

Magic Leap

A startup is betting more than half a billion dollars that it will dazzle you with its new approach to creating 3-D imagery.

By Rachel Metz

Logically, I know there isn't a hulking four-armed, twisty-horned blue monster clomping in circles in front of me, but it sure as hell looks like it.

I'm sitting behind a workbench in a white-walled room in Dania Beach, Florida, in the office of a secretive startup called Magic Leap. I'm staring wide-eyed through a pair of lenses attached to what looks like metal scaffolding that towers over my head and contains a bunch of electronics and lenses. It's an early prototype of the company's so-called cinematic-reality technology, which makes it possible for me to believe that the muscular beast with the gruff expression and two sets of swinging arms is actually in the room with me, hovering about seven feet in front of my face.

He's not just visible at a set distance. I'm holding a video-game controller that's connected to the demo station, and at the press of a button I can make the monster smaller or larger, move him right or left, bring him closer, or push him farther away.

Of course, I bring him as near as possible; I want to see how real he looks up close. Now he's about 30 inches from my

Breakthrough

A device that can make virtual objects appear in real life.

Why It Matters

The technology could open new opportunities for the film, gaming, travel, and telecommunications industries.

Key Players

- Magic Leap
- Microsoft

