

**Dissertation**

**A Virtual Reality Head Mounted Display  
for Underwater Training and Recreational Purpose**

for the degree of  
Master of Science (Research) in Computing Sciences

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Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

## **CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as part of the collaborative doctoral degree and/or fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Name

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# Table of Contents

List of Figures .....	vi
List of Tables .....	vii
List of Publications .....	viii
Abstract .....	ix
Chapter 1 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background .....	2
1.2 Research questions .....	3
1.3 Stakeholders & Significance .....	4
1.4 Research Methodology.....	4
Chapter 2 Literature Review .....	6
2.1 On-land Virtual/Augmented Reality Applications.....	6
2.2 Underwater Virtual/Augmented Reality Applications.....	8
2.3 Summary of findings .....	10
Chapter 3 Approach and Implementation .....	11
3.1 Hardware development.....	11
3.1.1 Background of Head Mounted Display .....	11
3.1.2 Common visual parameters for Head Mounted Display .....	12
3.1.3 Implementation Approach .....	17
3.1.4 Implementation Process.....	20
3.2 Software development.....	25
3.2.1 Build an initial scene .....	28
3.2.2 Tracking techniques.....	36
3.2.3 Interactivity in UnderwaterVR .....	38
Chapter 4 Evaluation.....	43

4.1 Archived Data.....	44
4.2 Scenarios .....	46
4.2.1 A tropical shallow sea virtual scene without interactivity.....	47
4.2.2 A tropical shallow sea virtual scene with light tracking.....	48
4.2.3 A tropical shallow sea virtual scene with marker tracking.....	49
4.3 Summary of findings .....	50
4.3.1 Enjoyable underwater experiences .....	51
4.3.2 Less cybersickness than usual .....	53
Chapter 5 Conclusion and Future work .....	54
5.1 Conclusion.....	54
5.2 Unexpected finding .....	56
5.2.4 Cybersickness Reduction.....	57
5.3 Hypothesis .....	57
5.2.1 Sensory Integration Model .....	58
5.4 Future work .....	60
Appendix A. Immersion Questionnaire .....	61
Appendix B. Flow State Scale Questionnaire.....	64
Bibliography.....	68

## List of Figures

Figure 1 non-pupil-forming architecture.....	14
Figure 2 pupil-forming design .....	14
Figure 3 Cushion ring of consumer level head mounted display.....	19
Figure 4 structure of first iteration .....	20
Figure 5 Lens holder .....	21
Figure 6 Skirt of scuba diving mask .....	22
Figure 7 case (bottleneck) and cap.....	23
Figure 8 Structure of last iteration .....	23
Figure 9 Improved bottle neck structure .....	24
Figure 10 Difference between new and old cap structure.....	24
Figure 11 Appearance of the prototype.....	25
Figure 12 summary of questionnaire result.....	27
Figure 13 Terrain .....	29
Figure 14 Rendering workflow of Unity3D.....	30
Figure 15 Surface shader.....	31
Figure 16 Vertex and fragment shader.....	31
Figure 17 (Coast Guard diver training 2017).....	32
Figure 18 Game screen capture.....	33
Figure 19 (Scuba 2017).....	34
Figure 20 Unity statistics comparison.....	34
Figure 21 Game screen capture.....	35
Figure 22 Interactive picking up game .....	38
Figure 23 UI Canvas .....	39
Figure 24 Caustics.....	40
Figure 25 ARToolKit coordinate system.....	41
Figure 26 Pistol in the game .....	42
Figure 27 Immersion & FSS score.....	52

## List of Tables

Table 1 The gap of the existing research .....	3
Table 2 optical/visual parameters for HMD design .....	13
Table 3 Comparison between two approaches.....	19
Table 4 Nexus 5X dimensions .....	21

## List of Publications

Zhang, W., Tan, C.T. & Chen, T. 2016, 'A safe low-cost HMD for underwater VR experiences', *SIGGRAPH ASIA 2016 Mobile Graphics and Interactive Applications*, ACM, p. 12.

## Abstract

This thesis introduces an interactive underwater virtual reality headset as an engaging and convenient tool for educational and recreational purpose.

Recreational sea diving and other related underwater activities are common exhilarating experiences for many people. However, it is dangerous, costly and time-consuming for novices to learn. Virtual Reality presents a possible approach to this problem. Most of the consumer level virtual reality headsets can only be employed under dry conditions. Through a detailed literature review of virtual reality (VR) research field, a small gap that has not been filled which refers to the use of VR in wet or underwater scenarios.

In order to fill the identified gap, a head mounted display prototype called *UnderwaterVR* was designed and implemented. The prototype is a safe and low-cost alternative for novices to learn diving in a controlled swimming pool environment, which at the same time serves as a novel entertainment platform to experience interactive underwater games. The proposed prototype is a cable-free, mask-like, waterproof VR goggles. In the virtual world, participants behave autonomously and being able to interact with the environment continuously.

To evaluate the prototype, an autoethnographic study was conducted. The prototype was reported to be engaging and that, interestingly, there was less cybersickness in the prototype than in a normal VR setup out of water. A hypothesis is presented to interpret the reason why there was less cybersickness.

This thesis presented a low cost but efficient way for making a waterproof head mounted display via 3D printing. The failures and redesigns that we had during the development contribute to the further research. Another contribution we have made in this thesis is to explore the underwater interactivity for VR/AR.