Open source virtual reality platform takes on 13 new partners

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Credit: osvr

An open source virtual reality platform reports 13 new partners. This is the Open Source Virtual Reality (OSVR) ecosystem, envisioned as the platform that can bring together companies doing work in a number of areas of virtual reality. OSVR aims to set an open standard for virtual reality input devices, games and output. Its framework offers the

potential to unite developers and gamers under a single platform.

As the platform is open-source, people working with hardware developmental kit designs or software plugins, for example, for motion control, game engines, and stereoscopic video output get complete access to what they need. An OSVR white paper makes a case for how this would be beneficial for gaming developers: OSVR "provides interfaces – pipes of data – as opposed to an API to a specific piece of hardware. If there are multiple devices that provide the same type of information (for instance: hand position), these devices can be interchanged... You can reconfigure the OSVR 'plumbing' so that the game can continue to work well regardless of how where hand position is coming from. With OSVR, game developers can focus on what they want to do with the data, as opposed to how to obtain it."

In short, OSVR would let you mix and match hardware and software packages. "For instance, if you use an eye-tracking camera, you can use the software provided by the camera vendor to calculate gaze direction, but you can also use alternative gaze-detection packages. This means that companies that focus on a particular software or hardware component (e.g., gaze detection module or eye-tracking camera) are not left out of the VR eco-system: their expertise can be interconnected with components from others."

Among the 13 new members is Jaunt, a company focused on cinematic VR. The company has hardware and software solutions for capturing, editing and playing back immersive, full stereoscopic, 360-degree cinematic VR. VisiSonics is focused on spatialized 3D Audio for virtual and augmented reality in gaming and movies. Tammeka Games is developing an arcade sci-fi racer built for VR. VR Union makes virtual reality hardware for VR businesses and professionals. The companies indicate the range of focus areas uniting gaming providers.

"The reception of OSVR exceeded even our own expectations," said Min-Liang Tan. He is the founder and CEO of Razer which does business in devices and software for gamers. Razer and Sensics, a company that does business in professional-grade VR goggles and other near-eye devices, are supporting the platform.

In additional ecosystem efforts, Razer announced Tuesday the OSVR Academia Program. The initiative will provide 10 free OSVR Hacker Development Kits and full access to the OSVR source code to each eligible university that has or intends to set up a full VR lab.

The Razer website said that an OSVR Hacker Dev Kit is shipping in June at $199.99.

More information: www.osvr.com/

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