

Samsung VR on roller coasters in nine thrilling parks

March 7 2016, by Nancy Owano



Samsung's VR technology is coming to nine Six Flags locations starting this month. Six Flags Entertainment and Samsung Electronics America are the two partners in a move that involves nine Six Flags [parks](#).

Riders will take their seats on the coaster rides and will fasten their headsets— Samsung Gear VR powered by Oculus. Fly alongside

Superman. Co-pilot a jet fighter to save the planet.

The Samsung newsroom said these would be "fully immersive, virtual riding experiences." Samsung also said, "You'll be able to feel the heart-pumping adrenaline of steep drops, inverted loops and powerful twists and turns as gyros, accelerometers and proximity sensors synchronize all of the action while viewing a remarkably realistic 360-degree virtual world."

Wait, why would you put on a headset if a regular roller coaster ride is already engineered for thrills, chills, twists and screams?

The plan is to transport the riders into adventurous game scenarios. On six VR coasters, riders are taken into battle to save the planet from an alien invasion. Riders become co-pilots. The other three parks' VR worlds will feature Superman and the city of Metropolis. Riders meet Lex Luthor. The latter uses an anti-gravity gun along with his army of Lex Bots to create chaos in the city.

Still, Adi Robertson in *The Verge* found the concept of wearing VR gear on an actual [roller coaster](#) a bit of a puzzle. Robertson said that "the whole point of going to Six Flags is to really, truly see the ground hundreds of feet below you—to get the closest possible simulation to flying in real space. I might as well go to a golf course and play Wii Golf on the [fairway](#)."

"Wearing headsets on the rides is still going to be completely optional, so they're effectively ignorable for anyone who doesn't want one."

It may be ironic that some amusement park goers precisely make the effort to get out into the real world, with hopes that they will get their own minds off [virtual reality](#) and the entire all-absorbing sit-down world of staying online. They also want to get their children away from their

tablets and computer games at least for one afternoon. And Lo and Behold.

Nonetheless, Samsung and Six Flags have come up with their VR on coaster idea and it turns the cliché "game changer" into something that really would change the game of park ride entertainment. For riders who want the VR experience, they would get a double decker park ride enhanced simultaneously with gaming.

John Gaudiosi, who covers video games, quoted Brett Petit, senior vice president of marketing for Six Flags, in *Fortune*: "The possibilities are almost endless when you consider all of the different concepts and themed worlds that can be [created](#)."

Gaudiosi pointed out an economic reason for parks turning to virtual reality technology for ride enhancements. "By adding virtual reality to pre-existing rides, theme parks are able to change experiences from year to year without constructing new multi-million dollar rides."

Six Flags said, "The Samsung Gear VR headsets provide high-resolution imagery with an extra-wide point of view to seamlessly merge reality with the virtual world."

Safety and sanitation are proactively addressed in the Six Flags FAQ web page. Children ages 12 and under may not use the Gear VR headsets. This is based on manufacturer's guidelines.

The wireless VR headset is secured with three straps – one around the head, one over the head and a [chinstrap](#), along with a safety lanyard.

Roller coaster riders wearing the Samsung Gear VR headsets feel the chills and thrills of steep drops, inverted loops and twists and turns, and the visuals going on via the VR screen are synched with the drops, twists

and turns.

As for cleanliness, all parts of the headset that touch a rider's face and head will be covered with an anti-microbial leather and cleansed between every use with anti-bacterial wipes.

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