reducing return rates in these categories. Car dealerships can use VR to help experience a particular car if it's not available for trial.

MANUFACTURING

If you ever had to assemble any IKEA furniture, you can understand that sometimes how difficult it can be to find out where something goes and to visualize how everything fits together. Imagine if you had a pair of AR glasses, that can identify every screw and bolt and project where it goes? It's just one example of how AR can aid in manufacturing. Projecting digital instructions into the physical product can help guide workers in the assembly process and reduce mistakes.

INDUSTRIAL APPLICATIONS

Industrial markets would likely be disrupted by the introduction of AR. It has the potential to change how many jobs are performed. Remote staff can help technicians who are working in the field by providing live support. It would help streamline the processes by eliminating guesswork from manual work. Recently, Microsoft's HoloLens was used to construct a new spacecraft by NASA making complex instructions and manuals redundant.

TOURISM AND TRAVEL

Tours and sightseeing, hotel reservations, modes of transportation, hospitality, and local experiences such as festivals and cuisine are integral parts of tourism. Augmented reality presents multiple opportunities in this space. Navigation is a very obvious use case. Google maps have a functionality where users can scan the streets using their smartphone and receive the instructions. Mobile apps with AR capabilities can translate street signs which are in a foreign language, show tourist trails and provide information about a place like its history. Accessibility of indoor navigation can be improved by pairing AR with beacons, Wi-Fi, and Near Field Communication devices.

CONCLUSION

Both AR and VR have numerous business applications. It will be fascinating to observe how these technologies evolve in the next five years and how businesses will use them. What used to be science fiction is now a reality!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Yashasvi hails from India and recently graduated from Lancaster University (Masters in Business Analytics). Her interests are multi-disciplinary in the field of Analytics, Forecasting and Big Data. She also tries her hand at racquet sports from time to time.

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