Panel: Teaching Virtual Reality: Why and How?

Only about 3% of universities worldwide teach VR today. Is this because the field is new? Is this because there is no marketplace for graduates of such studies? Is it because there are not enough qualified instructors with first-hand know-how to teach these courses? Is it because equipment is still expensive, or hard to get? Is it because of the lack of real applications or case studies? Or is it because there is still a perception today that VR was just one of those technologies that did not live up to early expectations and “VR-educated” students will have nowhere to go once they graduate? These are issues that need to be addressed if the state of VR education is going to improve. Indeed, the state of the whole VR field may depend on how we teach it.

Another issue is who should be taught? Do we teach only scientists and only at the college level? Or should we teach artists, physicians, or high school students? Do we teach full time students in classrooms, or part-time students through distance learning? Do we give diplomas and certificates (as done at some “Master in VR” programs in UK, for example), and how do we standardize such degrees? Is there a standard of quality?

These issues are complex, and never made the object of an IEEE VR Forum. It is time somebody did! We propose a panel with members that have extensive experience in VR research and teaching, in academia, industry and the military. Some have wrote textbooks with which the conference audience is familiar. Thus it is likely a lively debate with strong audience participation will ensue.

Organizer
Rudolph P. Darken, DSc, Naval Postgraduate School

Panelists
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Grigore (Greg) Burdea PhD, Rutgers University
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