The past, present and future of virtual reality

Tom Furness
Professor
Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering
University of Washington

Abstract: Prof. Furness will address where virtual and augmented reality came from, what it can do in terms of unlocking and linking minds. He will consider the long-term implications, applications and hazards of the technology.

Bio: Prof. Furness is an amalgam of Educator, Inventor and Entrepreneur in a professional career that spans 55 years. In addition to his contributions in photonics, electro-optics, and human interface technology, he is an original pioneer of virtual and augmented reality technology and widely known as the 'grandfather' of virtual reality. Tom is currently a Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering with adjunct professorships in Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering. and Human Centered Design and at the founder and International Director of the family of Human Interface Technology Laboratories at the University of Washington, Christchurch, New Zealand and Tasmania, Australia. He is also the founder and chairman of the Virtual World Society, a non-profit for extending virtual reality as a learning system for families and other humanitarian applications. His current research interests include exploring the functionality of peripheral vision at large eccentricities and investigations into photon emission from the retina. Tom and his students/colleagues have spun off 27 companies with an aggregate market capitalization of >$10B. He is a Fellow of the IEEE.