**Introduction:**

The transmission of force perception from a real (physical) or virtual object to an operator who may be in a remote location has signiﬁcance in virtual reality (VR) and telerobotic operation [1]. Haptic feedback is critical to allow a user to intuitively perceive and understand a distant or inaccessible environment even with visual feedback [2]. In the absence of imagery, the sense of touch is more vital since it is often the only readily available and easily understood somatosensory feedback in robotic and virtual reality applications. An example of this is during robotic surgery where poor or occluded visibility is common with endoscopic cameras [3].

Arguably, force is one of the ﬁrst contact events felt by humans. The state of the art in force feedback systems involves real-time interaction between users present in remote locations to physically touch each other through actual force and pressure. A two-way communication can be established between these operators by projecting a floating silhouette of their counterpart and rendering this interaction in real-time through haptic feedback, making the users who are present in isolated locations to perceive this interaction as actual physical touch [3].

However, it is extremely difficult to replicate and render force feedback accurately and with precise localization. These force feedback technologies often suffer from many shortcomings like robustness, latency, control issues and low availability of user friendly interfaces [1] [4]. Flexible, light weight devices that are easy to use and can deliver haptic feedback with high spatial precision and intensity will be game- changing technologies, as they can have applications in a variety of fields especially where presence of humans is difficult and unlikely [4] [5]. Haptic feedback provides supplementary information to aid and abet the information obtained from other sensory modalities of audio and vision, allowing operators to intuitively understand an object’s properties situated at a remote and isolated location [2].

To address these shortcomings, we have designed and fabricated haptic gloves that are lightweight, ﬂexible and capable of delivering haptic information with high spatial precision and intensity. Using a sensory substitution approach to transform pressure characteristics to vibratory stimuli has helped in reduction of size and bulkiness of a haptic device [3]. However, a vibrotactile feedback strategy is limited by actuator size and a desire for ﬂexibility, which restricts the number of actuation (sensing) points. This reduces spatial precision and range of stimulus presentation.

Visual augmentation is a phenomenon in which a user views a real world environment directly or indirectly while supplementing or ‘augmenting’ this environment with computer based sensory inputs such as graphics, imagery, sound or videos. In contrast to virtual reality where an artificial world is simulated around the operator, augmented reality (AR) allows digital manipulation and interaction with real world and environment, making this technology more relatable and relevant [6]. In the field of telerobotics, visual augmentation allows resourcefulness and several modelling approaches as real world data can be used in real time to make human-robots cooperation more adaptive and intelligent [7]. Once considered as science fiction, AR has helped tremendously in remote operations of semiautomatic systems which when coupled with haptic feedback allows intuitive understanding of remote environment aiding human-computer-robot cooperation [8]. In medicine, this technology has tremendous applications especially in developing minimally invasive and highly safe surgical tools to provide real time 3D computer generated anatomical environment augmented on a surgical platform [9].

However, AR has many drawbacks, especially in the fields that are heavily dependent on the field of view of the operation procedure. Dextrous telerobotic systems suffer from latency issues as robotic manipulators are controlled by the movements performed by remote operators which are very often misrepresented and misclassified. The newer generations of this technology should invest in more user friendly interfaces that represent the real anatomy of the object under consideration and allow for quick transition, synchronised with the movement of the deployed robot through varied environments [10].

In the field of disaster recovery, tele-manipulation and space exploration, AR and haptics can create an immersive and real environment with sensory feedback, giving the users present far away from the site to carry search and rescue operations effectively without having to be physically present at the location [11].

**Methodology:**

The experimental setup consists of an eye tracking system, EEG data acquisition system and a fully immersive virtual reality CAVE system. The subjects will also be asked to wear haptic feedback gloves that provide vibration feedback upon stimulation. For accurate measurement of surface brain activity, the EEG system consists of an EEG cap with a 64-channel EEG amplifier connected to a data acquisition system and ASA Lab software to check for impedance of the electrodes. EEG and EOG activity is recorded by the amplifier at 256 samples per second (ANT <>). The recording setup also includes a high resolution 24” display placed 60 cm away from the subject.

During the experimental procedure, the subject will be asked to perfom tasks in the virtually immersive CAVE system. This system consists of 4 projector screens (3 walls and 1 floor) where stimulus will be presented as part of the experimental protocol. The projector screens are each attached to four computers and these computers communicate with one another for rendering stimuli in a synchronous manner. They will also be used for sending triggers or event markers to the EEG system to record the start and end of the event epoch.

1. Haptic glove prototype

The haptic glove is designed to be lightweight, have increased robustness to actuator displacement and, hence, capable of delivering precisely localized haptic information. The glove will consist of 18 vibratory rotating mass actuators. The actuator locations were selected to deliver haptic feedback at the most used and sensitive areas on the palm-side of the hand during exploratory procedures [14]. The actuators will be held in place by a silicone rubber mould to prevent displacements after prolonged usage and give a more natural skin-like feel.

\B. Control box structure and design and improved GUI

The control box will be miniaturized and placed at the wrist location. The vibration intensity and their activation will be controlled wirelessly as was done with the ﬁrst generation glove. In near-ﬁeld operation the latency is low permitting real-time feedback [15]. However, we will explore latency issues related to remote teleoperation. The control box consists of two pulse width modulation (PWM) drivers and one Arduino microcontroller [16]. The computer transmitting an encoded stimulation signal received by the control box initiates the communication pathway. This signal is sent to a microcontroller for actuation. In addition, the control box contains a power source for the system. During the ﬁrst generation glove design and fabrication, a graphical user interface (GUI) was designed to send custom stimulation patterns [17]. The GUI enables single and multiple actuator activation with amplitude modulation for intensity control. The GUI is also capable of frequency modulation but not implemented with the ﬁrst generation glove. The same GUI will be used with the second-generation gloves with both amplitude and frequency modulation.

* 1. *Describe the protocol(s) to be used. If the research is a drug trial, please include information of the research drug and any other drugs that will be used in the trial.*