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Upper Intermediate Student’s Book

Life

Augmented reality

**00.05–00.22** On the campus of New York’s Columbia University, researchers are already looking into the future. It’s part of a programme designed to change the way we see the world. Professor Steve Feiner and his group of computer science students are working to, as they say, augment reality.

**00.24–00.35 Professor Steve Feiner** The idea means essentially that we’re trying to build up a virtual world that we can integrate with the physical world so the virtual world can provide extra, added information about what you see and hear.

**00.36–00.59** Using a head-worn device, this prototype superimposes text and graphics over a person’s normal field of vision.

Sophisticated tracking devices determine exactly where the user’s head is oriented, allowing the computer to constantly update the information on display. It’s a relationship all built on numbers and hard work.

**01.00–01.03 Professor Steve Feiner** And it’s based on our having very laboriously measured where things are.

**01.04–01.10** The system enables users to view three-dimensional graphics and imagery, mapping their location within their surroundings.

**01.11–01.18 Blaine Bell** This is actually very good for going into an environment that users are very unfamiliar with and they need to get information about.

**01.19–02.02** Imagine giving firefighters a clear view of building blueprints even as their vision is obscured by smoke, or providing pilots with information on the windscreen of their cockpits.

Utilising a global positioning system, or GPS, Feiner’s research team is among the first to take augmented reality technology outdoors and into the real world where it might entirely change the tourist experience, offering situated documentaries about the history of a site.

It’s already begun on Columbia’s campus where augmented reality users can learn about Bloomingdale Asylum, an early 19th-century asylum for psychiatric patients which previously occupied this space.

**02.03–02.18 Professor Steve Feiner** They would see the main asylum building overlaid as sort of a ghost image, on top of their view of the library. And they could actually walk around that building and look at it and see additional information about it on the hand-held display.

**02.19–02.24** It’s all very educational but Feiner’s motivations may be a bit more pedestrian.

**02.25–02.30 Professor Steve Feiner** I have a very bad sense of direction. This is part of the reason why I want to be able to – to have this kind of technology.

**02.31–02.36** If he’s successful, you might never get lost ever again.

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