FRIGHTrope Walking

Vivian Auduong - Design That Understands Us Blueprint

As we learned in class regarding automation:

That which can be automated should be. That which cannot be meaningfully automated should not be.

Ge Wang, p. 376 in Artful Design

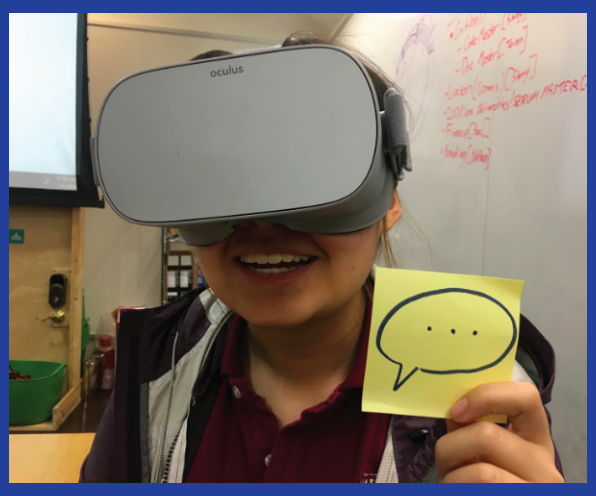
VR has similar guidelines:

When do we want to implement an experience in VR?

“Dangerous	Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro might be the adventure of a lifetime, but it could also be your last. Several people die on its slopes every year.
Impossible	You can’t travel back in time, grow a third arm, or experience life as a person of a different race or gender. But VR can give you a surprisingly visceral taste of what it would be like if you could.
Counter-productive	Chopping down a tree can illustrate the negative effects of climate change, but it does not make sense to do this in real life.
Expensive/Rare	If it would cost a lot to do something in real life, like visit the statue of David in Florence, Italy, it might make sense to do it virtually.”

Jeremy Bailenson, Stanford University
Director of Virtual Human Interaction

FRIGHTrope walking is a game which aims to help players live their lives with better focus and more courage regarding a fear of heights. The game involves walking across a tighrope while having to focus on challenging and distracting tasks.



Tightrope walking is great for VR because of its physical nature, which would be dangerous and expensive to implement in real life. In addition, VR makes it easy to implement endless possibilities for distracting surroundings. This project, when generalised to multiple tasks and distracting environments, will hopefully be beneficial for example to help people overcome their fear of public speaking when practicing giving a speech to rowdy virtual audiences or learn how to juggle objects that would be dangerous to throw in real life.

FRIGHTrope Walking is meant to help people build concentration while performing a specific task and facing their fears. The specific task will be determined soon but the idea is to place the user into increasingly distracting environments and having them maintain their focus. For this project, we are planning to target people with fears of heights, bats, the dark, etc and help them learn how to perfect a specialised task in these frightful environments.

FEAR

While walking across a tightrope is daredevilly dangerous in real life, it is much more feasible in VR. Virtually simulating tall buildings, a city-scape, tightropes, and an end goal will gamify tightrope walking and help users acclimate to heights, while the risk of falling helps remind users of possible dangers, and introduces a dimension of reality.

FOCUS

The game aims to help people of all ages who wish to improve focus and concentration, while making the heights a distraction, thus helping them learn to ignore any fear of heights. This specific interaction requiring focus may include flipping pancakes, cracking an egg, yoyo tricks, a slider puzzle, a memory game, or reading a speech. The player can not continue moving forward on the tightrope without actively completing this task that requires focus.

FUN

Finally, the game aims to appeal to people's senses of fun! Absurd things that don't happen in VR can be made completely normal in VR. Objects like birds, bats, bread fly at you while you're walking across the tightrope. If they hit you, you lose balance and fall off.