

Mixed Reality Ship Handling Training Method

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Ship handling is the task of precisely controlling a seafaring vessel's movement using its propulsion and navigation systems. Ships move in a variety of marine environments. Starting from shallow waters of a harbour they navigate vast seas to a port in another harbour across the ocean. Vessels also navigate inland waterways such as rivers, canals, backwaters and creeks. In order to handle a ship in such varied environments, a seafarer needs to take into account environmental forces such as wind, waves and current acting on the ship (Seamanship 2016). More recently, developments in offshore wind farming, the oil and gas industry have necessitated regular visits to offshore structures located on continental shelves for construction and maintenance activities.

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As in aviation navigation in marine environments a requires the navigator to assimilate information about various environmental factors affecting the task. In ships, the relevant information has been traditionally presented in various display panels placed around the navigator in the ship bridge. In 1955, the US Navy began researching head-up displays (HUD) to reduce complexity of aircraft instrumentation. HUDs were found to be helpful for piloting and by 1970s, the use of HUDs expanded beyond military aircraft into commercial aviation.

Even though aviation and maritime navigation present similar challenges for a navigator, the use of head-up displays is not yet commonplace in the latter. The maritime sector is a niche market with a segmented market-space (many small and medium-sized companies), low R&D intensity and, a conservative attitude towards innovation (Lukas, Vahl, and Mesing 2014). Nevertheless, research can be found on maritime applications of augmented reality (Hugues, Cieutat, and Guitton 2010, Vasiljević, Borović, and Vukić 2011 and, Lukas, Vahl, and Mesing 2014). These applications have focused on augmenting vision with real-time information of the environment; potentially helping them perform the job more efficiently. For example, overlaying the bridge-view of a ship with route waypoints, distance to next waypoint, local hazards, and navigational aids such as buoys, lighthouses.

Further, there have been developments in ship instrumentation design over the recent years with newer bridges tending to feature less-cluttered designs compared to the past. This could be partly a reflection of the increasing automation seeping into the industry. The dynamic positioning system for example can be used to automatically position a vessel at a specific location, thus making display panels for position, thruster/propeller-related information more redundant than before. A further consequence of increasing automation will be the reduced need to learn to perform the automated functions manually.

Ship simulations systems are currently *de facto* method of learning ship navigation. Various schools around the world setup simulation centers where generic principles of sea-faring can be learned and practiced. However, there has been little research on the use of mixed reality technologies to create simulation environments for training purposes even though simulation is used extensively for ship operations training. This research studies the feasibility of a training method to learn ship navigation in mixed reality environments.

1.0.1 Research Questions

This study explored a few possibilities for upcoming mixed reality technologies to enable high fidelity on-board ship manoeuvre training programs. While there exist ship simulators which are used extensively by ship crew for learning, certification and, upkeep of operational skills, being simulations by nature and, they are approximations of the process of sailing a real vessel in marine environments.

Training on-board real ships is ideal from the perspective of learning vessel-specific instrumentation and it's dynamics under various weather conditions. But the logistics of setting up environments for training is not trivial. A system of generating visual perception of a training environment is then in theory a solution to the non-trivial problem of setting up training environments. If such a system were capable of producing a convincing feeling of the presence of physical objects in the surrounding, it would enable on-board training in real environments enhanced by visuals of virtual objects.

With the intention of learning the feasibility of using mixed reality technology for training purposes in the maritime sector, the following research questions were proposed.

1. What are the operational scenarios in which mixed reality training could be useful?
2. How is the experience of navigating vessels in mixed reality environment using state-of-the-art see-through display technology?
3. How effective a tool is mixed reality for the learning of ship maneuvering?

The remainder of this chapter describes the research method used in this study and provides a brief background overview of the concept of mixed reality with a definition of augmented reality.

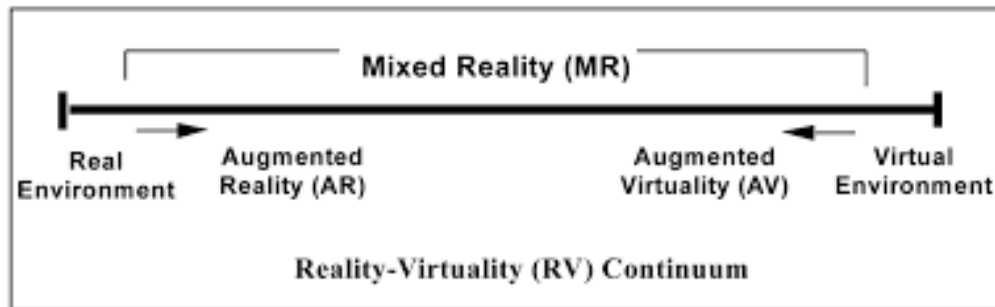


Figure 1.1: Mixed Reality Continuum (Source: Milgram et al. 1995)

1.1 Research Method

Description of sce method goes here.

1.2 Augmented Reality

Mixed reality refers to the merging of virtual and real worlds in which physical and digital objects co-exist and interact in real time. In the field of mixed reality, some distinctions have been made between various applications based on the amount of virtual content in the mix. A continuum has been drawn characterising different mixed reality environments as shown in figure 1.1. Completely real and completely virtual environments bring up extreme ends of the continuum, with different levels of virtuality in between. No clear distinctions are made between points in the continuum.

Augmented reality has been defined by Azuma (1997) as having the following three characteristics:

1. Combines real and virtual
2. Is interactive in real time
3. Is registered in three dimensions

Virtual reality has been gaining popularity in the consumer market in recent years. It is a specific type of mixed reality featuring entirely digital visuals and virtual environments. One particular construct, augmented reality, has been gaining popularity over the years. Augmented reality refers to systems that feature predominantly real environments whose perception maybe augmented with information not readily available to the user (figure 1.2 for example, shows a map overlay on top of the camera view of a street). Further, some factors have been identified that help distinguish between different mixed reality systems: extent of world knowledge (whether the augmentation takes place in a modeled world or not), reproduction fidelity (quality of display of the real/virtual objects) and extent of presence metaphor (extent to which user feels they are present in the displayed scene themselves). A detailed description of mixed reality displays and differences in their characteristics can be found in Milgram et al. 1995.

In general terms mixed reality is an emerging technology which can be used to display virtual objects merged with real world views. It has been found to be useful in job scenarios that require execution of complex tasks. A use case that has been explored in the real-world is the assembly and maintenance of equipment. Overlaying 3-D virtual guides on see-through images of actual equipment obviates the need to look away in order to refer to a manual. In the maritime sector, a study on the application of augmented reality found that 3-D virtual guides help users perform ship building and maintenance tasks in almost half the usual time (Henderson and Feiner 2011).



Figure 1.2: View of a street 'augmented' with information on places of interest

Chapter 2

Foundation

This chapter covers results of the domain analysis that was used to derive requirements for a scenario-based ship maneuvering training method. The content explored in this chapter are relevant to answering the research question - what are the operational scenarios in which mixed reality training could be useful. In keeping with the sCE method, it covers operational demands, human factors and, technological options available for the design of this human-computer interface for maritime training.

A survey of literature in this context brings up some studies of applications that aid job performance by providing helpful contextual information on top of real-world views. Overlaying route waypoints, distance to next waypoint, local hazards, etc. allows the integration of various information that is used by the officer of the watch into one single augmented display. In poor visibility conditions, virtual rails on both sides of the ship help with steering. Buoys, fog signals, day beacons and other navigational aids can also be visually overlaid in low-visibility conditions to help with navigation. These applications show the use of augmented reality as aids for task execution, but little research can be found on use in training ship crew members.

The first section is an introduction to ship handling in general, including a specific case - the offshore energy industry where unique requirements led

to the development of increased automation and specialized equipment for ships. The following three sections are in accordance with the situated cognitive engineering research method. Section 2.2 titled operational demands describe from an operator point-of-view, requirements for safe execution of ship handling operations. In designing a technological solution, the SCE method takes into account human factors that could affect interactions between users and the system being developed. Consequently, section 2.3 titled human factors knowledge describes mode errors - a type of error arising from operation of state-dependent systems out of state. Finally, section 2.4 describes technological options available to implement the mixed reality training method that is envisioned.

2.1 Ship Handling

Given the varied environments in which a ship is handled, a distinction is made between vessel handling in restricted spaces as opposed to in spacious surroundings of the open seas. Maneuvering typically refers to handling of ships in confined spaces and at low speeds; requiring accuracy and precision in movement. On the other hand, navigation occurs in open seas with more room for movement which makes it a comparatively easy task over maneuvering. During navigation, a ship usually moves in straight lines. So there is little need to steer for the most part. In other words, fewer changes in direction occur over time.

A certain amount of automation has seeped into marine industry over the years. It assists human operators to accomplish vessel handling tasks with functions such as autopilot for navigation and dynamic positioning for maneuvering. The underlying idea is to counter water resistance to ship movement using the propellers and thrusters it has, while also accounting for environmental forces such as waves, wind and current. Current generation autopilots do a satisfactory job of the navigating ships in open seas. But

maneuvering continues to be a specialized human job even though a good degree of automation support exists. Hence, this research focuses on training for ship maneuvering.

The training method developed here is aimed at learning maneuvering. Besides being a skilled task, it also involves safety risks by nature of its activities. The next section describes challenges of maneuvering and its high relevance in the offshore oil industry. It is followed by a brief description of Dynamic Positioning Systems, the automation technology that assists with ship maneuvering tasks and its riders that drive the need for manual vessel handling skills in operators.

2.1.1 Maneuvering

Vessel handling at low speeds has been difficult on marine vessels historically Ship 2016. From a technical point of view, the working mechanism of past rudder systems made it difficult to turn vessels 'in place'. Maneuvering a large vessel at low speed is often a challenging operation even from the perspective of a human operator. Many factors affect the precise handling of a given vessel such as its size, power, thruster configuration, onboard bridge equipment, etc. Further, the vessel's handling characteristics are subject to environmental conditions such as wind, current, and waves. Besides, low speed maneuvering often occurs in close proximity to man-made constructions such as docks, offshore structures and other ships. The potentially destructive consequences of collision risks in such scenarios makes it a stressful operation, further amplifying the challenge of maneuvering.

A method for objective evaluation of ship handling difficulties in restricted maneuvering area, in areas of traffic congestion is presented in (Inoue 2000). Examples of difficult maneuvering operations include approaching a harbour, berthing in a port, sailing side-by-side another vessel, approaching and stationing close to an oil platform, etc. An often recurring sequence is that of port-bound vessel heading to its berthing location in the harbour. Having

entered pilot waters from seaward, a vessel's course needs to be controlled accurately to ensure safe passage through channels, bridges, and locks; avoiding collisions with other vessels at the same time. Safety risks involved in such tasks make it a stressful operation. Mistakes have high associated costs, possibly leading to lost lives and damage to expensive constructions.

2.1.2 Offshore Supply Operations

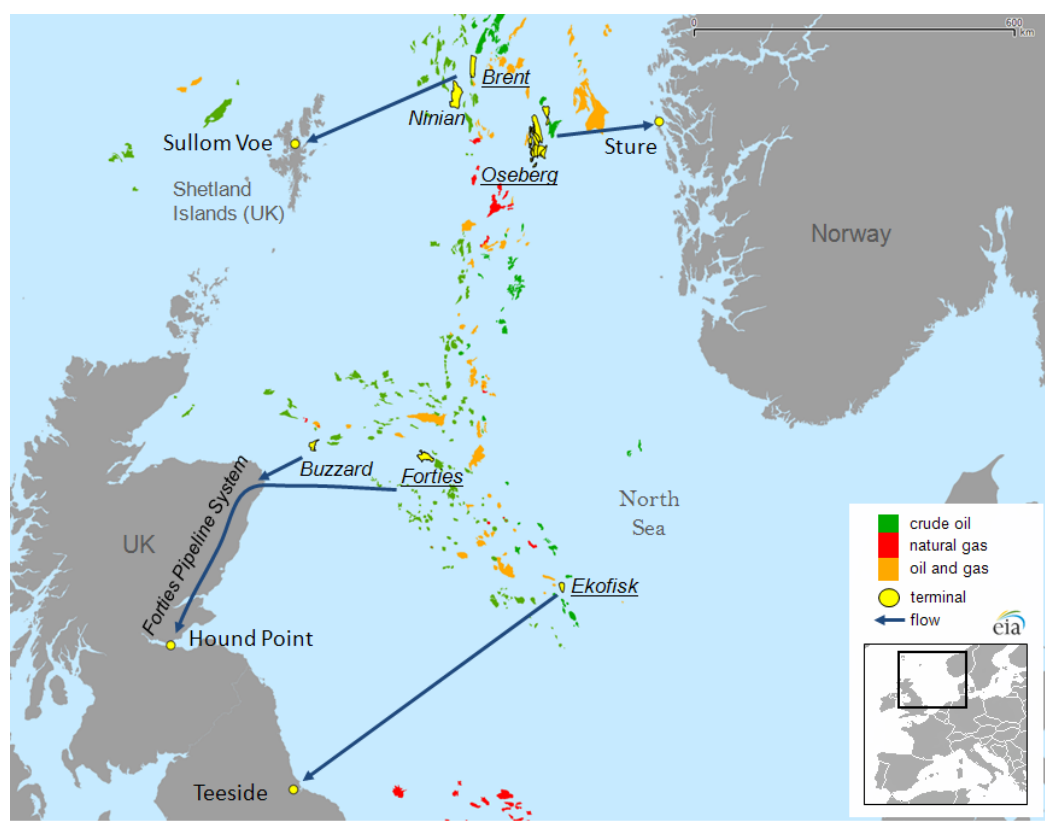
A special application of ship handling skill is on-board offshore supply vessels. These are vessels that are used in support of exploration and production of offshore mineral or energy resources located in continental shelves around the world. For example, figure 2.1 shows some prominent oil fields in the North sea. Specific missions of offshore supply vessels include:

- seismic survey to locate potential oil and gas fields
- towing of rigs to their location, positioning them and laying anchoring and mooring equipment
- supplying equipment, personnel, provisions, other necessary goods to rigs
- subsea operations such as ROV operation, diving support, inspection and maintenance
- safety standby for emergency response and rescue operations

Maneuvering plays an important role in platform supply vessels. They transport supplies such as fuel, water and chemicals to the offshore facilities and bring back disposables for proper recycling. Hence, these vessels need to approach and be stationed close to platforms on a regular basis. Loading and unloading operations happen at the stern of a vessel and requires station

¹U.S. Energy Information Administration, United Kingdom Department of Energy and Climate Change, Norwegian Petroleum Directorate

Figure 2.1: Prominent oil and gas fields in the North sea



Source: refer footnote¹

keeping till the operation is complete. This requirement led to the development and subsequent popularity of dynamic positioning systems. These are automated systems that help with station keeping and other maneuvering operations. The following sections describe the dynamic positioning system, their conceptual working mechanism and modes of operation before making a case about the need for skilled manual maneuvering operators.

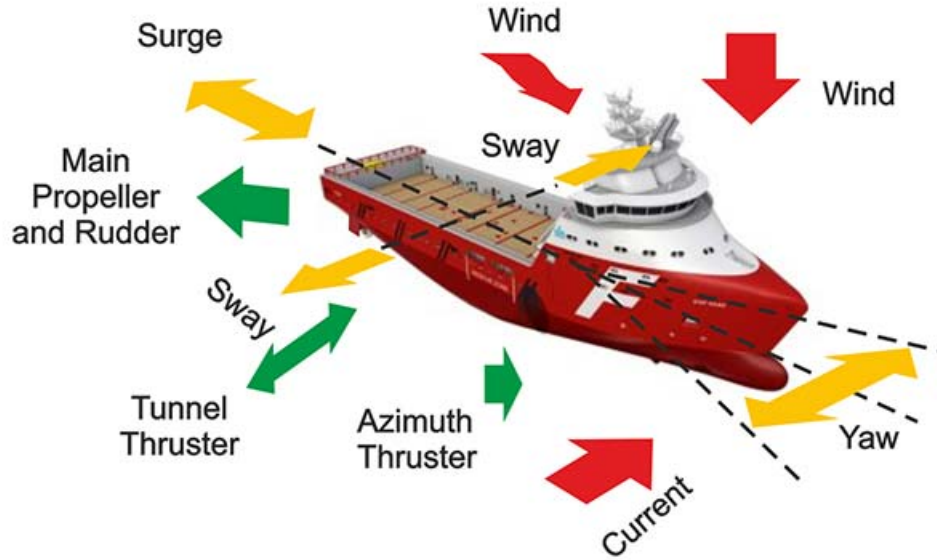
2.1.2.1 Dynamic Positioning System

Dynamic positioning (DP) is a computer-controlled system that maintains position and heading of a vessel automatically by using its propellers and thrusters. Information from position reference sensors that provide the vessel's position and heading, along with information from wind sensors, motion sensors and gyrocompasses on the vessel are used by the system. The information is supplied as input to a program that calculates the changes in position/heading required to bring the vessel a preset location and, activates the vessel's thrusters as necessary.

The use of dp systems has been increasing over the years since its first inception in 1960s. There are well over 2000 DP vessels in operation today Sørensen 2011. From early days of the technology where main focus areas of research were accurate position measurement and control system technologies used, research has now moved on to more specialized problems such as optimizing dp systems for energy efficiency. With increasing popularity of DP systems and increased use of sophisticated technology onboard ships, the marine industry can expect more advanced automation in vessel control over the years. Future systems could be enabled with features such as automatic maneuvering in shallow water and harbor areas, formation sailing, and automatic collision avoidance.

Dynamic positioning is an automated system that helps human operators with maneuvering operations. It offloads part of the human operator's decision making overhead in real-time. Using a mathematical model of the ship

Figure 2.2: Forces acting on a ship and its possible movements



Source: kongsberg.com

and, the forces acting on it, the DP system can control the vessel's thrusters to position it in a preset destination. Figure 2.3 is a model of the functional components of a dynamic positioning system.

The system contains a *controller* module that influences vessel movements by taking decisions on power allocation for individual vessel thrusters. It takes as input, weather information from wind sensors and current position information from position reference systems. Expected output is to position the vessel at a position and heading preset by the operator. After being initiated, the system determines the difference between current position and desired position. It then attempts to minimize this difference over time. This is done by firing appropriate thrusters into action, producing vessel movements in different directions.

Environmental forces acting on the vessel during the time though add to the complexity of this operation. The controller then needs to compensate for unpredictable environmental forces as it decides on allocations for individual

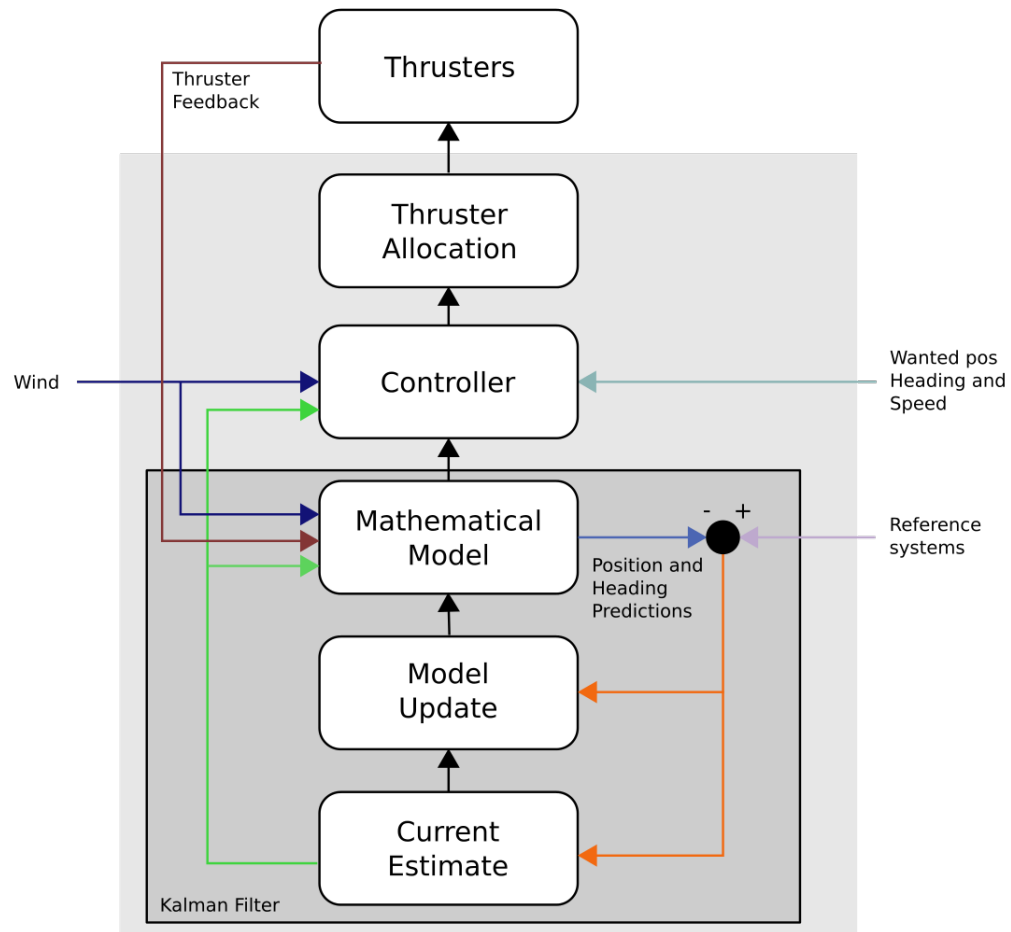


Figure 2.3: Model architecture of Dynamic Positioning systems

thrusters. While the system takes into account wind forces acting on the vessel measured using wind sensors, as shown in 2.2, a vessel's position is also affected by ocean currents and waves. Kalman filter is generally used to model the environmental forces. It is an algorithm that uses a series of measurements observed over time, containing statistical noise and other inaccuracies, and produces estimates of unknown variables by using Bayesian inference and estimating a joint probability distribution over the variables for each timeframe. While it tends to be more precise than algorithms based on a single measurement alone, it is nevertheless a probability based system that produces estimate predictions of changes in environmental forces over time and some uncertainty in predictions can be expected. Although there do not exist rules specifying acceptance criteria for the positioning performance of DP systems, DNVGL guidelines state that "in moderate weather conditions and with a fully operational DP-system the vessel should generally be able to demonstrate position keeping accuracy with a 3 meter radius and $\pm 1^\circ$ of heading." Veritas 2011

Figure ?? shows the interface of a typical DP system. A display monitor is used to show various information regarding the vessel and its control systems. Apart from the display, there exists input interface in the form of buttons. They are used to provide information to the system such as desired location and the mode in which it will be used.

Dynamic Positioning Modes Dynamic positioning systems can be commonly operated in different modes. Modes define the type of automatic vessel operation, some of which differ in the amount of automation involved. Following are some common modes of dynamic positioning systems.

1. **Joystick:** In this mode, the operator can control the vessel position and heading manually using a joystick.
2. **Auto heading:** In this mode, the vessel automatically maintains a preset heading.

3. **Auto position:** This mode automatically maintains the vessel's position and heading.
4. **Follow target:** Enables the vessel to automatically follow a moving target.
5. **Autopilot:** In this mode, the vessel steers automatically to follow a predefined course.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of DP modes. It can be observed that besides functionality, the modes listed above differ by the level of automation involved in the functionality. The joystick mode offers the least amount of automation. In this mode, a single lever can be used to control all of the vessel's thrusters at the same time. A large vessel such as a platform supply vessel typically has two azimuth thrusters at the stern-end of the vessel and one at the bow-end. In addition, they also typically have tunnel bow thrusters that can be used to turn the vessel in place (refer figure 2.4). While it is possible to control each of the thrusters individually from the bridge of the vessel for fine-grained control; the joystick mode encapsulates all the thrusters into one control. This allows control of forward, reverse, steering and even sideways motion using just one lever.

2.1.2.2 Manual Handling

Going by number of total losses occurring per year (refer figure 2.5), the safety of vessels world-wide can be said to have improved over the years, particularly the last decade, despite the ever increasing number of sea-faring vessels. Nevertheless, there is a growing concern in the industry regarding overreliance on electronic navigation aids. Studies have found human error to be dominant factor in a significant percentage of the accidents Baker and McCafferty 2005; Hauff 2014. Incidents such as the Norne shuttle tanker's collision with an FPSO on 5 March 2000, Big Orange XVIII's collision with

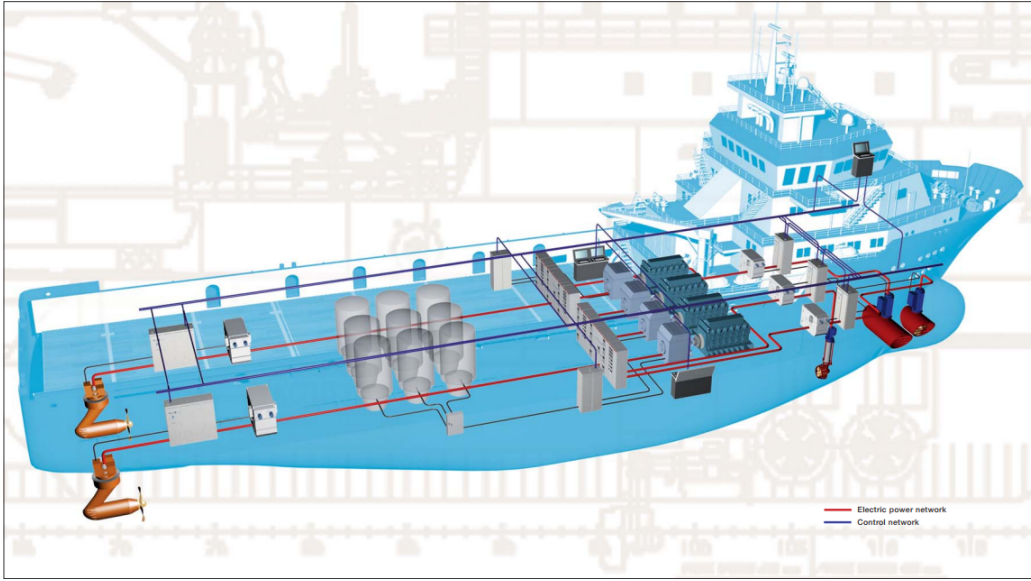


Figure 2.4: Schematic diagram of the power and control network of a typical offshore supply vessel

the water injection facility Ekofisk 2/4-W on 8 June 2009 and standby vessel Far Symphony's impact with the mobile installation West Venture on 7 March 2004 are mentioned as cases of shipping incidents that showcase the lack of preparedness among crew members to handle with emergency situations Vinnem 2013.

2.2 Operational Demands

An intuitive understanding of the vessel's handling is required to manually manoeuvre the vessel. Different vessels exhibit different handling behavior depending on their propulsion technology, steering controls, and, dynamics of the particular vessel, owing to its design. These factors have a combined effect on the handling behavior of the vessel, that is unique to the vessel, or the vessel type in general. Besides, vessels also differ in the way they respond to various weather conditions. Gaining a high level of intuitive understanding

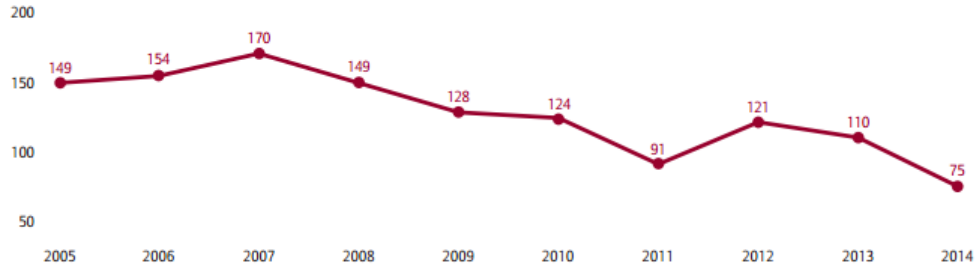


Figure 2.5: Schematic diagram of the power and control network of a typical offshore supply vessel

of the vessel's motion dynamics comes with extensive practice. A manoeuvre training system should then enable maneuvering practice on the real vessel in real situations.

A clear view of the target object around which the vessel is being maneuvered, provides direct visual feedback of the target's position relative to the vessel. By looking out the bridge windows, the operator can immediately learn about the progress of the maneuvering operation. Using this information, the operator can make adjustments to the vessel's movement as required.

When maneuvering large vessels, besides the person at the helm, another person usually aids the operation. Standing outside the bridge of the vessel, this person keeps a lookout for the position of the ship, and conveys it to bridge personnel. He also keeps a lookout for traffic and other objects in the vicinity such as navigational aids.

Figure 2.6 shows the certification process required to be a qualified dynamic positioning operator. One starts with a classroom-based induction course that provides basic knowledge of the principles and practical use of DP. After such a course, the trainee is expected to be familiar with the components of a DP system, concept of redundancy that separate different classes of DP systems, its modes of operation and limitations. Thereafter the trainee goes on to acquire watchkeeping experience onboard real vessels

with DP. This watchkeeping exercise takes place for a relatively short period of time where the trainee is familiarised with DP equipments onboard the vessel and gets to witness operations. This is followed by a simulator-based course where the trainee gets practical experience operating DP systems in onshore simulation centers.

2.3 Human Factors Knowledge

2.3.1 Mode Errors

In context of interface design, mode errors are the errors that occur when a user operates an interface in a manner that is appropriate to a different state of the system than the one it actually is in. When the user forgets the actual state and performs an action appropriate to a different state, the system response is unexpected and usually undesired. A common example of mode errors is the undesired input of capitalised letters on a computer due to caps lock, or the inability to enter numbers using the number pad due to numlock.

The design of a ship operation training method set in augmented reality needs to take into account the possibility of mode errors resulting from the two realities that are simultaneously at play. A trainee moving a real ship in augmented reality is also moving it in actual reality. Take the example of a training exercise to approach a virtual object out in the open sea. In the course of the exercise, the trainee moves the vessel towards the virtual object in the augmented reality. At the same time, the real vessel is actually moving somewhere out in the open sea. If the bridge equipment is also augmented, the radar would be expected to display an indication of the virtual oil platform. Adding a virtual object to a radar display that already contains information regarding other real objects can be confounding to users. A way to distinctly identify virtual objects should help reduce mode errors but it also hampers immersion of the experience. It is advised to avoid the

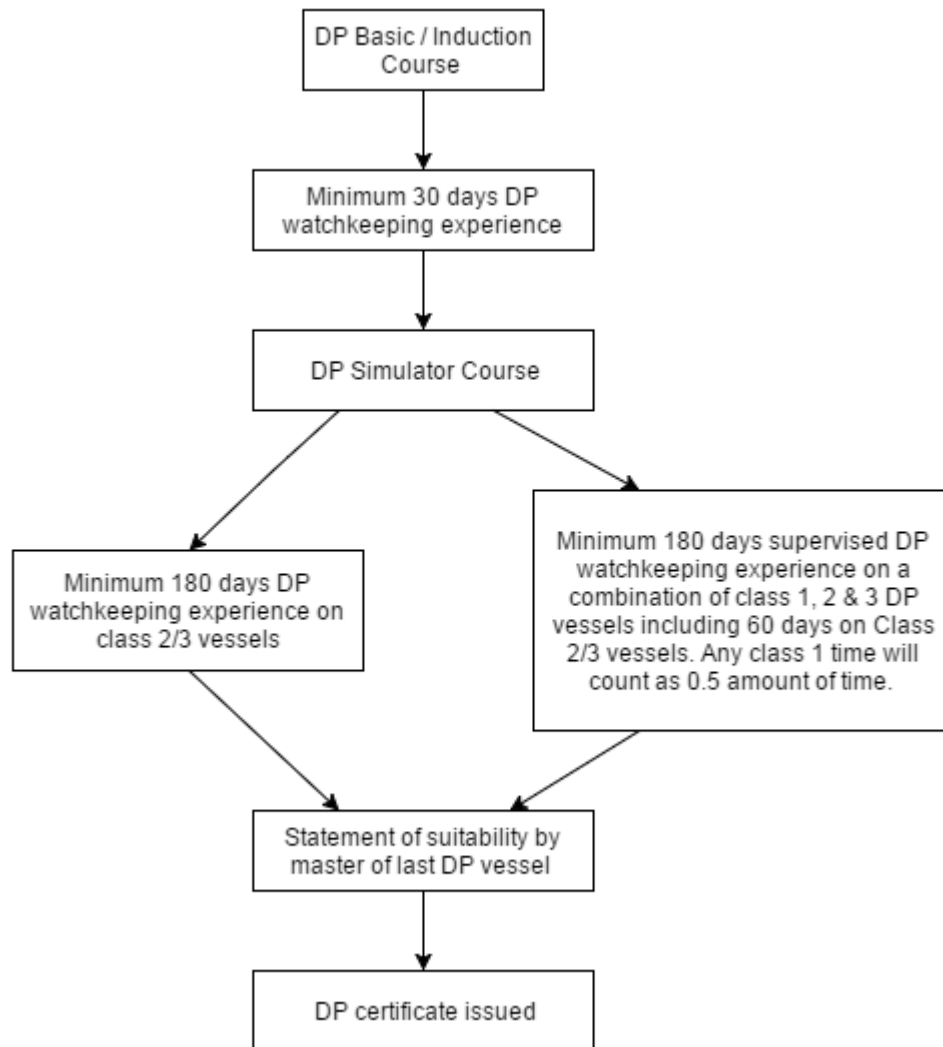
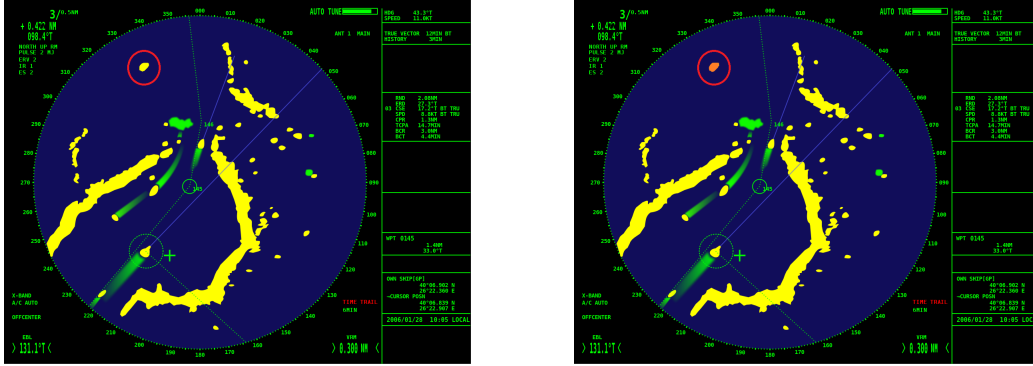


Figure 2.6: Flowchart of nautical institute Dynamic positioning certification scheme

possibility of mode errors when possible (citation needed).



(a) No colour differentiation

(b) Differentiated virtual object

Figure 2.7: Display of virtual objects on radar

2.4 Envisioned Technology

An important choice in the design of a new human-computer interface is the technology used to build prototypes, and eventually the end product. For example, devices like keyboard, mouse and trackpad have acted as the standard input interface for personal computers for over 2 decades now, while computer monitors in the form of CRT, LCD and TFT displays have formed the output interface. Not unlike television monitors, computer monitors were initially used for purposes of data processing before being used for entertainment purposes such as gaming and media streaming. With the evolution of computing technology from large machines driven by punch cards and that filled up entire rooms to the personal computer form has coincided with their ubiquitous use in the modern world influencing the manner in which most office jobs are carried out today.

Computers had a significant impact on the maritime industry. Where naval architecture was traditionally a craft with little scientific information to back designs, modern computers enabled computing power to be leveraged to



Figure 2.8: Setup of a dynamic positioning simulator by VSTEP

predict performance. Modern ship designs make use of tools that have been developed to assess static and dynamic stability, water resistance, for hull development and structural analysis. Among other uses, maritime industry found use for computers as devices that could be used for the simulation of movements of vessels on sea. In a gaming-like use case, computers are used to run ship simulation software for educational purposes. These programs can be used to control virtual ships in virtual marine environments. Some setups involve actual bridge equipment to input commands to the program, making the experience more real-like. An array of monitors are used for display. Backed by computer graphics and models of sea, vessel and other objects, the simulation software is supposed to create the perception of being inside a real vessel. It is now standard practice to undergo training using simulators in the maritime industry. Figure 2.8 shows the setup of a typical dynamic positioning simulator.

2.4.1 Augmented Reality Display

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This section talks about display technology that is needed to create augmented reality applications. It briefly describes technological options available for augmented reality applications from the point-of-view of creating the visual perception that is part of augmented reality. Three ideas of mixed reality displays are considered, namely, optical see-through, video see-through head-mounted displays and, spatial augmented reality. Having been conceived in the 1980s, military and medical visualization contexts, these options for mixed reality displays were first catalogued in a landmark survey paper on augmented reality by Ronald Azuma Azuma 1997.

The utility of different categories of augmented reality displays in the ship handling training context is considered in this research. Optical see-through displays theoretically allow an unhindered view of the outside world, whereas in video see-through display it is camera-mediated. Optical see-through HMDs appear to be the most logical choice for AR intuitively. It is ideologically consistent with AR in that most of the visual reality is left untouched, only to add bits of information (real/virtual) as necessary. Spatial augmented reality is another option for AR, but lack of mobility makes it infeasible in this scenario. It is nevertheless described in brief here for posterity. The following sections describe each of the display technologies in turn before comparing optical and video see-through HMDs.

2.4.1.1 Optical See-Through Head-Mounted Display

Optical see-through head-mounted displays are one of the two basic choices available for mixed reality content display along with video see-through head-mounted displays. In general, see-through displays allow the user to see the real world through a display system while also being able to seamlessly display digital content on it. These were first developed for military aircraft for applications such as fixing the target of ammunition on locations that could be seen through the aircraft. The concept of see-through display is also mak-

ing way into consumer markets, with head up displays used in cars being one of the more popular uses. Such display systems can also be mobile with users wearing them on the head so as to directly influence their view of the outside world. These are called as head-mounted displays. The following sections describe optical and video see-through displays in turn. A comparison of the two technologies on various parameters is presented thereafter.

Optical see-through head-mounted displays (OST) are display systems that exploit the transparency of glass material to provide unobstructed views of the outside world. By definition, they can also digital content on the same surface simultaneously. As figure 2.9 shows, OST displays use optical combiners to combine light from the real world with that of the digital content. Optical combiners usually reduce the amount of light from real world. Combiners act like half-silvered mirrors to be able to reflect light from monitors into user's eyes. Theoretically, this display system can provide undistorted view of the real world (apart from slight obstructions caused by the frame itself). As a downside, it also affects the display of digital content adversely, making virtual objects appear semi-transparent and 'ghostlike'.

2.4.1.2 Video See-Through Head-Mounted Display

Video see-through HMDs are similar to optical see-through HMDs in that they allow the combination of real world views with digital content. Differences between them stem from their source of real world view. As opposed to OST which provides a direct view of the environment, VST uses video feed from a camera in the HMD system to provide real world views. So, in addition to the head trackers and viewing monitors as in OST HMDs, VST HMDs require a camera appendage in the setup (see figure 2.10). This type of HMDs block the wearer's external view in favor of better immersion into the stereoscopic view provided by the system. A video camera can be mounted on the exterior of such an HMD to incorporate external view back into the content.

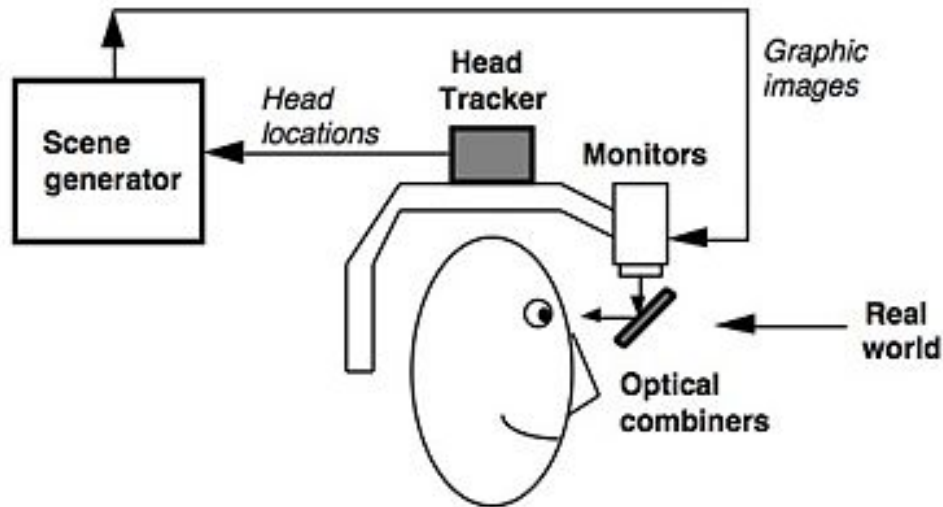


Figure 2.9: Schematic diagram of optical see through display (Source: Azuma 1997)

Driven by interest from the gaming community, and virtual reality applications in general, closed-view HMDs have seen more development as of this writing. Low cost HMDs are available in the consumer market, and can be used for 3D games and entertainment applications. With the addition of one or two cameras, these can be leveraged for mixed reality applications. Consequently, calibration of the camera's view to that of the user's eye position will have to be made.

2.4.1.3 Spatial Augmented Reality

Spatial augmented reality (SAR) refers to the concept of augmenting real-world spaces (with digital media) without the use of special devices such as head-mounted display. As an AR technology, implementations of SAR must adhere to the basic requirements of augmented reality listed in section 1.2. Along with HMDs, it forms another paradigm for the creation of mixed reality content. SAR offers unique benefits over HMDs such as obviating the need to wear special devices and possibly high resolution, wide field of view

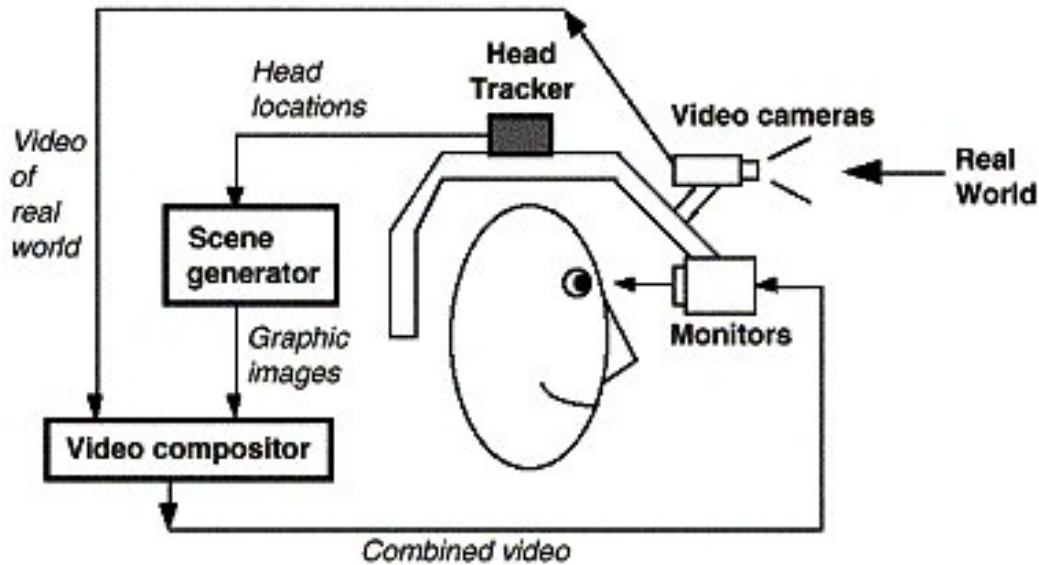


Figure 2.10: Schematic diagram of video see through display (Source: Azuma 1997)

displays integrated into natural environments. Large field of view and higher resolution provides a stronger feeling of presence (Lantz 1996), allowing for better immersion and easier eye accommodation². On the downside, it suffers from setbacks such as having to set up expensive custom-made display configurations that require more space and hardware than standardized HMDS.

The lack of standardized solutions and the need to setup special hardware tailored to individual ships makes SAR an impractical solution for creation of AR onboard ships for maneuvering training purposes. A portable technological solution that enables mobility between vessels is desired. This allows for trainings to be conducted on various different vessels with minimal time and effort involved in setting up the augmented environment. Instead, the use of mobile AR devices such as HMDs means that trainees can carry individual AR devices onboard and vessels do not need to be docked for purposes of setting up the AR environment. Nevertheless, the concept is described

²refer to section 2.4.2.1 for a discussion on photorealism

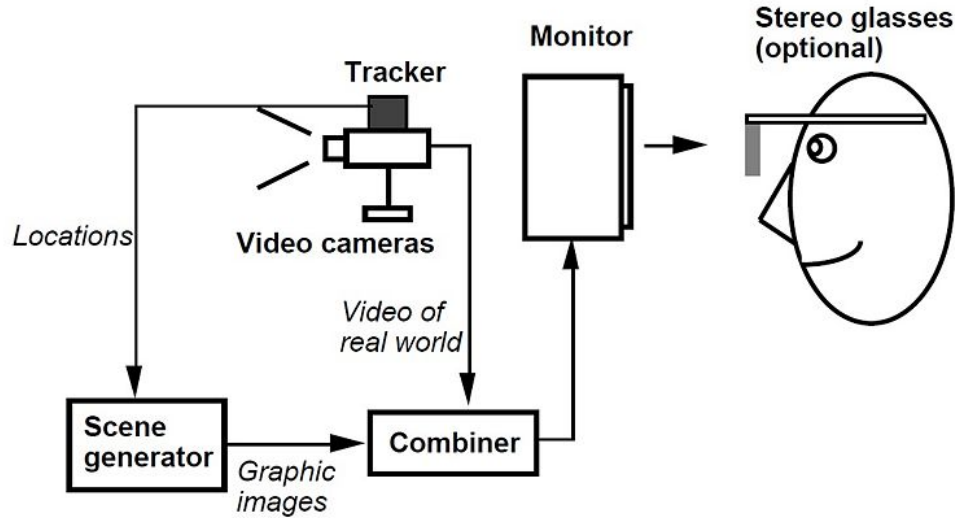


Figure 2.11: Schematic diagram of monitor see through display (Source: Azuma 1997)

in brief here for completeness. A detailed treatment of the topic of spatial augmented reality can be found in Bimber and Raskar 2005.

Figure 2.11 shows a concept of monitor-based spatial augmented reality. In this setup, the user views the mixed reality on one or more monitors in front of the user which display a combination of virtual and real world images captured by video camera. This is similar to the CAVE (Cruz-Neira, Sandin, and DeFanti 1993) concept for virtual reality. CAVE (CAVE automatic virtual environment) seeks to immerse the user in a 3D virtual environment created using rear/front facing projectors lighting up projection screens in 3 dimensions. Although originally designed for virtual reality experience, the concept can be adapted for augmented reality. Advances in projection technology make it possible to have projections on transparent screens (Peterson and Pinska 2006).

A discussion of display options for AR would be incomplete without spatial augmented reality. As opposed to head-mounted displays, SAR relies on

projectors to create the views necessary for the perception of mixed reality. SAR may be just as effective as head-mounted displays in being able to create immersive mixed environments. A study on the use of large projection screen as an alternative to HMDs for virtual environment found no significant difference between the two for spatial cognition tasks (Patrick et al. 2000). But projector-based display systems are custom solutions that need to be designed for the specific environment in consideration. Ships come in a variety of shapes and sizes, so do their bridge rooms. Setting up MR environments onboard different supply vessels would then involve considerable effort to tailor the display system for individual ships. Besides, some modification of the ship bridge room is involved such as placing projectors at the appropriate locations and turning bridge windows in to projection screens onto which virtual objects can be projected.

2.4.2 Comparison of Head-Mounted Displays

This section provides a comparison of optical and video see-through HMDs based on parameters thought to be relevant to this study. For an in-depth review and comparison between these two display types, readers can refer to Rolland, Holloway, and Fuchs 1995.

1. *Simplicity*: In mixed reality applications, there is a need to see the external world besides virtual images being displayed in the HMDs. Optical see-through systems meet this requirement naturally from employing transparent displays which do not interfere with the external view. Video see-through systems on the other hand, use a camera to capture the external view. The camera then seeks to perform the role of human vision, one of the most complicated sensory systems in the universe, the various functions of which are either not built into or not yet achievable using consumer grade cameras. For example, the resolution of the entire view (real + virtual) is limited to that of the

display device in case of VST. This constraint is also present in optical see-through devices, with a crucial difference that it is only applicable to virtual parts of the scene.

2. *Lag*: A persistent problem with interactive computer graphics is that of time delay (lag) between expectation of the appearance of a scene and its actual appearance. For example, in an OST system, there will be near zero lag in viewing real scene as it is viewed directly by the user. Whereas, the display of any virtual objects can be a source of lag. The system first needs to decide whether to display virtual objects based on viewing direction and orientation and, also calculate appropriate projection of the virtual object if it needs to be displayed indeed. Finally, there will be a small delay in rendering the images itself.

In case of video see-through systems, additional lag is present from having to digitize video stream of the real world. In a display that refreshes at 60Hz, the time that elapses between display of one frame and another is 16.67ms. Hence there will be a minimum of 16.67ms delay in displaying the external view recorded by a camera, discounting the time taken to digitize the camera view. According to (Ellis et al. 1997), for close range tasks, one millisecond of delay causes one millimeter of error

An advantage of VST over OST is that the higher degree of control over display streams (real and virtual) in video see-through makes it possible to avoid the problem of temporal mismatch due to delay in virtual images by delaying real view as well.

The display technologies considered so far have been applicable for creation of mixed reality for individual users. These systems do not scale easily to groups of users needing to experience the same mixed reality. For example, in the mixed reality ship handling training method that is being conceived

Table 2.1: Comparison of see-through head-mounted displays

	Optical see-through	Video see-through
Simplicity	Only one stream to process (virtual images)	Two streams to process (camera feed + virtual images)
Quality of real world view	Largely undistorted	Camera and display dependent
Time lag of real world view	0ms	>16ms
Resolution	Partially display dependent	Fully Camera and display dependent
Peripheral field of view (horizontal)	180 degrees	110 degrees
Digital display field of view (horizontal)	20-40 degrees	>90 degrees
Focus and contrast	Hard to blend virtual object into real scene	Less severe contrast issues due to limited dynamic response of cameras
Occlusion	Challenging to achieve full occlusion	Occlusion is possible due to full control over displayed content

in this project, it is required that at least two people experience the same scenario, i.e. the trainee and a trainer (experience ship handler). Apart from the trainee who needs to view the virtual object/s for training purposes, the trainer also needs to see the same in order to evaluate trainee performance. Collaborative design such as for architecture and modeling is another use case multiple users needing to experience the same mixed reality.

2.4.2.1 Photorealism

2.4.3 Ship Instrument Augmentation

Mixed reality displays described in the previous section form a part of enabling technologies for the mixed reality ship maneuvering training conceptualized in this research. HMDs for instance can help create visual perception of an offshore oil platform standing on the open sea. In other training scenarios they may be used to display tracks/lanes for navigational tracking or virtual ships on collision course/sailing side-by-side etc. Different artifacts may be displayed depending on training objectives and the perceptions that need to be created. Ships over the years though have evolved to be technically complex machines. The bridge room of a modern age vessel houses multiple instruments tracking different aspects of its reality. Therefore, the design of a mixed reality environment on-board a modern seafaring vessel should consider how virtual objects interact with various instruments in the bridge room to accurately correspond with the reality that is being visually perceived.

2.4.3.1 Bridge Instrumentation

2.4.3.2 Tracking Requirements

In-out vs out-in tracking

Fiducial Markers

Table 2.2: Levels of photorealism

Classification Reasoning	
High	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Presentation of occlusion, a basic depth cue, is necessary to induce sense of depth in the augmented scene2. Wide field of view is required to create illusion of large object being nearby.3. Virtual object is the main focus in the scene and, inconsistency in 3D view of augmented reality can hamper task performance from visual fatigue due to accomodation-vergence conflict.
Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Occlusion is useful to induce depth in the scene, but some amount transparency can be tolerated.2. Lack of wide field of view does not affect task performance.3. Inconsistency in 3D view does not easily amount to visual fatigue as virtual object is not the user's main object of focus in the augmented scene.
Low	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Depth cues in the scene are not necessary for purposes of the training.2. Wide field of view is not required for effective task performance.3. Inconsistency in 3D view does not easily amount to visual fatigue as virtual object is not the user's main object of focus in the augmented scene

Chapter 3

Specification

3.1 On-board Training Possibilities

Comparison of training methods

Table 3.1: Comparison of on-board training options

	Manoeuvre Training	Navigation Training	Emergency Response
Aim	Learn vessel steering in navigationally challenging situations	Learn long distance maritime navigation	Learn emergency response procedures and teamwork skills
Scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Position keeping ■ In-place turning ■ Berthing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Path planning ■ Navigate port entrances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fire in engine room ■ Water flooding in lower deck ■ Man over-board
Competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bridge equipment operation ■ Vessel movement intuition ■ Depth estimation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Route planning ■ Identify, use maritime navigation aids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Emergency severity assessment ■ Teamwork, communication
Equipments Required	Radar, ARPA, ECDIS, Fiducial markers in bridge	Radar, ECDIS, ARPA, AIS, Markers in bridge	Fiducial markers in engine room, deck, etc.
Onboard crew Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Trainee ■ Instructor ■ Officer of the watch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Trainee ■ Instructor ■ Officer of the watch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Full crew / part of crew located at emergency site
Photorealism required	High	Low	Medium

Table 3.2: Comparison of training methods

	Simulator training	MR on-board training	On-the-job training
Practice on real vessel	✗	✓	✓
Practice in various real weather conditions	✗	✓	✓
Perform training repeti- tions in same conditions	✓	✗	✗
Scope for standardized competency assessment	✓	✓	✗
Scope for gradation of learning outcomes	✓	✓	✗
Close range ship handling training	✓	✓	✗
Scope for introduction of learning framework	✓	✓	✗
Risk of collision with other vessels	✗	✓	✓
Suitable for learning level	All	All	Advanced

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