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Art 104

Reading Response #1 - An Introduction to Virtual Reality (1994)

Leda Kanellakos' article, "An Introduction to Virtual Reality," provides insight into the "new" emerging method of communication. According to Kanellakos, Virtual Reality is as much of a leap in technology as was television to radio. Described as a computer simulation that one can be immersed and interact in, Virtual Reality offers limitless possibilities in virtual environments. It is simply a "medium for the extension of the body and mind." Virtual Reality was a "cyberspace" where people in separate places could meet. It allowed people the ability to convey touch, and engage in intimate verbal conversations. You could be anyone you want, and go wherever you pleased. The technology however, was not ready to be implemented in homes at the time of the article. A woman who sampled the tech called the graphics "crude" and the images, unrealistic. The question of how VR will affect social communication in introduced in the article. What if we get to the point where "face-to-face communication may longer be the most immediate form of interpersonal communication?" Instead of scheduling a meeting in person, why not meet in VR where one person can pose as any avatar they'd like? To Kanellakos, VR isn't meant to replace our current reality, it never could. "With all the required gear to wear, I doubt we will feel the soft warmth of a blanket, the comfort of a hug, the cool grass between our toes, or the rain on our faces."

Before reading the article, I thought of VR as something relatively new, an invention of the past decade. Seeing how this article was published in 1994 was a shocker. At the time of the

article, VR was nowhere near being commonplace in households. 24 years since, VR is has become available to purchase for the average consumer. It's very interesting to see VR is used as a social platform as how it was predicted to be 24 years ago. While it hasn't become the predominant form of communication, it's made a huge impact on social culture today. Personally, I find VR amazing, although I've only used it once. It's able to immerse the wearer enough to the point where a virtual roller coaster ride can tip you off your balance and induce motion sickness. While it's still not able to replicate our all our senses from reality, whether or not that's a good thing is still up for debate.