

For virtual reality pioneers, no rush to succeed in 2016

February 10 2016, byDerrick J. Lang



In this June 11, 2015 file photo, Oculus founder Palmer Luckey holds up the new Oculus Rift virtual reality headset for photographers following a news conference, in San Francisco. Luckey and other pioneers of modern virtual reality technology from such companies as Google and Sony are gathering for a summit on Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2016, about the immersive medium in Hollywood. (AP Photo/Eric Risberg, File)

Palmer Luckey doesn't just want to sell a bunch of virtual reality

headsets. He wants buyers to use them every day.

The founder of Oculus told a group of developers working on VR content Wednesday that the immersive medium's success should be measured by time— not necessarily money—spent on it.

"We can sell a bunch of things that will sit on a desk and stay dusty," he said on stage at the Vision Summit. "I wouldn't consider that successful. If we can make things that people use every day, that's a good sign for the future of [virtual reality](#) as an ecosystem."

Oculus' technology surrounds wearers' eyes with 360-degree views of virtual worlds that are either created inside a computer or captured with several cameras. The headset tracks a users' movement and can be used with Oculus' wand-like Touch controllers to create an interactive experience.

The Facebook-owned company is scheduled to launch the Rift headset March 28. Oculus incited sticker shock in January when it announced the consumer edition would cost \$599—or \$1,499 when bundled with a high-powered PC required to use it.

"We shipped a couple hundred thousand developments kits, but that's nothing on what we plan on doing this year," teased Luckey.



In this Friday, Jan. 29, 2016 file photo, a video game enthusiast experiences a virtual reality headset at the Taipei Game Show 2016 in Taipei, Taiwan. Oculus founder Palmer Luckey and other pioneers of modern virtual reality technology from such companies as Google and Sony are gathering for a summit on Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2016, about the immersive medium in Hollywood. (AP Photo/Wally Santana, File)

The first-ever Vision Summit was organized by game engine purveyor Unity, which unveiled a tool Wednesday that allows VR designers to create and manipulate virtual worlds while wearing headsets.

Luckey announced that the Rift would come with a four-month trial of a professional edition of the Unity engine, so that all Rift buyers "could be a creator, not just a consumer."

Unity CEO John Riccitiello cautioned the 1,400 attendees at the Hollywood & Highland Center that 2016 will not be the year that VR

sees mainstream adoption and that the technology has been "overhyped" by the media.

"It's going to be bigger in the long run," said Riccitiello, who previously served as president and COO of video game publisher Electronic Arts.



In this Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2016 file photo, Matthew Taylor paints in 3D virtual reality at the Intel booth using HTC Vive virtual reality goggles at CES International, in Las Vegas. Oculus founder Palmer Luckey and other pioneers of modern virtual reality technology from such companies as Google and Sony are gathering for a summit on Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2016, about the immersive medium in Hollywood. (AP Photo/John Locher, File)

Riccitiello projected 1 billion consumers will own VR technology in 5 to 10 years, pointing to the similar growth of such technologies as smartphones.

While VR on smartphones is now available with headsets like Google Cardboard and Samsung Gear, higher fidelity experiences won't be available until the launch of the Oculus Rift, Sony's PlayStation VR and Vive from HTC and Valve.

PlayStation VR and Vive will be available later this year for yet-to-be-announced prices.

Valve co-founder Gabe Newell sent the Vision Summit audience into an Oprah Winfrey-like frenzy when he announced that all the developers in attendance would receive a free Vive system.



In this March 18, 2014 file photo, Richard Marks, senior director of research and development at Sony Computer Entertainment America, speaks about the PlayStation 4 virtual reality headset Project Morpheus, pictured at left, at the Game Developers Conference 2014 in San Francisco. Oculus founder Palmer

Luckey and other pioneers of modern virtual reality technology from such companies as Google and Sony are gathering for a summit on Wednesday, Feb. 10, 2016, about the immersive medium in Hollywood. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu, File)

"You get a Vive, and you get a Vive, and you get a Vive," the veteran game designer joked.

The conference continues through Thursday with such talks as "Emotional Presence in Virtual Reality" and "VR in the Classroom."

More information: www.visionsummit2016.com

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