Is ignorance bliss? Turning the real world into a black box for a better VR experience

Open Bachelor Thesis

Background

With the evolution of Virtual Reality the possibility has risen to provide users more wholesome perceptual experiences of virtual environments. Using a head mounted display (HMD) stimuli of the real world can be ignored more easily and hence allow for a better focus on the virtual world. If optimized, the user does completely forget about the real world and has the sense of being in the world depicted by the HMD. This phenomenon is called presence. However, this state is rarely achieved as it is not possible to completely exclude real world stimuli from a VR experience and users often have difficulties to ignore them. Therefore, research has tried to find ways on how to support users to focus exclusively on the virtual world. Doing could enhance VR experiences significantly and allow for the experience of new realities.

Research Goal

Goal of the thesis is to investigate if users feel more present in a virtual world if they are not aware of their surroundings in the real world. Therefore, a study will be designed that measures users' presence in a virtual world once with introduction to the room the study is conducted in and once without prior introduction. Furthermore, it shall be investigated if it makes a difference when subjects are told that the unknown room is safe to move around freely.

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