

Captain Kirk to the holodeck: Shatner beams in to remote meeting

August 3 2023, by Huw GRIFFITH



Set phrases to stun: despite teething problems the veteran actor delivered his lines to the audience in Sydney.

More than half a century after he materialized on far-flung planets as Captain James T. Kirk of the Starship Enterprise, William Shatner has

beamed into a distant land in a demonstration of hologram technology.

The "Star Trek" actor was a guest speaker at an advertising conference in Sydney, Australia, where his lifelike image appeared in a box like a giant action figure—despite his being in a studio in California.

"You're 7,000 miles away and I'm here in Los Angeles," he told the audience. "And you can hear every word I'm saying. It's like I'm there; I'm in the phone booth."

The tech, produced by Los Angeles-based Proto, displays a [high definition](#) 2D image that uses shadows to create a volumetric illusion of three dimensions.

Coupled with the human-sized display—the screen takes up the bulk of a 2.2-meter (8-foot) device—the result is pretty realistic.

But it is not without problems—the demonstration that AFP watched Tuesday initially faltered, with the audience left staring at a blank screen while Shatner hammed his way through a "Star Trek"-style materialization.

"There's always jeopardy when there's new technology," the 92-year-old shrugged when his image appeared inside the device in Sydney moments later.



It's live, Jim, but not as we know it: William Shatner beamed into a meeting in Sydney, Australia, using a hologram technology from Los Angeles.

David Nussbaum, chief executive of Proto Inc. said the veteran performer was a natural choice to showcase the tech.

"William Shatner stamped the idea of holoportation on our imaginations with his performances on 'Star Trek' and now he can beam anywhere on Earth, in real life," he said.

Canadian Shatner became a cult star in the wake of the 1960s sci-fi adventure "Star Trek," which follows the crew of a spaceship as spreads liberal humanitarian ideals through the galaxy on a mission "to boldly go

where no man has gone before."

As well as numerous big screen follow-ups as the lantern-jawed Captain Kirk, Shatner also played the titular character in cop show "TJ Hooker," and won both a Golden Globe and a Primetime Emmy for his role on "Boston Legal."

In 2021, he became the [oldest person](#) ever to go to space when he traveled aboard a Blue Origin craft.

Shatner told AFP he was a fan of new technology, but pointed to the actors' and writers' strike playing out in Hollywood as a good example of how industries have to adapt to it.



Captain slog: Shatner has had a long acting career that has included not only stints at the helm of the Starship Enterprise, but also life as a beat cop and as a lawyer.

"We can't do what we did last year, six months ago," he said.

"Artificial Intelligence, 3D, streaming, are all new ideas. So new protocol needs to take place. It's as simple as that. Everybody recognizes it."

Studios, whose production has been shut down for weeks by the strike, are resisting demands to limit the use of AI in filmmaking and scriptwriting, in a dispute that is costing the entertainment industry million of dollars a day.

The studios are "fighting it because they don't want to pay," said Shatner.

"And what will make them pay the money? Hopefully not too much blood from the actors and the writers."

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Citation: Captain Kirk to the holodeck: Shatner beams in to remote meeting (2023, August 3) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://techxplore.com/news/2023-08-captain-kirk-holodeck-shatner-remote.html>

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