

CyberPsychology & Behavior

The Impact of the Internet, Multimedia and
Virtual Reality on Behavior and Society

Editor-In-Chief

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Now Available on
MEDLINE

Atlantis Cyberspace

<http://vr-atlantis.com/800v/abyss/index.html>

This commercial site promotes the products of Atlantis Cyberspace, a company that develops VR game systems for location based entertainment centers. Claiming to have researched the market, technology and business model of the VR industry, Atlantis Cyberspace has developed its own operating system which converts off-the-shelf PC consumer games into VR experiences. They also have a section on the actual hardware that they offer ranging from boom-mounted HMDs to CyberPods that can support multiplayer shared interaction.

Virtual Reality Technology, 2nd Edition, by Grigore Burdea & Philippe Coiffet

<http://www.vrtechnology.org>

Brief Book Review: Following on the seminal first edition of this book published in 1994, this newly updated 2nd edition provides comprehensive coverage of the technology that underlies VR as well as the conceptual issues that support its use across a range of application areas. The book also includes a CD containing a variety of commercial and application videos along with a very well conceived lab manual containing structured exercises of value for those intending to use this edition as a textbook.

As I read this book, I generally found it to be excellent at describing the technical "nuts and bolts" of VR in a nonintimidating manner. There are clearly written chapters on such technical areas as input/output devices, computing architectures, modeling and programming. As well, very readable chapters on human factors, traditional VR applications and emerging applications provide an excellent walkthrough on the areas presented. While the book provides the kind of structured information needed for use as a VR textbook, it could also serve as a handy reference guide for even those who are already familiar with VR. Sprinkled throughout the book are concise definition sections that should be understandable to most readers and serve to demystify terms in a way that makes the more advance discussion that follows more comprehensible. It is readily apparent that this book was designed to "teach" and great care seems to have been taken to do this in a clear and specific manner. While at the same time, the writing does not water down the detail needed to provide a solid understanding of the technology. Additionally, the tone of the book presents a positive view of VR technology while not overselling its potential. In this regard, throughout the book, the authors present rational explanations of the limitations and challenges that still need to be addressed in order to advance the field. The authors have also set up a web site that helps instructors use the book for their VR course (by providing lecture notes, quiz examples, programming projects and so on). As well, this site includes a worldwide survey of over 100 universities complete with links to their VR courses. Finally, the price of the book is competitive with other books in the field and would make a fine addition to the bookshelves of CyberPsychology and Behavior readers who, while having a more clinical focus, still want or need to understand a bit more on the technical front!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The 2nd Annual CyberTherapy 2004 Conference: Using Interactive Media in Training and Therapeutic Interventions

San Diego, California

January 9–12, 2004

<http://www.e-therapy.info/>

The 12th Annual "Medicine Meets Virtual Reality" Conference, "Building a Better You: The Next Tools for Medical Education, Diagnosis, and Care"

Newport Beach Marriott Hotel, Newport Beach, California

January 15–17, 2004.

http://www.nextmed.com/mmvr_virtual_reality.html

2004 International Conference on Simulation in Education (ICSIE '03)

Part of the 2004 Western Simulation MultiConference (WMC '04)

San Diego, California

January 18–22, 2004

<http://runestone.it.uu.se/~arnoldp/ICSiE/>