

NEWS RELEASE

University of Pretoria Unveils Ground-breaking Immersive Technology Laboratory



Dean of the Faculty of EBIT, Prof Wynand Steyn, trying out the new VR headsets

PRETORIA - Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (EBIT) is proud to announce the launch of its new Immersive Technology Lab at the Department of Information Science. This cutting-edge facility marks a significant milestone in the university's journey towards integrating advanced immersive technologies into its curriculum and research initiatives.

The Immersive Technology Lab has its roots in the early integration of Virtual Reality (VR) technology within the department dating back to 2013. The acquisition of early VR headsets allowed Honours students to immerse themselves in the forefront of technological innovation. As the appeal of VR grew, the lab evolved into the Virtual Reality and Interaction (VRI) Lab, formally inaugurated in February 2018, to accommodate a larger cohort of students.

The VRI Lab has been instrumental in familiarizing BIS Multimedia students with virtual reality equipment, enabling them to develop applications that leverage the immersive capabilities of this technology. This

initiative has ensured that students are equipped with essential skills to meet the growing demand for immersive technology expertise across various sectors.

In recent years, the lab has played a crucial role in both the BIS Multimedia Honours and Masters programs, with students achieving remarkable success in conceptualizing high-calibre VR research applications and games. The lab's infrastructure has also supported Masters students in developing bespoke applications for their studies, showcasing the transformative potential of immersive technology in academic research.

The inauguration of the Immersive Technology Lab in 2024 represents an evolution from the VRI Lab, extending access to immersive technology to the wider university community. The lab serves multiple purposes: introducing staff and students to immersive technology, providing a platform for students to develop immersive experiences, investigating the integration of immersive technology into pedagogy, and fostering transdisciplinary collaboration.

The Immersive Technology Lab stands as a testament to the Faculty's commitment to innovation and academic excellence. It is poised to chart new frontiers in education, research, and societal impact through immersive technology.

--- End ---

Media enquiries can be directed to Mr Sashlin Girraj - Public Relations & Events Manager

Email: sashlin.girraj@up.ac.za | Cell: +27(0)72 447 3784

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a Faculty of Veterinary Science, which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The [2024 Times Higher Education subject rankings](#) placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of Law, Veterinary Science, Accounting and Finance; Agriculture and Forestry and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranked the University among the top five in Africa, as part of their [2024 World University Rankings \(WUR\)](#). UP was the only South African university featured in the [2023 World University Rankings for Innovation \(WURI\)](#), falling within in the 101-200 range of innovative universities.

For more information, please go to www.up.ac.za