Minecraft iOS app takes models to new places

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(Phys.org)—Hold on, is that a pirate ship in your office? An airplane flying over your washing machine? A robot guarding the doorway? Minecraft, a runaway hit with game players, even topping Call of Duty: Modern Warfare on Xbox Live as the most played title on connected Xboxes in an October week's tally, is doing something different, offering

a new app for iOS devices. The new app lets fans plant their Minecraft builds in the real world. Stockholm, Sweden, based developer Mojang, the group behind Minecraft, has partnered with augmented reality developer 13th Lab to create Minecraft Reality (MR) for iOS. A promotional blurb says, "Using advanced computer vision, Minecraft Reality maps and tracks the world around you using the camera, and allows you to place Minecraft worlds in reality, and even save them in a specific location for others to look at."

Minecraft Reality is built on 13th Lab's PointCloud SDK. The latter is a C/C++ library for iOS devices that makes use of computer vision technologies such as 3-D tracking and mapping (SLAM) and fast image recognition. With MR, a user takes a model that was first created in the game and places it elsewhere. The app uses the iOS device's camera to track surroundings before projecting the creation onto the landscape. The user can change the size of the object and poke around it to see it from different angles. The app will let the user upload the finished object to a website and then place it in the real world, in that it can be seen through the iOS device's camera. The Minecraft Reality app is available now for $1.99 and ships with some models preloaded. Beyond delivering fun, the app might assist in practical situations if someone needs to figure out how an object placement may affect a room design or if used in a landscaping project.

Stockholm-based 13th Lab is a startup with a technology focus on computer vision for mobile devices. "What if a web browser could see?" asks the company. The camera, says its company team, has the potential to be the most important device sensor, and the group aims to build tools to enable this. The team said they think the camera will replace the GPS as the most important sensor to interpret and make sense of the world.

Two things are worth noting. The app is not supported for iPod Touch 4G or earlier. Most functionality is not available on iPhone 4. Also, the

uploader is in "a very rough beta release" stage. "There are a lot of things we are working on improving," said the site for Minecraft Reality. The next version, which they said is coming soon, "will be much more user-friendly."

More information: minecraftreality.com/support
itunes.apple.com/us/app/minecr … 91556?l=sv&ls=1&mt=8

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