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Cardboard

How does the magnet select button for Android Cardboard work?

I am trying to build a VR set using the Cardboard app which was recently unveiled at Google IO 14. The instructions suggest that a magnet is required for selecting the option currently visible in app. How does the magnet interface with the touch screen of phone?

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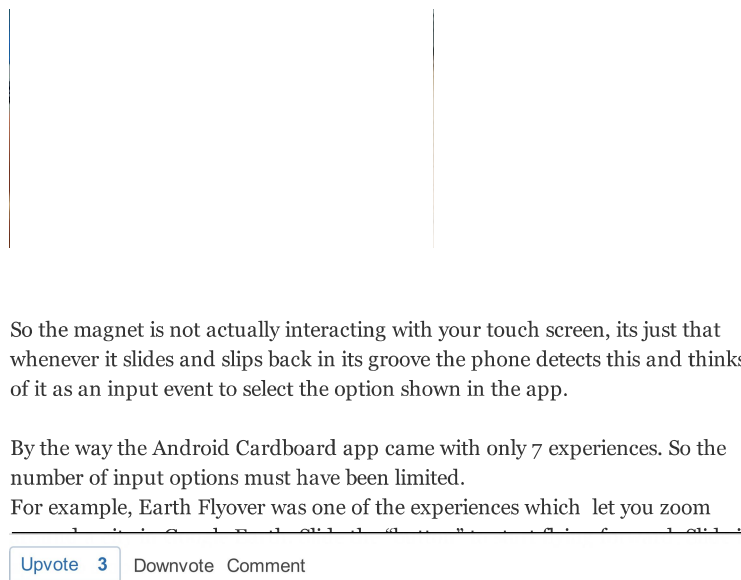
3 ANSWERS



Rajesh Doyijode

3 upvotes by Ankit Kumar, Sami Makki, and Amanda Cavalcanti.

There are magnetic sensors in the back of some phones that are used to sense docking stations or smart covers that put the phone to sleep (also called sleep sensors). The magnet on the Android Carboard slides within its groove, then automatically slips back into a place because of another magnet on opposite side. Your phone is able to sense the magnet's movement using its own magnetic sensor, allowing it to act as a ridiculously clever little button.



So the magnet is not actually interacting with your touch screen, its just that whenever it slides and slips back in its groove the phone detects this and thinks of it as an input event to select the option shown in the app.

By the way the Android Cardboard app came with only 7 experiences. So the number of input options must have been limited.

For example, Earth Flyover was one of the experiences which let you zoom

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Ashwini Kumar Sharma, Learner

1 upvote by Mohamed Jamal.

The magnet is placed in the inside of the cardboard. See here:

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A ring of magnetic material is placed in the space outside the box, which the magnet holds in place. See here:



Now, as you can see, there is space to move the ring. When it moves, it creates a difference in the magnetic field, which can be detected by the phone's magnetic sensors. This difference in the field can be programmed in your app to be considered as a 'click', as in the Google Cardboard app.

Written 25 Dec, 2014.

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Lukáš Řádek

1 upvote by Mukesh Tiwari.

If you actually launch the cardboard app, take a neodymium magnet (my choice, maybe it would work even with weaker ones) and make similar motion on the left side off you phone (in proper landscape orientation), it will register click :)

Written 5d ago.

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