Headsetless Holographic Virtual Reality Displays

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Abstract: We introduce a headsetless holographic virtual reality display. In this new design, a custom holographic projector populates a micro-volume located at some distance with 3D images. Users view these with the help of an eyepiece. © 2023 The Author(s)

1. Introduction

Virtual Reality (VR) headsets offer a next-generation display experience with many use cases in education, office work, and entertainment [1]. However, these VR headsets must overcome issues related to their form factors, computing, heating, and power to deliver an immersive 3D experience in the future [2]. Our previous work combats these issues by separating active and passive components of a VR headset [3] but cannot genuinely deliver 3D images. Specifically, our design offers a unique optical layout containing a stationary 2D projector and a wearable eyepiece. We upgrade this 2D projector design using Computer-Generated Holography (CGH) [4] with a new prototype that delivers 3D images, and we brand this improvement as HoloBeam [5]. HoloBeam improves resolution and Field of View (FoV) of Beaming Displays from 7 cycles-per-degree (cpd) with 30 degrees monocular FoV to 24 cpd with 70 degrees FoV. HoloBeam can use either our optimization framework for CGH [6] and a dedicated, learned method that could convert conventional 2D images (RGB without depth) to 3D holograms. All our implementations use our differentiable toolkit [7, 8]. We pitch our innovation as a headsetless device that paves the way to the potential to replace today's 2D desktop display with our 3D holographic display that could deliver perceptually accurate CGH [9] while not requiring bulky form factors or invasiveness caused by traditional wearable VR headsets.

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