

SocioTechnical Synthesis

Overcoming Acrophobia

A large number of people are afraid of heights. Prior research suggests that exposure therapy is effective in helping those with acrophobia. A VR experience that exposes acrophobes to virtual heights in a safe environment may help those suffering from the phobia. A virtual reality environment can produce similar results to experiencing the fear in person, but is much safer. This project was developed in Unity and C#. Game-like elements will be used to incentivize the user to interact with heights and get comfortable with them. To test the effectiveness of the VR exposure, human participants with varying levels of acrophobia tried the VR exposure therapy and gave their feedback via a survey administered before and after the test.

The Rise of Discord

In our ever-changing world, people are finding new ways to interact and fulfill the social desires we have as humans. Online communities have been around since before the days of MySpace in 2003. The rise of social media and smartphones enabled everyone with an electronic device to have an online presence in some shape or form. Discord, an app targeted at online gamers has changed the way that people are able to interact online. I personally spend a lot of time on discord in voice chats and text chats talking to people from across the country (some in Canada and Europe as well). Online interaction is now more important than ever, with the threat of sickness when in contact with too many people due to the pandemic. In this paper the questions: who is choosing discord for their communities, how is Discord different from other platforms, and how is an effective community on discord made, will be explored.

The Technical and STS reports are not related.