Interactive digital learning centre launched in Tshwane

Tshwane's Interactive Digital Centre (IDC) has been launched to bring high-end interactive 3D digital media, virtual reality and augmented reality technologies to the city. The Centre is the result of a collaboration between the City of Tshwane, California-based software company EON Reality, and local VR company Naledi3d Factory.

The seventeen-year relationship between Naledi3d Factory and EON Reality - a specialist in VR-based knowledge transfer for business, education, and edutainment - resulted in Tshwane being a natural choice for EON Reality's first IDC in continental Africa. With the global augmented and virtual reality markets expected to reach $150bn, content creation has to expand to keep up with local and global consumer's needs. This new IDC will establish a local AR and VR ecosystem in Tshwane and its Entrepreneur School that will help to develop skilled local resources.

This IDC is a central part of Tshwane's long term plan, Tshwane Vision 2055, to "break the cycle of generational poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment" as well as to enhance the local business and investment climate in South Africa's capital city. It's claimed that the content and applications created by the Tshwane IDC will help with vocational skills transfer and improve local STEM education.

Improving education

Augmented reality and virtual reality applications are able to improve education and successfully address the issues of illiteracy and language barriers by showing rather than telling. The hands-on educational approach makes learning more engaging, thereby improving retention, and building experiences to be recalled rather than memorising facts.

Dave Lockwood, director, Tshwane IDC says that, "virtual and augmented reality has huge potential across the whole of Africa, as a way to support, but also to transform how we learn complex subjects, such as vocational skills at college and maths and science at school. Language barriers, as well as low literacy levels, tend to reduce how we understand what is being said and taught. By showing a concept, in a way that we can also play with it means that we can 'see' what is been taught, hence, we can understand it better and also remember it much longer."

"Virtual reality-based knowledge transfer will be crucial to the future of education in South Africa, particularly in Tshwane. a capital city, Tshwane is often confronted with difficult policy choices given the limited financial resources and competing service delivery needs. To this end, the City has taken a policy position to prioritise investments linked to education and development of young people. This explains our quest for state of the art technologies that assists the City to ignite excellence when delivering services. The Interactive Digital Centre will propel vocational skills training and development to unprecedented levels in South Africa," concludes Dumisani Otumile, group chief information officer for the City of Tshwane