MR Critiques

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Fragments

Fragments is a game that places you into the mixed reality of a detective attempting to piece together intricate crimes. Fragments is a game that includes several different interactions at play. You could gather clues, talk to your partners, walk around the levels and utilize a detailed tool menu. A specific interaction I experienced while playing Fragments was with the act of examining items in a room. Examining is one of the most important mechanics in the game as it allows you to get a glimpse of any object for clues. These clues can be in the form of fingerprints, writings, and any other significant things that can be found. This is the main interaction that helps progress the game and causes the player to assess and figure out the most significant clues in each level. You can examine an object or item by pressing a specific button or by saying the word examine.

Interaction strengths I noted were the hand signals worked fine, it is evident what can and can’t be interacted with, and there’s help every step of the way. Anytime I wanted to gather evidence or see objectives the machine read my hand signals and performed the action in a timely manner. I was never confused on what I could interact within a level as there were indicators around the level objects. This made finding clues and progressing the story so much easier. Everything was clear and I always had detailed instructions on what to achieve in the game. Any time I got lost or forgot a certain command I would be guided on what I needed to do. I ran into no interaction problems when playing Fragments. During my playthrough, everything worked so smoothly, and I felt the designers truly did well in that aspect.

HoloTour

HoloTour was the oddest experience that I have ever encountered on the mixed reality headset. It is essentially a virtual tour of many foreign and exotic places on the planet. A specific interaction that I encountered was moving to trigger various informational scenes. For instance, I ended up on a blimp in Peru, and the guide told me about the mountains and surroundings whenever I moved to a certain point. The tour guide would finish up a story about your character’s current place and a pointer would direct you to things native to that area. Flowers, birds, and ruins are just some of the numerous things that the guide gave me information on. I think the designers were trying to simulate a museum tour by escorting you to the location and having your movements take you to places. If that was the primary goal, then the designers were able to implement it correctly as the experience is reflective of that.

When it comes to the critiquing HoloTour’s interactions and their suitability for MR I don’t have a lot to say. I didn’t encounter interactions that messed up the game, and the experience was simple. My personal tour guide was helpful in suggesting where to explore around the globe and what I needed to say or do. Everything from turning to a specific point to trigger a scene and saying certain words to teleport worked successfully. HoloTour brought an interesting take on the way we receive information about other places. HoloTour works well and there is an endless number of things to learn about while playing this experience. Exploration has been a hot topic for a while, so I plan on seeing many more experiences like this. It was refreshing to see new technology be used for something other than games.

HoloStudy Biology

I decided to choose this as one of my critiques since it is an educational game like HoloTour. A specific interaction I had was with the explore it tool. When I started the experience, I was given some information on the nucleus. I could rotate, maximize, and study the way it looked. When I wanted to learn more about what was inside of it, I used the explore tool. To use the explore tool I simply clicked my pointer and thumb together on the words explore it. The explore tool allowed me to learn more about certain parts of the nucleus and examine them. Like the nucleus, each part I went to gave me information on the subject. The explore function had a huge impact on me as it is the main thing you do in the experience. The player reads and bounces from different sections when they want to.

Educational games don’t play like regular win/lose games. I wasn’t tested on the material and had the option of going from section to section whenever I felt like it. For me, it is usually slightly more difficult to critique their interactions when there aren’t a whole lot at play. You point, click, and read and you do that for the entire experience. As with most of the mixed reality games, I ran into no problems with getting HoloStudy to function on the headset. One interesting interaction that was implemented was having the scientist tell you more about what you’re reading about. If you click on excursion, the scientist will break down what you are looking at. This can help for people with bad eye sight who are unable to see well so that was a plus. Designers are making education mixed reality experiences fun and informative at the same time.

The Machine

The Machine is a puzzle game mixed in with horror genre elements. Throughout my playthrough, I got escape room vibes because of the dark and closed in atmosphere. The main interaction I want to talk about is the use of hand signals on the environment. This game took full advantage of my hand movements, and I used them to do the puzzles. The first puzzle I did was to rearrange the book covers on the shelf so that it reads noose, a hint that I received from a picture. The task was simple enough, put the books would not always move fast enough. This specific interaction would work sometimes, and other times wouldn’t react to my hand signals. At several times, I was left believing the game didn’t work well and that I was doing something wrong.

The problem with the interactions of The Machine is you can get stuck very easily and what to do next isn’t always clear. For instance, after if pulled the switches down and made them all glow it wasn’t made clear what I was supposed to do next. The puzzles themselves weren’t hard to solve it was figuring out the objectives. Sometimes when I tried clicking on something in the room, I wouldn’t get a response, despite it being the only actual object in the vicinity. At many different points, I saw myself getting lost, and I was never able to progress past the first level. The furthest I was I made it was past the first two sets of puzzles. If those interaction issues get fixed, then it is quite possible that I’ll go back and try again.