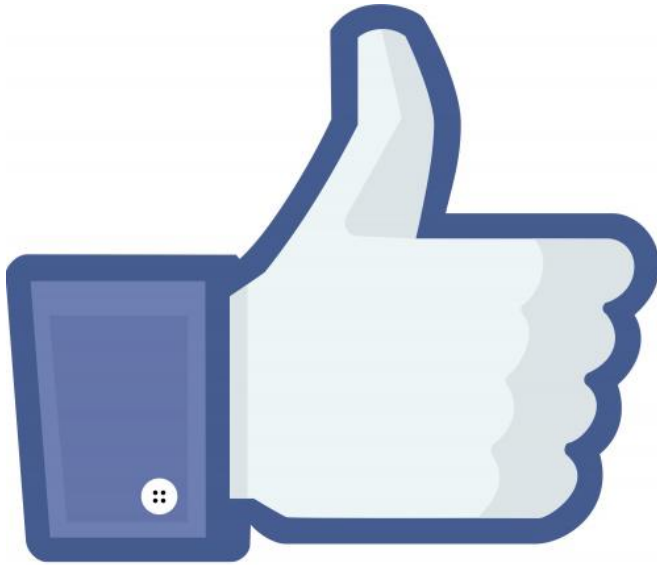


Facebook outlines plans for virtual reality

27 March 2015, by Queenie Wong, San Jose Mercury News



Facebook and virtual reality, at first glance, might seem like pieces of a puzzle that don't exactly fit in the social network's future.

But as Facebook wrapped up its annual F8 conference on Thursday, the company's [chief technical officer](#), Mike Schroepfer, explained to developers why the company snapped up the virtual reality startup Oculus last year for \$2 billion.

When people head to a movie theater, celebrate their birthday or watch their child's first bike ride without training wheels, they want their friends and family to be there.

Virtual reality can make that happen, Schroepfer said.

The power of combining virtual reality with Facebook, he said, is the "ability to bring everyone in these moments in one point in time and have this true sense of being there."

Schroepfer was outlining the company's vision for the future over 10 years, which includes increasing Internet access throughout the world and helping people navigate through an information overload online.

But with Oculus' headsets for gaming yet to be released to the public, the social network's virtual reality aspirations are still years away from happening.

Schroepfer and Oculus's Chief Scientist Michael Abrash signaled Thursday that the company is slowly inching closer to this goal, though there will be challenges along the way.

"The shift to [virtual reality](#) is going to bring huge change both to us as developers and society as a whole," Abrash said.

Abrash showed the audience through optical illusions how the mind can play tricks on someone's perception of reality. A paper dinosaur appears as if it's moving because of the way it's folded. A checkered board jumps out when dots are added.

"VR is about experiencing the virtual world as real. And what we've just learned is that an experience is real to the extent it convinces your perception system in your brain," Abrash said.

So what does this all mean, the chief scientist asked the audience at the end of his keynote.

Quoting the Wizard of Oz, he replied: "Buckle up your seatbelt, Dorothy 'cause Kansas is going bye bye."

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APA citation: Facebook outlines plans for virtual reality (2015, March 27) retrieved 15 October 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-03-facebook-outlines-virtual-reality.html>

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