ShareVR: Enabling Co-Located Experiences for Virtual Reality between HMD and Non-HMD Users

Jan Gugenheimer, Evgeny Stemasov, Julian Frommel, Enrico Rukzio
Institute of Media Informatics, Ulm University, Ulm, Germany
<firstname>.<lastname>@uni-ulm.de

Figure 1. ShareVR enables co-located asymmetric interaction between users wearing an HMD and users without an HMD. ShareVR uses a tracked display (a, e) as a window into the virtual world and a floor projection to visualize the virtual environment to all Non-HMD users. It enables collaborative experiences such as exploring a dungeon together (b), drawing (b), sports (c) or solving puzzles (e, f) as well as competitive experiences such as “Statues” (d) or a swordfight (g). ShareVR facilitates a shared physical and virtual space, increasing the presence and enjoyment for both HMD and Non-HMD users.

ABSTRACT
Virtual reality (VR) head-mounted displays (HMD) allow for a highly immersive experience and are currently becoming part of the living room entertainment. Current VR systems focus mainly on increasing the immersion and enjoyment for the user wearing the HMD (HMD user), resulting in all the bystanders (Non-HMD users) being excluded from the experience. We propose ShareVR, a proof-of-concept prototype using floor projection and mobile displays in combination with positional tracking to visualize the virtual world for the Non-HMD user, enabling them to interact with the HMD user and become part of the VR experience. We designed and implemented ShareVR based on the insights of an initial online survey (n=48) with early adopters of VR HMDs. We ran a user study (n=16) comparing ShareVR to a baseline condition showing how the interaction using ShareVR led to an increase of enjoyment, presence and social interaction. In a last step we implemented several experiences for ShareVR, exploring its design space and giving insights for designers of co-located asymmetric VR experiences.

Permission to make digital or hard copies of all or part of this work for personal or classroom use is granted without fee provided that copies are not made or distributed for profit or commercial advantage and that copies bear this notice and the full citation on the first page. Copyrights for components of this work owned by others than the author(s) must be honored. Abstracting with credit is permitted. To copy otherwise, or republish, to post on servers or to redistribute to lists, requires prior specific permission and/or a fee. Request permissions from Permissions@acm.org.
CHI 2017, May 6–11, 2017, Denver, CO, USA
Copyright is held by the owner/author(s). Publication rights licensed to ACM.
ACM 978-1-4503-4655-9/17/0551$15.00
DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3025453.3025683

INTRODUCTION
Virtual Reality (VR) head-mounted displays (HMD) are currently getting released as consumer devices (e.g. Oculus Rift, HTC Vive, and PlayStation VR) and are becoming part of the home entertainment environment. The technical progress allows for creating highly immersive virtual environments (IVEs) where users can even physically walk around and interact using their hands (roomscale VR) [13]. Having this physical exploration leads to a higher spatial understanding and therefore further increases immersion and enjoyment for the HMD user [4].

Despite VR aiming to become an essential part of the future living room entertainment, most current VR systems focus mainly on the HMD user. However, Alladi Venkatesh describes the living room as a highly social environment where people experience content together and interact through technology [61]. Since the level of engagement may vary between members of the household (e.g. some want to watch, some want to have some form of interaction and some want to be fully part of the experience), a VR system has to cover a wide bandwidth of engagement [63]. Solely observing participants...
Experiences with Virtual Reality

CHI 2017, May 6–11, 2017, Denver, CO, USA

would benefit from a more spatial representation of the virtual world such as the approach of Valve, which uses a green screen in combination with a tracked camera to create a mixed reality video for the observer [60]. People who only want a brief experience without committing to an extensive gaming session would benefit from a form of interaction with this mixed reality representation without having to put on an HMD. We argue that for VR to become part of this social living room environment, a way of interaction between users with an HMD and without an HMD is essential. Therefore, the focus of our work was on including the Non-HMD users into the VR experience and enhancing their way to interact with the HMD user.

We propose ShareVR (Fig.1), a proof-of-concept prototype enabling Non-HMD users to be part of the VR experience and interact with the HMD user and the virtual environment. We use a tracked display and a floor projection to visualize the virtual space for the Non-HMD user (Fig.1 a,e) and potential bystanders. To increase the engagement and enjoyment of Non-HMD users, we bring both (HMD and Non-HMD) into the same physical space enabling the same form of interaction. Prior work showed that this physical interaction can potentially increase enjoyment, social interaction and has cognitive benefits [39, 21, 42].

We conducted an initial online survey (n=48) with early adopters of VR, investigating how they currently deal with interactions between HMD and Non-HMD users and what future concepts should provide to improve this interaction. Based on those insights, we designed and implemented ShareVR. In a user study (n=16), we compared ShareVR with a baseline condition (gamepad and television), showing the increase of enjoyment, presence and social interaction for HMD and Non-HMD users using ShareVR. We further explored the design space of ShareVR and implemented three example applications, showing the novel possibilities for asymmetric co-located experiences and give insights on how to design future experiences for asymmetric co-located VR interaction. The contributions of this work are:

- Concept, design and implementation of ShareVR – a proof-of-concept prototype for co-located asymmetric experiences in VR, based on the feedback (n=48) of VR early adopters.
- Insights from a user study (n=16), exploring the impact of ShareVR on enjoyment, presence and social interaction and showing its advantage compared to a baseline consisting of a gamepad and television.
- Exploration of the design space for co-located asymmetric VR experiences and implementation of three example applications, giving insights for designers of future asymmetric co-located VR experiences.

ENVISIONED SCENARIO

Our envisioned scenario is centered around a living room where VR already became an essential part of the home entertainment. Future systems will be designed having asymmetric co-located interaction in mind and provide appropriate visualization for Non-HMD users (e.g. embedded display in controllers) and an in-situ visualization of the physical tracking space (e.g. embedded projectors in already used hardware such as the tracking system of the HTC Vive).

Our final vision further incorporates additional devices such as nomadic VR HMDs [24], AR HMDs and smartphones. These devices are all additional points on the interaction gradient between fully immersed user (VR HMD) to bystander (Non-HMD user). This work will mainly focus on spanning and exploring this design space between HMD and Non-HMD users. Future research projects should further explore additional devices on this gradient which generate different asymmetries and come with different concepts of visualization and interaction (e.g. [17, 25, 30]). Each of these devices will presumably have an individual impact on enjoyment, presence and social interaction.

RELATED WORK

Our work builds upon three general fields of research: Collaborative/Spatial Augmented Reality, Collaborative Virtual Environments and Asymmetric Co-located VR Gaming. We will not specifically focus on prior art having a different research direction but sharing a similar technical setup such as [38, 43].

Collaborative/Spatial Augmented Reality

Since presented in 1998 by Raskar et al. [51], spatial augmented reality aims to augment the environment by using projection technology instead of head mounted displays [35, 34]. The field is closely related to projector camera systems which were developed to enable these kind of experiences [50]. A recent example of this approach is RoomAlive by Jones et al. which is closely related to our work [34]. Using a set of projector camera systems, an approach to transform the living room into a gaming environment and enable multiple users to play and interact together was presented. This work beautifully displays and explores the design space of spatial augmented reality inside the living room. Our work is closely related to Jones et al.’s RoomAlive since we apply a similar approach to visualize the virtual world, but we focus mainly on interaction between HMD and Non-HMD users.

Collaborative augmented reality [2, 49] focuses on enabling collaboration and interaction between people using AR technology and further incorporates work with asymmetric setups (e.g. different visualization and different input capabilities [7, 55, 26]). The Studierstube [53] by Schmalstieg et al. and “Shared Space” [2, 3] by Billinghurst et al., are systems presenting a variety of interaction and visualization concepts for co-located augmented reality collaboration. A similar approach was presented by Benko et al. with VITA, a collaborative mixed reality system for archaeological excavations [1]. VITA combined projected interfaces, a large screen and tracked handheld displays to enable collaboration in a multi-user scenario. Stafford et al. further presented “god-like interactions”, an approach to enable asymmetric interaction between a user with an AR HMD and a user with a tablet [55]. ShareVR follows a similar approach by offering individual interaction and visualization concepts for users without an HMD.

Collaborative Virtual Environments

Churchill et al. initially defined Collaborative Virtual Environments (CVE) as distributed virtual reality systems that enable users to interact with the environment and each other [11]. The focus was initially mainly on the distributed aspect [47]. DIVE, a distributed interactive virtual reality environment was presented by Carlsson et al., focusing on multi-user and 3D interaction aspects in distributed collaborative virtual
environments [8]. Oliveira et al. further presented a distributed asymmetric CVE, where an HMD user would receive guidance and instruction from a user sitting at a PC using a traditional GUI [45]. However, the focus of the work was mainly on training applications and e-commerce scenarios. ShareVR incorporates several concepts from distributed CVEs in its prototype but mainly focuses on co-located synchronous interaction as defined by Johansen et al. [33]. In C1x6, Kulik et al. presented a co-located CVE that was realized using six projectors and active shutter glasses to provide correct perspectives to six users inside a virtual environment. This allowed each user to perceive the same experience, whereby ShareVR focuses on creating different perceptions of the same experience leveraging the advantage of each individual visualization approach. Kulik et al. found that people are more enthusiastic about exploring a virtual environment as part of a group which was one of the main motivations for ShareVR.

Similar to prior work, one essential characteristic of ShareVR is the asymmetry of the experience [17, 44, 12, 30, 29, 18, 15]. Duval et al. presented an asymmetric 2D/3D interaction approach which allows users who are immersed in an IVE to interact with users sitting at a PC [17]. The approach works by leveraging the advantage of each individual representation (2D vs 3D). Oda et al. presented a further asymmetric interaction between a remote user and a local user wearing an AR HMD [44]. In a user study, the remote user had to explain a specific task to the local user either through a 2D interface or a VR HMD. The results show that local users understood faster when the remote users actually demonstrated the task wearing a VR HMD vs writing annotations with a 2D interface. ShareVR incorporates these findings by letting the Non-HMD user have the same way of interaction as the HMD user. Also closely relevant to our work were projects exploring an asymmetric “god-like interaction” with the goal to let people build worlds together [12, 29]. Users with an VR HMD could collaboratively create virtual environments with users at a PC. A similar approach was shown by Ibayashi et al. with DollhouseVR [30]. ShareVR differentiates itself from those approaches by strongly focusing on enabling a co-located experience which aims to increase enjoyment, presence and social interaction instead of increasing performance.

More recently Cheng et al. presented HapticTurk [9] and TurkDeck [10]. In contrast to prior work on generative haptics in VR [27, 28], HapticTurk and TurkDeck leverage human workers to generate haptic feedback for the HMD user. Our work was highly inspired by both systems and the haptic feedback was incorporated into the concept (e.g. lightsaber duel). However, in contrast to Cheng et al. ShareVR tries to enable an equally enjoyable experience for the Non-HMD user by literally sharing the virtual world of the HMD user with all people in the surrounding. To the best of our knowledge, ShareVR is the first system to enhance co-located asymmetric experiences between HMD and Non-HMD users who share the same physical space. This is a scenario that we argue will become more relevant as consumer VR technology progresses and attempts to become part of the living room entertainment.

Asymmetric Co-located VR Gaming
Despite the recent popularity of online multiplayer, co-located multiplayer games are still highly appreciated by many players [22, 46, 48] and researched by the scientific community [62]. Gajadhar et al. found that players experience a higher positive affect and less tension in a co-located than in a mediated setting. In the VR context, co-located settings are difficult to provide as usually only one VR HMD is available and only one player can wear it at a time. However, there are a few co-located VR games that make use of other means to circumvent this limitation. Games such as Black Hat Cooperative, Ruckus Ridge VR Party, Playroom VR and Keep Talking And Nobody Explodes apply an asymmetric interaction approach by either providing the Non-HMD user with an additional controller [52, 19], mouse and keyboard [57] or relying solely on verbal communication [56]. Recently, Sajjadi et al. presented Maze Commander, a collaborative asymmetric game in that one player uses a VR HMD while the other interacts using Sifteo Cubes. Although game experience did not differ between both interaction methods, players generally did enjoy the asymmetric game play.

Although these games all feature local multiplayer for VR, most game mechanics would still function if the games were implemented online and players had some form of voice chat. In contrast, ShareVR strongly focuses on the shared physical space and the resulting physical interaction to enhance the experience. While playing in a co-located setting does have positive effects on players [20], we argue that physical interaction in particular does enable novel play experiences for VR. Prior research has already shown that enjoyment and social interaction can be increased through physical engagement and interaction [39, 21, 42]. Lindley et al. found that an input device leveraging natural body movements elicits higher social interaction and engagement compared to a classic gamepad [39]. Similar results were found by Brondi et al. who showed beneficial effects of body movement on player engagement and flow for a collaborative game in a virtual environment [6]. Recently, Marshall et al. [41] studied aspects of games that encourage physicality in an extreme manner and derived guidelines for such games. Johann Sebastian Joust [16], is a game in that players have physical interaction in a shared play space. The players hold motion controllers and have to grab the other players’ controllers in order to win while the played music restrains their allowed movement. To the best of our knowledge, ShareVR is the first VR system enabling physical gaming experiences between HMD and Non-HMD users.

ONLINE SURVEY
We conducted an online survey to elicit the demand for co-located asymmetric interaction and further explore how early adopters are currently coping with this (e.g. during demonstrations) and what they would expect from future technology to support co-located asymmetric interaction. The survey was posted in online forums (e.g. Reddit) and was sent out to mailing lists of early adopters. We were focusing on an audience which already uses the technology at home and falls under the category early adopter. Overall we received 48 responses.

Demographics
The majority of the early adopters were male (46 males, 2 females), held a college degree (∼77%), and were on average 30.85 years old (SD=7.87, range: 19-49). The most used headsets were the HTC Vive (54%) followed by the Google


Experiences with Virtual Reality

CHI 2017, May 6–11, 2017, Denver, CO, USA

When asked directly about asymmetric gameplay having one HMD, a vast majority agreed that they would love to be able to actively influence the virtual environment of the immersed user while not being immersed themselves (92%). When asked about specific aspects of asymmetric gameplay (Fig.2c), respondents often preferred the asymmetric option (e.g. different view of the virtual scene: 77%, different power level: 75% and different way of interaction: 79%). Nevertheless, the alternative options such as same view (42%) and physical interaction (54%) were still more towards an agreement as towards a disagreement. When asked about the representation of the Non-HMD user inside the IVE respondents slightly preferred to be visualized inside the virtual world (38%).

Discussion of the Online Survey

Our survey identified the users’ desire to be able to actively influence and interact with HMD users while not having an HMD themselves. We found dedicated co-located asymmetric games such as Ruckus Ridge VR Party are not widely known/spread, whereby 40% of the respondents already play with multiple users having one HMD. The main form of interaction between HMD and Non-HMD users is mainly speech. People further reported that they currently prefer using a traditional console with friends but would invite friends more often for VR gaming session if there would be a better way for playing together having one HMD. When asked about future concepts such a system should have, respondents preferred an asymmetric approach but still were interested in the alternatives. This indicated that these design decisions would have to be dependent on the underlying game dynamics. We used this feedback and incorporated it (e.g. speech as interaction, focus on asymmetry in visualization and power level) into our concept and implementation of ShareVR and its experiences.

SHAREVR CONCEPT AND IMPLEMENTATION

We designed and implemented ShareVR with the goal of enabling Non-HMD users to become a part of the virtual experience of the HMD user and enable them to interact and explore the environment together. Furthermore, we wanted to allow bystanders who are not interested in actively influencing the IVE to be able to follow and understand the events happening inside the IVE and be able to interact with the HMD and Non-HMD user (e.g. point and scream “watch out behind you”). A main goal for the design of ShareVR was to increase the enjoyment, presence and social interaction for HMD and Non-HMD users. We aimed for developing an entertainment system which would fit right into the social dynamics of a living room.

One of our major design decisions was not to design an HMD to HMD system but focus on asymmetric interaction with Non-HMD users. While we agree that the direction of HMD to HMD interaction is also highly relevant and (as presented in the related work section) a highly researched field, we decided to focus on scenarios where only one HMD is available. Similarly to Voida et al. [62], we argue that for the living room scenario, it is important to design a system which enables a gradient of participation. This allows users who are not eager to use

Cardboard (41%), Oculus Rift CV1 (33%), Oculus Rift DK2 (21%) and Samsung GearVR (19%). On average the respondents used the VR HMD 7.06 hours a week ($SD=6.44$, range: 0-30). Rated on a 5-point Likert scale, 73% stated a very high interest in virtual reality technology, 21% a high interest and 6% a moderate interest.

Current Coping Techniques

We asked people about the occurrence of asymmetric interaction (e.g. demoing a VR HMD) and how they are currently dealing with situations of asymmetric interaction (an overview of a subset of the questions can be found in Figure 2). The vast majority of our respondents reported they experienced asymmetric interaction during demoing of a VR HMD (94%) whereby only (38%) experienced it in a gaming scenario. Overall, only 13% played asymmetric co-located multi-user VR games (e.g. Ruckus Ridge VR Party) whereby 40% reported having regular (≈ 4 times a month) gaming sessions sharing one HMD (average group size of ≈ 3 friends).

When asked about the form of communication used in such asymmetric scenarios, the majority agreed to use speech (91%) followed by controllers (28%) and physical interaction (20%). When asked about their social coping, respondents agreed (48%) to prefer traditional consoles over VR HMDs when friends are around and would invite friends over more often (52%) for gaming sessions if there would be a better way of playing together having one HMD. Furthermore, respondents agreed that they would not mind being a passive observer (58%) and can imagine having fun playing with another person with an HMD while not having an HMD themselves (71%).

Demand and Future Requirements

We aimed for developing an entertainment system which would

1 All the following reported percentages are based on the number of strongly agrees and agrees towards a statement

4024
Experiences with Virtual Reality

We designed the visualization having the W1080ST projectors to visualize the tracking space and a 7 inch display on top of the HTC Vive controllers as a “window into the virtual world” for the Non-HMD user. This should result in an equal level of agency and engagement between HMD and Non-HMD users and further add the dimension of physical interaction (e.g. touch the HMD user). Prior research showed that this form of physical engagement and interaction results in an increase of enjoyment and social interaction [39, 21, 42].

Concept and Hardware Implementation

Our proof-of-concept prototype of ShareVR was built using an HTC Vive, two oppositely positioned short throw BenQ W1080ST projectors to visualize the tracking space and a 7 inch display attached to one of the HTC Vive controllers serving as a “window into the virtual world” for the Non-HMD user (Fig.3). We additionally added a TV which mirrored the view of the HMD user. The whole software was running on an i7 machine with an Nvidia GTX 970. The two main design variables we had were how to realize interaction and visualization for the Non-HMD users.

Interaction: Since we decided to bring both users in the same physical space we had to track the position and interaction of the Non-HMD user. We dedicated one of the HTC Vive controllers as the Non-HMD controller and used the Lighthouse tracking system of the HTC Vive to estimate the location of the Non-HMD user inside the physical space and let him interact with the IVE using the controller inputs. To leverage the advantage of sharing the same physical space we used physical props attached to the tracked controller as a second form of interaction between HMD and Non-HMD users. This enabled the Non-HMD user to generate haptic feedback for the HMD user (e.g. impact of lightsabers can be felt, cf. Fig.6). Based on the feedback of the online survey, we decided not to use headphones for the HMD user, to allow for oral communication between all users and directional sound (e.g. hearing the steps of the Non-HMD user).

Visualization: We designed the visualization having the Non-HMD user and additional users sitting on the couch in mind. To reduce the amount of shadows, we positioned two projectors opposite of each other directed towards the floor covering the full tracking space of the Lighthouse system. Both were calibrated through software to be perfectly aligned, visualizing the full tracking space to all people in the surrounding. This should help to develop a spatial understanding of the IVE for Non-HMD users. Furthermore, we attached a 7 inch display on top of the Non-HMD controller allowing to function as a “window” into the virtual world. We used a 5m hdmi cable to connect the display with the PC and supported it with power through a portable power bank inside the users pocket. We initially tried to remove all cables using wireless hdmi which resulted in a too big delay. Additionally, we used a TV to render the mirrored view of the HMD user.

Software Implementation

The whole software side was implemented using Unity® and the SteamVR Unity plugin. We used NewtonVR [58] as an additional layer on top of SteamVR to quickly prototype physical interaction such as grabbing virtual objects. We created a prefab in Unity consisting of the NewtonVR camera rig, an orthographic camera positioned above to cover the whole tracking space and a camera on the virtual Non-HMD controller. The orthographic camera rendered their image onto a mesh in which we could adjust individual vertices to correct for distortion and align both projectors. Two individual versions of this mesh were positioned in front of two additional cameras which rendered the projection images. We used this prefab throughout all our implemented experiences.

IMPLEMENTED EXPERIENCES

We implemented three different applications: BeMyLight, SneakyBoxes, and SandBox consisting of four smaller experiences (lightsaber duel, soccer, puzzle and drawing). The first two BeMyLight and SneakyBoxes were later used in our comparative user study, whereby the SandBox was used in the final exploratory study.

Collaborative: Be My Light

The experience BeMyLight places both users in a pitch black cave full of creatures and riddles to solve (Figure 4). The goal of the game is it to escape the cave system. Therefore, both users have to cooperate to be able to fight the monsters and solve the riddles. The HMD user plays an adventurer who holds a sword which he can swing to damage monsters and teleports2 himself through the map. The Non-HMD user plays a magic fairy light which floats around the HMD user and is the only source of light inside the pitch black cave system. The fairy is furthermore able to cast a fireball which lights up the cave and damages monsters in its way. The riddles are designed in a way that both users have to work together to be able to solve them.

The HMD user sees the world through the eyes of the adventurer (point of view) and the fairy is visualized as a floating light (point light and spotlight in Unity). The Non-HMD user has

2we reimplemented a form of Valves The Lab teleport for locomotion
a top down view of the current tracking space visualized on the projection. This allows him to see the directions from which monsters are approaching or attacking the HMD user. He is further capable of controlling the scale of the projection (zooming) to use the projection as a map. The handheld screen is used as a “window into the world” metaphor and controls the direction of the spot light (flashlight metaphor). To further increase the dependency between both users, some information is only displayed to the fairy and some only to the adventurer, encouraging them to collaborate (e.g. “please shine some light here I think I saw something you can’t see”).

This basic dynamic highly encourages a form of collaboration since the HMD user needs a light to see monsters and the environment and the Non-HMD user can not explore the world on his own since only the HMD user can teleport. Both have an asymmetry of information (e.g. only the adventurer can see the key for the exit but the fairy has to shine light on the key to make it visible) and an asymmetry of power (e.g. the fairy knows the path through the cave system since he can see cues on the projection but only the adventurer can move both).

**Competitive: Sneaky Boxes**

*SneakyBoxes* is based on a popular children’s game [64] which has different names through the world (e.g. RedLight, GreenLight in the US). *SneakyBoxes* is further highly inspired by Ruckus Ridge VR Party [19] which is one of few currently available co-located asymmetric VR games. The HMD user is positioned at the edge of the tracking space and uses one controller which represents a “marker” which can shoot projectiles. When looking into the tracking space the HMD user sees randomly positioned boxes, chests and barrels (Fig.5). The Non-HMD user is visualized as one of those boxes and is positioned inside the tracking space holding one controller which is mainly used for tracking his location. The goal of the HMD user is to find and “mark” the box which represents the Non-HMD user, whereby the Non-HMD user has to look through all the other boxes and find a randomly placed gem. All boxes are fixed in the scene and only the Non-HMD users’ box moves when he physically moves his controller. This allows the HMD user to distinguish and tag the Non-HMD user.

To create a bigger challenge for the HMD user, the lights in the scene go out after approximately 10 seconds. To turn the lights back on, the HMD user has to turn away from the tracking space and hit a floating target behind him. This gives the Non-HMD user time to reposition himself and look through some of the boxes. To further exploit the physical proximity we attached an inflatable sword on the controller of the Non-HMD user. By hitting the HMD user with the inflatable sword, the lights inside the scene can be “hit out” every 15 seconds, forcing the HMD user to turn around and turn the lights back on. The handheld display is used as a “window” into the virtual world and the projection visualizes the tracking space (top down view of all boxes).

*SneakyBoxes* was designed to explore the competitive possibilities which arise from the co-located asymmetry enabled through ShareVR. We deliberately avoided the use of headphones for the HMD user, since the direction of the noise the Non-HMD user does is an essential part of the gameplay. We further actively decided to use a physical prop (inflatable sword) as a tool for the Non-HMD user to interact with the HMD user. We were mainly interested what implications this physicality has on the social dynamic.

**Exploratory: Sandbox Application**

In addition to *SneakyBoxes* and *BeMyLight*, we implemented a *SandBox* consisting of several smaller experiences which individually explore a novel aspect of the unique design space of ShareVR.

*Soccer*: The soccer application further explores the concept of high interaction asymmetry. The Non-HMD user uses both HTC Vive controllers and becomes the “Curator/Master” of the experience (Fig. 6 a). He can position targets inside the scene and spawn balls which he then can throw for the HMD user. The HMD user has to redirect the ball into the target using his head (header in soccer). The soccer application explores how an experience can be designed for ShareVR which puts the HMD user in a passive role and the Non-HMD user into an active and dominant position.

*Lightsaber Duel*: With the lightsaber duel we wanted to explore an interaction where the Non-HMD user is capable of interacting with the HMD user without the need for a visualization. To achieve this we mounted an inflatable lightsaber onto each of the HTC Vive controllers (Fig. 6 d). For the HMD user, we modeled a virtual lightsaber instead of the controllers which is exactly the same length resulting in a 1-to-1 mapping of the physical lightsaber and the virtual lightsaber. This allows the Non-HMD user to adjust his actions based on the physical location of the HMD user and his inflatable
Experiences with Virtual Reality

Figure 6. An overview of the individual applications with overlaid visualizations from the Sandbox: (a) throwing a ball to the HMD user in the soccer application, (b) instructing the HMD user in the puzzle application, (c) drawing a palm tree together and (d) having a lightsaber duel.

lightsaber. To represent the Non-HMD user inside the virtual scene, we used a robot avatar with simple inverse kinematics. The HMD user benefits from the high fidelity of the experience (e.g. feel the actual impact of the lightsaber).

Puzzle: The puzzle application was designed to explore the capabilities of more user involvement. Several 3D geometrical shapes are spawned around the HMD user with which he can interact using an HTC Vive controller (Fig. 6 b). His goal is to bring them into a certain arrangement. Only the Non-HMD user sees the building instructions on the projection and the handheld display on his controller. The only form of interaction between HMD and Non-HMD user is a virtual arrow attached to the Non-HMD user controller he can use to point at objects. The main form of communication is verbal, which includes all the potential additional users sitting on the couch. The puzzle application was designed so everyone can be involved in the experience since the building instruction is prominently visible and people on the couch can also direct actions of the HMD user (e.g. the red piece behind you should be a little more left).

Drawing: We implemented a drawing application to show how simple it is to extend an existing VR experience to be working with ShareVR and multiple users (Fig. 6 c). The basic principles are simple, both the HMD and Non-HMD user have one controller which they can use to draw with one color in midair (similar to Google’s Tilt Brush [23]). The projection shows a top-down view of the tracking space (drawing space) and the handheld display works again as a “window” into the virtual world.

USER STUDY

To explore the interaction with ShareVR and measure the impact ShareVR has on the enjoyment, presence and social interaction between HMD and Non-HMD user, we conducted a user study. We compared ShareVR to a baseline condition consisting of a gamepad and a TV. In the baseline condition the Non-HMD user would sit on the couch and interact with the HMD user using a gamepad and a TV screen. This setup is currently used in most asymmetric co-located VR games (e.g. Ruckus Ridge VR Party [19], PlayStationVR [14]). The main difference between ShareVR and the Baseline was the shared physical space and physical engagement of the Non-HMD user.

Study Design

The study was conducted using a repeated measures factorial design with three independent variables. As independent variables we selected System (ShareVR, Baseline), HMD (HMD, Non-HMD), and Experience (BeMyLight, SneakyBoxes). For the Baseline system separate versions of BeMyLight and SneakyBoxes were created that were played with a regular gamepad instead of a tracked Vive controller. Further, smaller changes to the Baseline versions of games were made in order to provide a fair comparison of the systems (e.g. a button press can be used to trigger a sword hit in SneakyBoxes).

Independent variables were enjoyment measured with the post-game Experience Questionnaire (GEQ) [32, 31] as well as valence and arousal from the SAM questionnaire [5], presence measured with Slater, Usoh, and Steed’s presence questionnaire [54] and social interaction measured using the behavioural involvement component of the GEQ’s social presence module [32, 31]. In addition to these questionnaires we added a final comparison and asked participants to rate their enjoyment, presence and social engagement on a 7-point Likert scale.

Procedure

The study took place in a university lab that was prepared to resemble a realistic living room scenario containing a couch, a TV screen, and the play area of the HTC Vive (see Fig. 3). Participants were recruited in pairs. After a brief introduction, they played all 8 possible permutations of our independent variables (System x HMD x Experience). The order was counterbalanced using a Latin square. All play sessions were interrupted after 5 minutes in order to guarantee fair comparisons. After each play session, participants completed a questionnaire measuring their experience and additional data (e.g. visual attention). The study took on average 1.5h and participants received 10 currency.

Participants

For this study we recruited 16 participants (5 female, 11 male) with an average age of 27.63 (SD=3.181). Participants were recruited in pairs and with the premise that they have such a social connection that they feel comfortable playing with each other. They reported an average experience with VR technology was very high (M=6.13, SD=0.62), but their intention to buy a VR HMD in the next 12 months was low (M=2.81, SD=2.04, both variables measured on 7-point Likert scales).

Results

Scores for positive experience and presence were analysed using a 2x2x2 (System x HMD x Experience) repeated-measures ANOVA. As the other variables were not normally distributed, nonparametric Aligned Rank Transform [65, 36] was applied. Figure 7 summarizes the collected data of the GEQ and SUS.
Experiences with Virtual Reality

**Enjoyment**
The post-game GEQ consists of four components: positive experience, negative experience, tiredness, and returning to reality. HMD users reported a significant higher positive experience compared to Non-HMD players ($F(1,15)=11.573$, $p=0.004$, $r=0.660$). As expected, Non-HMD participants reported significantly higher scores for tiredness using ShareVR compared to Baseline ($F(1,15)=12.060$, $p=0.003$, $r=0.829$). Participants further reported significantly higher scores for "returning to reality" when using an HMD compared to Non-HMD ($F(1,15)=33.067$, $p<0.001$, $r=0.668$).

Participants playing with ShareVR ($M=7.47$, $SD=1.01$) reported significantly higher valence scores compared to Baseline ($M=6.95$, $SD=0.92$) ($F(1,15)=10.952$, $p=0.005$, $r=0.650$). Additionally, using an HMD led to significantly higher scores for valence than without ($F(1,15)=7.213$, $p=0.017$, $r=0.570$). Furthermore, significantly higher scores of arousal were reported using ShareVR ($M=6.1$, $SD=1.61$) compared to Baseline ($M=5.36$, $SD=1.50$) ($F(1,15)=7.145$, $p=0.017$, $r=0.568$), as well as for HMD ($M=6.01$, $SD=1.28$) compared to Non-HMD ($M=5.31$, $SD=1.60$) ($F(1,15)=8.809$, $p=0.010$, $r=0.515$).

For the concluding questionnaire ("I enjoyed using [System]"), Likert scale from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 7 (= strongly agree)), a Kruskal–Wallis test revealed that ratings were significantly affected by the system ($H(3)=19.995$, $p<0.001$). {ShareVR x HMD} was rated significantly more fun than {Baseline x Non-HMD} ($U=27.781$, $p<0.001$). Furthermore, participants stated that they enjoyed {ShareVR x Non-HMD} significantly more than {Baseline x Non-HMD} ($U=19.062$, $p=0.016$), adjusted significances are indicated for the Dunn-Bonferroni post-hoc tests).

**Presence**
Participants felt significantly more present (SUS) using ShareVR ($M=4.5$, $SD=1.3$) compared to the Baseline system ($M=4.0$, $SD=1.1$) ($F(1,15)=10.024$, $p=0.006$, $r=0.633$) as well as while using an HMD ($M=4.9$, $SD=1.2$) compared to Non-HMD ($M=3.6$, $SD=1.3$) ($F(1,15)=52.745$, $p<0.001$, $r=0.882$).

In the concluding questionnaire ("I felt being in the game using [System]", Likert scale from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 7 (= strongly agree)), we found a significant effect of the system used ($H(3)=29.240$, $p<0.001$). {Baseline x Non-HMD} was rated significantly lower than {Baseline x HMD} ($U=25.844$, $p<0.001$) as well as {ShareVR x HMD} ($U=32.812$, $p<0.001$) and also lower as {ShareVR x Non-HMD} ($U=20.469$, $p=0.008$).

**Social Interaction**
Regarding social interaction, SneakyBoxes led to significantly higher scores for the behavioural involvement component of the GEQ social presence module compared to BeMyLight ($F(1,15)=6.877$, $p=0.019$, $r=0.560$).

In the concluding questionnaire ("I felt engagement with the other using [System]", Likert scale from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 7 (= strongly agree), the system significantly affected the reported social engagement ($H=26.942$, $p<0.001$). {ShareVR x HMD} was rated significantly more engaging than {Baseline x Non-HMD} ($U=25.656$, $p<0.001$) as well as {Baseline x HMD} ($U=24.781$, $p=0.001$). Further, ratings show that {ShareVR x Non-HMD} was significantly more socially engaging than {Baseline x Non-HMD}, $U=22.094$, $p=0.004$) and {Baseline x HMD} ($U=21.219$, $p=0.006$).

**Additional Observations**
Between each gaming session, we asked Non-HMD participants to state their visual attention on a 7-point Likert scale ($7=$most attention) between player, projection, tracked display and mirrored view (TV). Playing BeMyLight, participants reported a high focus on the handheld display ($M=5.63$) and a moderate on the projection ($M=3.81$). However, playing SneakyBoxes the focus switched to high on the projection ($M=6.75$) and low on the handheld display ($M=1.37$). This indicates the importance of alternative visualizations between experiences. Finally, participants were asked if they would want to have a system like ShareVR at home. Results show that ShareVR was highly positively perceived, $M=6.31$, $SD=0.873$ (measured on a 7-point Likert scale). This is also confirmed by the qualitative feedback we received, where participants actively stated that they want the system and asked about availability.

**Discussion**
The goal of our study was to examine the impact of ShareVR on enjoyment, presence and social interaction for HMD and Non-HMD players in comparison to the Baseline condition. Even if no significant differences were found for the GEQ questionnaire, in the final comparison we found a significantly higher rating of enjoyment using ShareVR for Non-HMD users. Even if not significant, we were surprised that overall participants rated using (Non-HMD x ShareVR) slightly higher than (HMD x Baseline). Furthermore, ShareVR did elicit more positive emotions, higher valence and higher arousal which can be both linked to positive player experience [37, 40]. These
findings further correlate with our observations and qualitative feedback of participants “I think both games should be further developed... they are really fun”. These findings confirm that with ShareVR we could increase enjoyment for Non-HMD users for co-located asymmetric experiences in VR. Similar to enjoyment, no significant differences were found using the GEQ behavioural involvement subscale. This can be explained with the strong effect each individual game had. The GEQ measures how much a player’s actions depend on the other player. This was in fact very different for both games which might have had more impact on participants than the system used. However, when rating only the systems regarding how engaged they felt with the other player, participants reported a significantly higher rating using ShareVR for both HMD and Non-HMD players. We explain these findings with the aspect of the shared physical space. When wearing an HMD, users are visually isolated from the space around them. Even if playing with another user located on the couch, not actually seeing the other reduces the experience to something similar to online gaming. This was similarly mentioned by participant 2: “The projection helps to be part of the experience but using the controller felt more like playing online since you don’t share any physical space”. Further this shows how ShareVR not only positively impacts the overall experiences for Non-HMD users, but also for HMD users.

Compared to the Baseline, ShareVR overall significantly increased the presence of the Non-HMD user measured by the SUS questionnaire and in the final comparison. Interestingly, in the final comparison participants rated (Non-HMD x ShareVR) only slightly lower than playing with an HMD in the Baseline. This suggests that ShareVR did in fact improve presence over the Baseline. Further, it might even be possible that the system can elicit presence in the Non-HMD player that is comparable to playing with an HMD.

Summarized, we found that ShareVR did improve enjoyment, social engagement and presence over the Baseline condition. Unsurprisingly, we found several effects of playing as HMD or Non-HMD player as well as effects from the individual experience. This suggests that although ShareVR showed promising results, experiences have to be specifically designed for the co-located asymmetric approach. Therefore, the next section is going to focus on the design space of ShareVR.

**DESIGN SPACE AND GUIDELINES**

To gain a deeper understanding of the design space, its implications and to be able to derive design considerations we conducted a second smaller exploratory study with two groups of 3 participants (n=6). The main goal was to further expose participants with the system and observe behavior and interactions using ShareVR.

**Exploratory Study**

We invited two groups of three participants each into our lab and let them experience an approximately 30-40 minutes long gaming session with the SandBox application (see Video Figure). Participants were again recruited as a group with a strong social bond and enjoying playing together. The first recruited group were three male HCI researchers (age: M=31, SD=3.56) and the second group consisted of three male VR enthusiasts (age: M=28.7, SD=0.47). After a short introduction into the control mechanics of ShareVR, participants were free to explore each application and had no further restrictions. Our only request was that each participant should experience each possible role (HMD, Non-HMD, and observer on the couch). Afterwards, we conducted a semi structured group interview on aspects of ShareVR, each individual role and the experienced gameplay. During the study three of the authors were present taking notes about observed behaviour and the group discussion afterwards. After both sessions the three authors had one shared coding session (thematic analysis) in which notes were compared and themes identified and discussed.

**Additional Findings**

The overall findings were directly integrated into the Design Guidelines and the Design Space. In this part we will briefly give insights on findings not covered by these two sections but seemed noteworthy to us.

Non-HMD users tend to form a certain bond with the observer since they both experience a similar perception of the virtual world and the HMD user. Participants often teased the HMD user with his inability of seeing the physical space (e.g. poke with a not tracked inflated sword). Nevertheless, HMD participants reported feeling safe when immersed to not bump into things and walk out of the tracking space since two Non-HMD users were around watching out for them. This shows that both accepted the teasing as part of the individual game without a negative influence on the whole experience. We further observed several occasions where the HMD user made mistakes resulting in a group laughter that started simultaneously. This shows that everyone was fully capable of understanding what is going on in the scene. Participants further reported they felt as they were entertaining the observer on the couch and that this feeling could potentially be higher if there would be several people on the couch. In terms of experiences, participants reported they had fun in every role but would prefer games which are not based on activities they can experience in real life (e.g. soccer).

**Design Space**

In the following we will present four variables of the design space we identified as essential factors and explain their implications. This categorization is based on insights we gained from actively implementing and testing ShareVR and both user studies.

**Asymmetry in Visualization and Interaction:** The main variable of every experience implemented for ShareVR is the level of asymmetry in visualization and interaction. The starting situation already has a strong asymmetry in terms of visualization, since the HMD user has stereoscopic perception of the virtual world and the Non-HMD user gets his understanding of the world through flat displays. Both have inherent advantages and disadvantages and should be considered when designing interactions for both users (see first guideline). The goal here is not to bring both on the same level but to leverage the advantages of each individual visualization. When done right, a high degree of asymmetry can lead to two entirely different experiences which results in a high replay value.

**Dependency:** The level of dependency in an experience controls how much coordination is necessary between HMD
and Non-HMD user to achieve a goal. Dependency must be controlled and balanced in collaborative and competitive games. A too high degree of dependency will slow down the overall gameplay but a too low dependency results in both players having two separate experiences. Each user should contribute something to the games progress by leveraging the advantage of their modality in a non-artificial form (not a “job creation scheme”). In BeMyLight, we used several iterations to balance the dependency in such a way that both users felt they played a vital role for the progress of the game.

**Power Distribution:** Throughout our work with ShareVR we observed that the power level one has over the other user or the virtual environment highly influenced the enjoyment of the experience. The more I can impact the virtual environment or the other user (e.g. hit him with a sword) the more I enjoy the experience. It is hereby not necessary to fully balance the power between both users since users mostly wanted to have both experiences and will switch roles eventually. Throughout our study participants were always aware of this switch of roles and therefore restrained themselves from over using their power. However, for collaborative experiences the power level should be equally balanced so that both users have a feeling of playing a vital role in the progress of the game.

**Physical Proximity:** Each individual experience implicitly controls the allocation of the tracking space between HMD and Non-HMD users. If the physical proximity is embedded as part of the virtual experience, it can potentially lead to an increase of presence for the HMD user. However, if incoherent information is perceived acoustically or tactilely it can break the presence and immersion for the HMD user (see fourth guideline). In general we observed that participants enjoyed a high level of physical involvement and were able to coordinate their position inside the tracking space easily. Here, it is a great advantage to have a Non-HMD user inside the tracking space since he was mostly in charge of the coordination.

**Guidelines**

From both studies and our own experience we derived four guidelines which we consider essential when designing for asymmetric co-located VR experiences such as ShareVR.

**Leverage Asymmetry:** Instead of assigning irrelevant tasks to the Non-HMD user to create any form of dependence and force collaboration, leverage the inherent advantages of each role. Offer isometric or orthogonal visualizations to the Non-HMD user since those help to perceive spatial relations in the virtual scene and allow the Non-HMD user to engage with further observers on the couch.

**Design for the whole living room:** Create visualizations not only for the engaged Non-HMD user but keep in mind that more participants can be around. We actively decided to use an orthographic camera for the projection and not a view dependent which could easily be adapted for the position of the Non-HMD user but only work from his perspective. Include as many observing roles as you wish in your application but keep in mind that Non-HMD users may tend to team up with observers against the HMD user.

**Physical engagement is fun in moderation:** Throughout our whole experience with ShareVR participants (both HMD and Non-HMD users) highly valued the ability to physically engage with each other. Introduce physical props which you can either mount onto one controller or track otherwise. Those can highly increase the presence of the HMD user. But be careful of physical engagement which is not visualized/transparent to the HMD user since this can result in discomfort.

**Design for mixed reality in shared physical space:** Keep in mind that your players are both located in the same physical space but perceive two different realities. Even if you do not visualize the movement and actions of your Non-HMD user, the HMD user will hear him interact in the surrounding. In some cases this can break the presence and immersion of the HMD user (e.g. hearing footsteps while his character is visually floating), but when considered in the game design can enhance the experience for both (e.g. physical props positioned by the Non-HMD user inside the tracking space).

**CONCLUSION**

In this work we presented ShareVR, a proof-of-concept prototype using floor projection and mobile displays in combination with positional tracking to visualize the virtual world for Non-HMD users and enable them to interact with the HMD user and become part of the VR experience. We designed and implemented ShareVR based on the feedback of early adopters (n=48) of VR technology. We implemented three experiences for ShareVR which each explore a different aspect of the novel design space. In a next step we conducted a user study (n=16) comparing ShareVR to a baseline condition (TV + gamepad) showing its advantage in terms of enjoyment, presence and social interaction. In a final step we conducted a short exploratory evaluation (n=6) which we used to help us explore the design space of ShareVR and give insights and guidelines for designers of co-located asymmetric VR experiences.

**Limitations and Future Work**

To entirely cover the gradient of engagement, an HMD to HMD interaction has to be modeled as well. We focused on asymmetric VR collaboration since it is likely to occur in the early days of consumer VR and appropriate concepts could benefit social acceptance. Furthermore, our findings are currently based on two or three people playing together. More research with a higher number of observers has to be conducted to fully understand the social dynamics happening in this asymmetric setup.

In the future, we are planning to extend ShareVR to incorporate more players and further integrate an additional HMD. This allows us to fully investigate the novel design space of asymmetric co-located virtual reality experiences and their impact on social dynamics.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This work was conducted within SFB/TRR 62 Companion Technology for Cognitive Technical Systems funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

**REFERENCES**


44. Ohan Oda, Carmine Elvezio, Mengu Sukan, Steven Feiner, and Barbara Tversky. 2015. Virtual Replicas for Remote


