Google offers Cardboard path to virtual reality

27 June 2014, by Nancy Owano

With some DIY spirit and appreciation of virtual reality immersion, you can have the VR experience. You need little more than cardboard and some items that you can pick up at your local hardware store. Google has its own egalitarian virtual reality solution, announced this week at I/O 2014. Its launch is a delightful outcome of Google's creatives. A team from something called the Cardboard project has figured out how to bring virtual reality on your smartphone using inexpensive, accessible, everyday objects for a headset. The headset ingredients include cardboard, lenses, magnets, Velcro, a rubber band and, if you like, an near-field communications (NFC) tag. Got cardboard? Google's project team asks. Then download Cardboard (the app).

Google provides a site to describe what materials you need to get started —- and do not forget ruler, glue, X-acto knife or access to a laser cutter. As for software, Google said, "We've created a tutorial and provided documentation to get you started. Because this SDK is experimental, it won't receive the same level of support as core Android SDKs and libraries. Things may change or break as we continue working, but the projects you build and

feedback you provide will guide subsequent versions."

The VR Toolkit enables developers familiar with OpenGL to create VR applications. The toolkit simplifies VR development tasks, including head tracking, 3D calibration, side-by-side rendering, stereo geometry configuration and user input event handling.

As all this clearly suggests, Google is eager for more developers to catch some VR fever and start tinkering. "By making it easy and inexpensive to experiment with VR, we hope to encourage developers to build the next generation of immersive digital experiences and make them available to everyone," said the team. "We want everyone to experience virtual reality in a simple, fun, and inexpensive way. That's the goal of the Cardboard project. By making it easy and inexpensive to experiment with VR, we hope to encourage developers to build the next generation of immersive digital experiences and make them available to everyone."

Origins of the Google Cardboard are traced back to

when David Coz and Damien Henry at the Google Cultural Institute in Paris built a [cardboard](#) smartphone housing to prototype VR experiences; the results were received favorably and they inspired a larger group to work on an experimental SDK.

At the Google conference, software engineers David Coz, and Boris Smus along with Christian Plagemann, Research Scientist, Google, were listed on the day's talk schedule to present, "Cardboard: VR for Android."

Android phones must be running Android 4.2 (Jelly Bean) or above to support Cardboard. Google provides a list of phones compatible with Cardboard.

More information:
[developers.google.com/cardboard/](#)
[play.google.com/store/apps/det …](#)
[s.apps.cardboarddemo](#)
[developers.google.com/cardboard/get-started](#)
[g.co/cardboard](#)

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