

*\*For this post, I took a slightly different approach, writing more informatively. In comparison to my other post, this one is a shorter post, as I wanted to demonstrate differences between long and short form content. As an option for potential VR pitfalls, I decided to look at potential risks of VR technology. While not necessarily in direct relevance to enterprise, certainly events need to understand the potential pitfalls before adopting the technology. With all of the hype about VR, I wanted to look at the other side of things, and play devil's advocate about the kinds of hazards we may be overlooking.*

## **Virtual Reality Could Revolutionize Enterprise Events But Are We Accounting For Its Potential Risks?**

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Virtual Reality's (VR) sudden and impactful rise has opened new possibilities for enterprise. When it comes to event technology VR is creating a revolutionary experience for audiences; it can engage people who aren't able to experience an event in person and immerses them in the moment in a way television never could.

Though virtual reality is changing enterprise for the better—and is expected to ship over 30 million units by 2020—we should be aware that it is still relatively unproven both in benefits and consequences.

What could constitute as potential risks for Virtual Reality? Like with most new technology, until we know its capabilities in its entirety the much-anticipated arrival of VR should still be met with some caution.

### **Are there Potential Pitfalls with Using VR Technology?**

This post will examine 4 potential major pitfalls that can be associated with using VR technology: Physical, Security, Behavioral and Configuration.

#### **Physical Risks**

Usually when a new product or technology hits the market, we tend to overlook any potential consequences. When the time comes for discovering what these could potentially be the first things we usually look at are the potential health risks of said product.

At least for the foreseeable future, virtual reality is still nowhere near good enough to be confused with actual reality. It is good enough, however, to trick the subconscious brain into thinking that the user is really in a given situation. Wearing VR goggles can, in fact, trigger phobias in people or cause severe shock to unsuspecting users.

Before companies make the investment into the technology, it is surely important to look how abusing or misusing VR technology could potentially cause physical harm.

Potential physical risks of VR technology include:

- If the user moves their head a certain way, the motion might not register accurately
- Nausea could be caused by motion disconnect from technology and user
- Severe Dizziness & Epileptic Seizures may occur
- Blackouts from exposure to certain flashing lights or patterns

## Security Risks

When organizations construct events, security is of the utmost importance. Usually, drills and strategic plans are put in place to deal with any potential crises that could occur at a live event. With virtual reality we don't yet have a grasp on what the true security risks are let alone how to handle them effectively and safely.

Some examples of potential security risks include:

- User ability to modify the appearance of their avatars and impersonate other users
- Without proper screening, potentially dangerous people could manipulate events through cyberspace
- VR's ability to allow users to alter the environment itself
- Violations of consumer privacy – which can land companies, event organizers and sponsors in hot water
- Other potential privacy breaches; in a virtual environment everything can be traced, meaning any component of a virtual environment could be manipulated

Manipulation and privacy violations could create potential dangers for events in which large amounts of people, information and various other factors are at risk of harm from outside and potentially unwanted audiences.

Any potential risks, like the aforementioned examples, could damage a particular event's brand and reputation if virtual reality security is ineffective, making security a critical focus when implementing VR technology for global event access.

## Behavioural Risks

In conjunction with potential security risks comes the risk of behavioral changes of people using VR technology. Research consistently shows [virtual reality can actually change how a user thinks and behaves](#), in part, because it is so realistic. If VR becomes a mainstay for events and enterprise there is much learning to be done as to how much exposure an individual should have before risking potential harm.

In addition to the risk of behavioral change is the possibility of using VR technology criminal activity that could put large groups of people at risk. We do not yet know what kind of capabilities an unlawful person might have at their disposal should they have access to the technology.

VR is praised for being able to break down geographic barriers; however, the dark side of this capability creates an opening for users to manipulate the system and display disturbing behaviours such as rudeness, harassment and stalking that are sometimes witnessed on the Internet.

### **Configuration Complexity Risks**

Despite being a simple headset, VR technology is far from “simple.” Using VR technology effectively requires proper knowledge and understanding. The complex configuration of VR technology can pose another potential risk that events need to pay attention to.

At any event, technical staff should be on hand to help set up and maintain the systems. Complex hardware systems have a tendency to malfunction at the worst possible times; Hinging your entire marketing activation effort on new technology could be a risky venture without having backup gear, or worse, a backup analog plan in place.

## **Understanding The Risks**

Proving these findings and theories won't be an easy task and finding a link between these risks and VR technology may not come for years. Therefore, amidst all the hysteria surrounding VR, it is important to know as much as possible about the potential dangers before distributing the technology en masse.