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Building educational augmented reality game app

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This is a talk describing my experiences with my team, using the strengths of Augmented Reality (AR) to design a fun and educational app series. The name of the product is, Dino on My Desk. The core technologies we used are the Qualcomm Vuforia as the AR platform, in conjunction with Unity for the gaming engine. As a newcomer into the field at the time, we found that our best resource was our own DIY spirit to crack into the area. I hired a loosely networked team of developers from around the world, including past students of mine (I teach animation and gaming at Mt. SAC College in California) to get the job done. The initial iteration was a 'confidence building exercise' for us all, and sees a mock-up of the product. The proof of this was in the fact that we were, with very few features, able to entertain test audiences running our AR app on their mobile devices. The next two iterations were built over the previous ones, each time tacking on functionality and engagement methodically. I am a firm believer in the idea that to be effective, a product has to leverage the uniqueness offered by the technology it is built on. In the process of building this product, we were continually uncovering what the uniqueness in interaction that AR offered, were. An overview of the AR genres that have evolved over the past few years, and the companies behind it show a trajectory that starts from the 'Magical', through to 'Function-driven', and finally to 'Enrichment-driven'. Finally, I would like to demo my product that started the journey for me in the mesmerizing field of Augmented Reality.

Biography

Sunil Thankamushy is a US based Video Game Industry Professional who was part of core teams that developed highly acclaimed and successful video game franchises such as Call Of Duty™: Finest Hour™, Medal of Honor™, etc. A Graduate of UCLA, he was hired by DreamWorks Interactive studio as one of its first Animators. After seven years of working at DreamWorks Interactive, and later Electronic Arts, he joined hands with other game veterans to co-found Spark Unlimited™, a game studio based in Los Angeles. Five years after its inception, Spark has a long body of work that includes helping launch the now multi-billion dollar Call Of Duty™: Finest Hour™ Franchise, Turning Point™: Fall Of Liberty™, Legendary™, Lost Planet 3™, etc. In every stage of his career, he has successfully created animation paradigms and technology to improve the level of immersion in the virtual environment of the game, and heighten the experience of realism for the player. After shipping more than 8 video game titles, he decided to change his life direction and set up Deepblue Worlds Inc., a knowledge-based games studio to make innovative products for children. His most current product is an Augmented Reality based mobile app called, Dino on My Desk. He recently joined Mt. San Antonio College, Walnut, California as Professor of Gaming and Animation.

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