

Fulldive VR Celebrates Early Success of Smartphone Based Virtual Reality Platform in Bringing VR to a Wide Audience

It's hard not to get excited about virtual reality and the things VR is on the verge of accomplishing when it comes to everything from entertainment to how well it can help sell products. The big limitation, in the eyes of many, has been the high price hardware. Fulldive VR has challenged that approach head on aiming towards "VR for everyone" using a smartphone based platform that's the talk of the industry.

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For the great many who appreciate tech it's hard not fall in love with virtual reality, which is finally coming into its own. The problem is the price point of the hardware most insiders are enjoying comes in at a range of \$600-\$1500 in most cases, which prices out the vast majority of the people interested in VR. Fortunately, Fulldive VR is working hard in this area taking a different approach with their platform, working hard to deliver the virtual reality experience to anyone with a smartphone. The company recently celebrated the success and support this drive has received, with the enthusiasm surrounding their project higher than ever.

“Once a skeptic sees a video made with Fulldive it usually only takes a minute or two for them to become passionate about our platform,” commented a spokesperson from the company. “There's over a million videos right now in Fulldive that can be seen in 360 degrees. We are set to transform elements of the entertainment industry in a very real way, just when they need it most. All with a headset costing as low as \$5 together with a smartphone.”

Fulldive's full version is available for Android devices, recently getting over 2.5 million downloads within a few months and a high 4.3/5 rating. They have a new beta version released for Apple phones.

The smartphone app includes a social feature where users can interact with each other and discuss about the content while inside a VR experience; a feed where the latest news and headlines from the world of VR is delivered to the smartphone users; and a growing set of Fulldive VR tools and resources which currently feature a media player, a functional web browser and everything else possible to help make the smartphone a credible VR tool.

According to Fulldive's co-founders Ed Ow and Yosen Utomo, the reason for it's success is because the company listens to it's users and has a large community support forum. Fulldive's policy is to provide monthly updates to the app, with 99% of the it's new features directly requested by it's users. Users would vote in the forum for the next best feature and Fulldive will prioritize what to make next, and announce it ahead of schedule. This creative crowdsourced approach to making apps is what makes Fulldive VR truly unique from other companies.

Fulldive's next feature is to be a social platform for all VR content. For example, an user can take a panorama or a 360 photo or video with a mobile phone, and upload it on the Fulldive app and share it with friends. Friends will be able to see that photo in virtual reality.

Sarah C., a Fulldive user, recently said, “VR didn't really interest me until my friend showed me some

videos using Fulldive. Too cool and too much fun. I can't wait to see how artists continue using this type of technology to express themselves in amazing ways. And count me in, I couldn't be more excited if I tried!"

Part of Fulldive's mission statement is to bring high quality VR to third world countries. "In a third world country, for example Indonesia and India, we're actually using technology which is 10 years older than what is used in the Silicon Valley," said co-founder, Yosen Utomo who left Indonesia to study in the United States seven years ago. "So our dream is to bring new technology such as VR, which we are working on, to these countries so we can create a bridge." The top three countries using Fulldive are the United States, India and Indonesia.

Utomo met Ed Ow while they were both at University of California Berkeley. After college, they created Fulldive. Ow on the other hand is a serial entrepreneur that has worked in China, Taiwan and the United States. He says he tries to bring that international perspective to creating the staff that makes Fulldive possible. Fulldive currently has offices and staff in the Silicon Valley, China and Russia.

"I want everybody to aim for the best, to do the things that people have never thought of. That's the culture we want to bring here. We're trying to bring VR accessible to everyone. But that's a grand vision. How do you do that? There're so many details. We tend to tell people every day, be brilliant yet think more in detail. Think about the steps. An idea is great, and at the end of the day it's about execution," said Ow.

The brainchild of two Berkeley University students with a clear vision, the virtual reality mobile app Fulldive VR has blown away even the highest expectations without accepting any outside investors. Currently Fulldive is part of the Vive X virtual reality incubation program, but they have not accepted funding. Charles Huang the founder of guitar hero and mentor of Fulldive VR, recently said, "It is amazing how they bootstrapped and created a next generation app that currently is performing so well in the VR sector - when there is so many giant competitors out there."

"It's because we believe in people first" Ow says, "people know well of our vision of bringing VR to everyone and deeply support us, so our company is really not made up of just ourselves, it's made up of all our users who love VR."