The State of VR... A thought loosely thrown together by kcSeb (26/03/2023)

If you want the tl;dr, it's this: VR is a wonderful technology with amazing potential and even for the average user, it is much more than a gimmick or one-time-experience. If you haven't tried VR, or are considering it, GO FOR IT!

The longer bit is this...

The current situation with VR as a technology and the available hardware is a stagnant one. This holds it back, but there's more to it than that, which holds it back. While VR is already a niche technology, even to this day, the headsets are even more niche. Furthering that, you have different classes of niche from "I just want to play VR for a couple hours a day" to "I want the cream of the crop. The most powerful thing there is."

I personally started in the VR game with HTC Vive which at the time was phenomenal. It brought "affordable" VR to the masses. However, it came with downfalls like needing a dedicated rig to run the VR titles. Having to either physically mount lighthouses into your walls or use awful, ugly tripod systems. But, I enjoyed it through and through. The HTC Vive was about 500 pounds.

But now we have things like the Quest 2 which is ENTIRELY[1] wireless. You can play full VR titles[2] without any cables or additional hardware and for the relatively low price of (originally 300 quid) now up to 400+ quid. 1 - While you can play entirely wireless, you can optionally tether to a PC to play SteamVR titles. 2 - While these titles are the full titles, they're of reduced graphical fidelity to accommodate for the Quest 2's hardware specs.

We also have the Valve Index which is (effectively) the top of the line VR headset you can get, for the most optimal, enjoyable, and seemless VR experience. For the low (kek) price of A WHOLE BAND. (1000 pounds...) I get it, I really do. The hardware is phenomenal! But you still have the original issue of light houses... and being tethered to the PC. Though, there are options to almost entirely eliminate those cables.

I refuse to acknowledge console VR (PSVR) as it's not really comparable. Likewise, Windows / HP Mixed Reality... Fuck off.

I love the Quest 2 for what it is. But I'll admit I am spoiled by having owned the Index (albeit for like... less than a month before returning it to get the money back.) and the HTC Vive. That being said... for just hopping into VR and playing some games for a few hours... It does the job well enough. From Onward to Walkabout Mini Golf... SynthRiderz and BeatSaber, the Quest 2 does everything I need and/or want it to. It still does have heavy Facebook integration which many people will absolutely sneer at, but I use Facebook/Meta Business suite for my business, amongst other things, so I am already within the Facebook/Meta ecosystem. It is what it is... but it has to be noted.

I believe there's a VR option for pretty much anyone out there, with many different price options. But... Because there are so many damn options... It has caused a stagnation within the ecosystem. So many things to choose from but why would I pick X over Y. To many folks, they don't want to know all the technical specs and each minor detail that makes one better than the other. They just want a system to play games on.

Additionally, no real new VR titles have come out for a long while. This has led folks to just put down VR and wait... Personally, I am still invested in it, as I now have the means, but I won't say that in a months time, I'll get bored of it again, as I'll have recycled my library once more.

If you're interested in VR, go for it! Absolutely. It's fun as hell, there are a fair few good games to pick up and try from many genres. My main advice is... don't get overwhelmed with the options and don't let all the technical talk be daunting. Do your research and make your judgement based on your situation. Can you afford to drop £XXXX? Do you have the means to run it? Ye have kiddos running around who would disrupt it? There many factors to take into consideration before jumping into one headset.