

## Tokyo videogame show transports fans to new realities

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A man looks at Sony's virtual reality head gear "PlayStation VR" during the Tokyo Game Show in Chiba on September 17, 2015

It may not quite be the Matrix, but videogames giant Sony took fans on a journey into its own virtual reality on Thursday when it unveiled its revamped Morpheus headset at the annual Tokyo Game Show.

Wearing huge, glowing, space-age-style helmets, players waved their hands, kicked around and swung their heads to and fro in terror as they

tried out the new virtual reality head gear, now renamed PlayStation VR.

"It was as if I was in front of Miku-chan at her concert," said Tomoki Iizuka, 30, a game shop manager, after being transported to a concert by her 16-year-old virtual pop idol Miku Hatsune.

Even experts breached new frontiers: one French videogame journalist in his 30s called Remy was visibly terrified after playing virtual horror game "Kitchen" on the PlayStation VR.

"I didn't know where I was.. it was an uncanny feeling," he told AFP, adding that he plans to buy the headset, even after accidentally injuring his leg as he wildly lashed out while playing the game.

"It's not the sort of the game we already know... It's the future of games."

Virtual reality headsets were only one of the hundreds of items that drew huge crowds to this year's show in the eastern Chiba suburb of Tokyo, where game-makers also showed off new streaming and mobile-phone technology.



People visit the Tokyo Game Show in Chiba, on September 17, 2015

Fans dressed up as their favourite game characters took photos and mingled around the event, which organisers predict will see a record 480 exhibitors from 37 different countries and regions this year.

## **'Do something undoable'**

Facebook-owned virtual reality firm Oculus's Gear VR headset, which was developed with Samsung Electronics's Galaxy smartphones, offered users a closer to home virtual reality experience.

"Together with Oculus, we jointly developed 160 contents worldwide for this gear," said Samsung's Katsutoshi Machiba.

They include an app which offers players a 360-degree view of performances by Cirque de Soleil acrobats or can transport them to the front rows of a concert by former Beatles legend Paul McCartney.

Another Samsung official, Yasukuni Ogiwara, said the company wanted to offer "virtual experiences of rooms for rent and virtual experiences of traveling to a foreign country".



People play with virtual reality head gear "Gear VR" by Oculus during the Tokyo Game Show in Chiba on September 17, 2015

Gear VR was released late last year in the United States, South Korea and China and went on sale in Japan in May, and works with Samsung smartphones Galaxy S6 or S6 edge.

Game designer Chihiro Yoshioka said the joy of gaming was trying things you never could do in the real world.

"The real world is the real world, and the game is the game. I think it's great that you can do something undoable," the 22-year-old told AFP

after trying the PlayStation game Uncharted.

But gamers weren't just transported to new realities at the show—Sony said it will soon also take players back to the past with its new streaming service, PlayStation Now, that will allow them access to games from previous generations.

The service, which will launch in the United States later this year, will also allow PlayStation users to play games across other Internet linked devices such as smartphones and tablets.

Sony Computer Entertainment official Masaki Tsukakoshi said the new service is expected to appeal to a broader audience as it is accessible across more devices.

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