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ITE students develop multi-sensory virtual reality game



 Temperature and wind conditions are simulated by a metallic device on the player's nape and built-in mini-fans. TNP PHOTO: SAMFREY TAN

ITE students develop multi-sensory virtual reality game Season Traveller



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As the lush greenery beneath the hot-air balloon transforms into arid desert plains, your nape swelters under the summer heat.

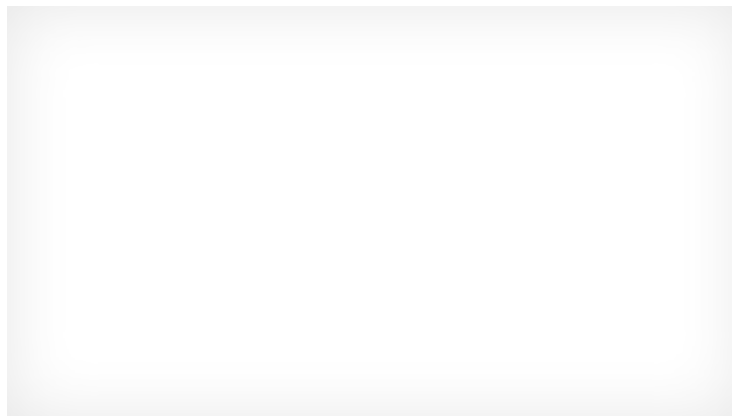
Heat sensations are a feature of Season Traveller, the first multi-sensory virtual reality game developed by students in Singapore.

It was developed by eight students from the Institute of Technical Education's (ITE) Games Art & Design and Games Programming & Development courses, and in collaboration with the Keio-NUS Cute (Connective Ubiquitous Technology for Embodiments) Centre.

Wearing a head-mounted system, players avoid boulder-hurling creatures by tilting their heads as they travel in a hot-air balloon. As they progress, they will virtually experience all four seasons, each identified by a particular fragrance - jasmine, lemon, cinnamon and mint.

To create a truly immersive experience, varying temperature and wind conditions are simulated by a metallic device on the player's nape and built-in mini-fans.

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There are vials of fragrance at the back of the headset, which are connected to the front via tubes.



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Each gameplay session lasts 30 seconds.

Lecturer-in-charge Raymond Koh, 36, said: "We are moving beyond sight and sound."

He said Season Traveller was created for research rather than entertainment purposes.

If successful, similar projects might be implemented in Singapore's marketing and tourism industries.

Director of ITE College Central's School of Electronics & Info-Comm Technology, Mr Aw Kim Geok, said: "Student-led projects such as Season Traveller allow our students to practise the skills they have acquired and recognise how to contribute meaningfully to the interactive and digital media landscape."

Mr Benjamin Chew, 24, was inspired by Japanese anime when working on the environment of the spring segment.

He said: "Video games are not just for entertainment. (Creating them) is a tough job, and I hope to please gamers through their enjoyment of (the final product)."

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