

What is QuickTime VR™?

As Susan Kitchens puts it in her ground-breaking book from Peachpit Press, *The QuickTime VR Book*, "What makes a QuickTime VR Movie? There are two parts to the technology. The first is QuickTime, Apple's system-level software that handles all matter of digital media — still and motion images and sound. The second part is QuickTime Virtual Reality, which provides an immersive experience. When playing back and interacting with a QTVR movie, you get the sense that "you are there."

The differentiation is in virtual reality and actual reality. Virtual reality is experienced throughout the use of a computer. In actual reality you can move around, looking here and there, and actually reach out and pick up an object. QTVR imitates these actions...looking around is accomplished by the panoramic movie experience, while an object movie allows you to simulate the action of picking something up and turning it around to examine it.

Again, Susan Kitchens, "A panorama movie is a cylinder-shaped image; the cylinder surrounds the point of the viewer. The viewer can look all around in a circle, left and right, up and down to see nearly everything that is visible from that single point of view...in QTVR, picking up something and examining is implemented as an object movie. In an object movie, an object can be examined from all sides, rotating it from any horizontal or vertical position. The two movie formats — panorama and object — when combined with the third option of choosing to change one's point of view, comprise the options for QTVR...with QTVR, you can create the essence of being there, by offering the viewer the same viewing choices she would have if she were actually there. The option to look around, move to another spot, look around again (and again and again), and examine things provides a powerful immersive experience for the viewer."

Apple Computer, Inc.™ developed QuickTime VR™ as an integral aspect of its QuickTime™ media layer. QuickTime has been the essential ingredient to maintaining Apple™ as the world leader in innovative technologies for the professional digital content creator. Through Apple's vigorous support of the technology's adoption as an industry standard, QuickTime has succeeded in becoming the cross-platform standard, worldwide. With Apple's concurrent (Macintosh™ and Windows™95/NT) release of QuickTime 3.0, QuickTime VR v2.1 and a streaming QuickTime Plug-In v2.0 for Netscape Navigator™ and Internet Explorer™, that standard became de facto. With the upcoming release of QuickTime 4, we are about to witness a new level of multimedia excellence.

QuickTime VR is an extension of Apple's basic QuickTime technology and supports two different types of movies, QTVR panorama movies and QTVR object movies; QTVR scenes are the third point of view in QuickTime VR. QuickTime VR is destined to be the ultimate enabling technology for electronic commerce. Usually implemented as a photo-realistic virtual reality, QTVR is finding its way into markets such as catalogs, real estate, museum, education, retail, web design, multimedia, travel industry, entertainment,

environmental studies etc. It's potential is just as strong in digital media presentations as it is on-line.

With VR PanoWorx and now VR ObjectWorx, VR Toolbox is fulfilling its promise to create innovative tools to keep content providers, from web developers to multimedia producers on the succeeding edge of the digital frontier. Panoramic authoring tools, like VR PanoWorx, produce movies which look out from a center or “nodal” point. VR ObjectWorx, an object movie authoring tool, generates object movies which look in at a center point or plane, simulating the effect of holding an object in the hand and turning it around to see all sides, top and bottom.

* The QuickTime VR Book, copyright 1998 by Susan Aimee Kitchens, Peachpit Press, 1249 Eighth Street, Berkeley, CA 94710