

Interact with virtual dolphins at NTU's Immersive Room

SINGAPORE — Virtual dolphins which can help autistic children hone their social skills. A crowd simulator that helps to predict human behaviour during an evacuation. 3D stereo digital art which showcases metrological phenomena.

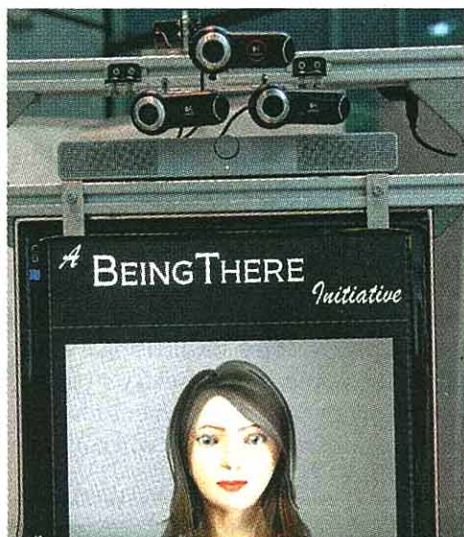
These are among the innovations that can found in the Immersive Room, the latest “star attraction” at the Institute for Media Innovation (IMI), Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

The Immersive Room, which resembles an IMAX theatre, was opened yesterday by Dr Tan Chin Nam, chairman of the Media Development Authority's International Advisory Panel.

The event also saw NTU showcasing its other 3D research, such as digital fashion and a robotic avatar used for telepresence which could one day replace video conferencing for remote face-to-face communication.

Virtual reality, noted NTU president Professor Bertil Andersson, is one of the most important technologies of the future. “It will produce a great leap forward in many fields, like communication, entertainment, engineering and even healthcare,” he said.

“The new Immersive Room is an important new facility that will enable our researchers to test-bed cutting-edge instructional and research applications within an immersive virtual 3D environment with interactive elements, enabled by new media



A robotic avatar with mobile video conferencing capabilities developed by NTU researchers.

tools. This system will bring us to the next level of 21st century interactive digital media (IDM) technologies,” Prof Andersson added.

For example, NTU and National Institute of Education researchers, in collaboration with the Underwater World Singapore, have come up with a 3D immersive version of a Virtual Pink Dolphin game, to help autistic children improve social interactions by interactively learning and playing with virtual dolphins.

The Immersive Room, and the other innovations by IMI, will be open to the public today and tomorrow from 4pm to 7pm at the Institute for Media Innovation, NTU.



Visitors can immerse themselves in a virtual world at the Immersive Room. PHOTOS BY ERNEST CHUA