Clarkson Library Virtual Reality for Seniors – Project Review & Evaluation

Focus	Key Findings	Challenges
Provision of a varied level of activity for seniors	• The rendever software offers more than 70 virtual reality (VR) programs for seniors to choose from • VR programs can be tailored to suit all abilities, i.e., participants can choose from gentle VR experiences to more exhilarating experiences • Participants enjoy the experience more when they request a specific experience during their attendance registration • VR experiences have short run times, resulting in minimum wait time (for a more suitable VR program) should a participant dislike a specific program	• As the VR session is a communal event, it can be difficult to accommodate individual requests • Participants unable to participate in exhilarating experiences must wait until said experience is completed before re-joining the session • Lack of transportation for people in aged care facilities was a minor issue
Provision of opportunities that may improve quality of life	• Each VR session was followed by a morning tea, providing participants with an opportunity for social interaction • Participants with mobility issues/constraints can engage in experiences previously unattainable to them • Participants unable to visit destinations due to financial hardship can visit ay destination of their choosing (within the limits of the VR programing) • Participating in a VR experience can result in improved moods • Participants enjoy sharing a communal experience	• Participants arriving to a session with pre-conceived ideas about VR found it difficult to change their mindset during and after the session
Creation of a safe and secure environment	• It is important to cater to all abilities in order to provide a comfortable VR experience • Providing participants with an introduction to the VR experience and an overview of how the session will run is key to their enjoyment of a session	• In some cases people living with dementia appeared confused and unable to wear the headset
Provision of volunteering opportunities	• The inclusive nature of the activity allowed for recruitment from a wide volunteer pool as no specific skills were required • None of the volunteers had previous VR experience • The user-friendly aspect of the VR equipment meant that volunteers were confident to work autonomously • More than one volunteer is required at all times as volunteers needs to both manage the equipment and interact with participants at the same time	• In the beginning, senior volunteers were intimidated by the technical aspects of the role

Education of project staff	• Multiple rehearsal sessions were required to ensure all project staff had a degree of comfort with the VR technology • Firsthand experience of a VR session is essential in the education of project staff. This firsthand knowledge allowed staff to answer participant queries and also to promote the project with confidence • Training on how to support seniors and people living with dementia is required for project staff	• Some staff were intimidated by the new technology • Difficult to source online training for dementia awareness
Increased opportunities for social connection	• The communal nature of the sessions resulted in the majority of participants remaining on site after a session had ended in order to discuss their experience with their fellow participants	• Many participants advised that there was a general lack of activities in the community that result in opportunities for social interaction • Difficult to set a time that allowed maximum social interaction opportunities due to the different lifestyles of seniors attending • In some cases, people living with dementia can only participate in post-session social connection if their carer's schedule permits