**Augmented reality (AR)**

Augmented reality is the integration of digital information with the user's environment in real time. Unlike virtual reality, which creates a totally artificial environment, augmented reality uses the existing environment and overlays new information on top of it.

## **How does it work ?**

## The kind of augmented reality you are likely to experience these days utilizes a range of sensors such as cameras and computer components as well as display devices in creating the illusion of virtual objects in the real world. Some of the smartphones in the market today have all the necessary components needed in the creation of augmented reality hence they are commonly used for most of AR experiences. The basic working of augmented reality is as follows. In general, the device will search for a particular object, which can be anything, but in most cases, they are usually 2D images like in the form of a movie poster. The augmented reality application will recognize the target through the camera and it will then process the image and augment it in some form through the utilization of sound and pictures. For example, if the target object was a movie poster, you may see it spring into life to play a trailer of the movie. So long as you continue viewing the poster through the “window” of the display object, you will see augmented reality rather than the plain old normal poster in normal reality.

Augmented reality will make wearable technology more prevalent. It’s already seen in the health and fitness markets with the arrival of Nike Fuel band and Fitbit Flex, but Google Glass will continue to usher in a new wave of AR-enabled wearable computing devices. But don’t take my word for it – Forrester Research has already described ‘wearables’ as ‘the next wave of consumer technology product innovation.’ Though many AR experiences currently require a smartphone or tablet – as a camera is needed to detect the image – the tech giants of Apple, Samsung, and more will start rolling out own their product lines for standalone devices, where wearable technology will likely become a piece of everyday fashion. While the future of this multi-billion dollar industry is bright, it’s important to remember that Google Glass is still in the development stages, and that mainstream consumer adoption is still a few years away.

**Moving Beyond Augmented Reality**

Without a doubt, the AR continuum will continue to evolve. Many of us have already experienced AR firsthand on products and advertisements, where a new layer of information is added on top of the real world around us. Soon, we’ll see this trend shift towards “augmented virtuality” and virtual environments – similar to Wii and kinetic sensors, where users will have their motions replicated by 3D digitization. Eventually, this will become a complete 360-degree virtual experience where users are totally immersed in a lifelike digital world. The bottom line is that augmented reality has not only arrived, but is here to stay. By crossing verticals and providing new opportunities for interactive, educational, and entertaining experiences that have not existed before, the technology will soon hold a significant place in our daily lives. The biggest challenge is mass consumer adoption, but as devices get faster and consumers become further educated on the uses of AR, it’s only a matter of time before yesterday’s augmented reality becomes today’s Internet.