

Macintosh VS Windows 95

#4 Virtual Reality

Summary

Using Apple® QuickTime® VR software, people can take virtual reality tours of museums and landmarks on the other side of the world, view buildings that haven't yet been built, and even visit imaginary places that don't exist. Nothing equivalent to QuickTime VR is available today from Microsoft.

This is part of a series of short reports on the contrasts between an Apple Macintosh® computer and a PC with Windows 95. To see previous entries in the series, visit us on the Internet at <http://www.apple.com/whymac/>

The Macintosh Advantage

QuickTime VR lets personal computers display 360-degree panoramic movies. Users can move forward and backward through the images, pan left to right and up and down, and select objects for close-up 360-degree views. The images can either be photographs taken with a standard 35-mm camera, or synthetic images made by a computer. This lets people explore 3D spaces and examine objects up close without buying add-on hardware such as graphics accelerator cards, floating point processors, helmets, goggles, joysticks, or gloves.

Panoramic movies made with QuickTime VR use as little as 150K of disk space. Thousands of panoramas can fit on a single CD-ROM, providing developers with the opportunity to create a rich and realistic three-dimensional user experience. Minimum system requirements are a 68030-based Macintosh or an 80386 Intel-based computer with Windows.

Although QuickTime VR runs on both Macintosh and Windows computers, it is enhanced to take advantage of the higher performance of PowerPC™ chips. Apple's in-house testing shows that users can get smoother, more realistic motion from Power Macintosh® computers than from Pentium computers.

Microsoft has demonstrated Windows-based software that it says will be similar to QuickTime VR, but it is not yet available and as far as Apple can determine, no shipment date has been announced.

Copies of the QuickTime VR player and sample movies can be downloaded from the World Wide Web at: <http://qtvr.quicktime.apple.com>

What It Means For Users

- In education, students will be able to explore, from their desks, a myriad of worlds in 3D. In seconds they could go from visiting Egyptian pyramids in Africa to Mayan pyramids in Central America. They could visit museums without getting on a bus, and even look at objects not on display in the real museum.
- At home, in addition to making it easier and more fun for children to learn, QuickTime VR will make home shopping much more interactive and compelling. It's also great for entertainment; one of the first QuickTime VR applications was an interactive tour of the Starship Enterprise, published by Simon & Schuster.
- In business, users will create 3D sales presentations in which the customer can see the product photographically, from all sides. Architects, engineers, and designers will also benefit from QuickTime VR's ability to realistically display buildings or products that don't yet exist.

What About the Future?

Apple has demonstrated future versions of QuickTime VR that include localized sound (sounds and volume change depending on where the user is "looking") and the ability to add motion to the panoramic movies. The release date for these features has not yet been announced.





Questions or Comments?

You can send e-mail to the Macintosh Platform Marketing team at competition@applelink.apple.com

For more information on the Star Trek TNG Interactive Technical Manual, use the Internet: <http://www.mcp.com/musoft/ssint/newtip.html>