

VR Startup Merxius Gets You Closer to Reality

Hot Startup

Merxius

RED, a general purpose tool developed by this startup, lets anyone with a 3D model create virtual reality

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Hyderabad: Strapping a headset and being transported into a different world for an immersive experience is what virtual reality is about. While this technology is slowly picking up in India, what may help it gain more momentum is a content-enabler, says Hasan Ali Khan, co-founder of Merxius, an augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) startup from Hyderabad.

“Internet adoption shot up in the ‘90s after FrontPage was released, which made it easy for anyone to create web pages. You always need content-enablers for any technology to pick up,” said Khan, who heads the company’s technical team.

Merxius has created RealSim Editor, or RED, a general purpose tool for virtual reality. Simply put, anyone who has a 3D model can import it into this platform and in one click, can get virtual reality (VR) out of it.

“It’s like Photoshop but for virtual reality. With RED, anybody can VR,” said Vaishali Neotia, CEO of Merxius. The startup was recently added to the list of top 10 deep tech companies by IBM SmartCamp. It has also been selected for a Tata Elxsi incubation programme.

The RED tool is currently being tested by the Indian Armed Forces to create a training module for engine maintenance. It can be licensed by anyone from the field of manufacturing, engineering, design and ar-



Cofounders Vaishali Neotia and Hasan Ali Khan

chitecture, among others.

Founded by college buddies Neotia and Khan in 2011, Merxius started dabbling with augmented reality when the technology was not pervasive in India with just a handful

of startups working in these areas. Their first product, Marmo, was an industrial augmented reality framework that helps in machine maintenance and operation.

“We built a mobile application

through which when the camera is pointed at a component, it would give animations overlaid with step-by-step augmented instructions on how to repair the machine,” said Khan.

By 2014, the duo decided to venture into the world of virtual reality with their product RealSim, a real-time industry grade simulator for the real estate market to help them visualise and customise apartment floor plans to potential clients.

The buzz around virtual reality has been growing because of big players such as Google and Facebook entering the space. The number of AR/VR companies in India has grown to nearly 170, according to data provided by startup analytics firm Tracxn.

Merxius, which has collected mul-

iple awards including the Aegis Graham Bell Award, is in talks with investors to raise \$2 million to accelerate the adoption of RED. They are also in the process of filing two patents for RED, which, they claim, would make Merxius the first company from India to file a patent in this space.

Padmaja Ruparel from Indian Angel Network (IAN), whose portfolio consists of virtual reality solutions startup SmartVizX, says they are upbeat about virtual reality technology and is in talks with another startup in this space.

“I think there is investor appetite for VR startups and it is bound to go up this year. But they would have to be unique and not another ‘me-too’ startup,” said Ruparel.