



From left in the photograph:
Mr. Jim Chabin
Chairman, Advanced Imaging Society
Mr. Guy Primus
The Virtual Reality Company CEO
Mr. Takashi Kawai
Japan Committee Chair, Advanced Imaging Society
Professor, Faculty of Science and Engineering, Waseda University

2017: Year One of VR VR will create new value in entertainment and change business in all industries

Virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), holograms and other advanced video technologies are attracting increasing attention. Against this background, a new project called INTER BEE IGNITION was held at Inter BEE 2016 to explore new media possibilities. The Advanced Imaging Society based in the United States also transferred an event it had previously held on its own unchanged to Inter BEE.

The Japan Committee of the Advanced Imaging Society held the ceremony for the Lumiere Japan Awards during this event. In addition, the Advanced Imaging University Seminar was given by Mr. Jim Chabin, Chairman of the Advanced Imaging Society; Mr. Guy Primus, who serves as the CEO in The Virtual Reality Company that was responsible for the VR production in *The Martian* movie by the director Ridley Scott; and Mr. Takashi Kawai, who is a professor in the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Waseda University while also serving as the Japan Committee Chair of the Advanced Imaging Society. The men talked about the position of the VR business in the video industry and their vision for the future in addition to the latest situation for VR that is being tackled by the movie industry in the United States in this seminar. We spoke to these three men who took the podium at this seminar: What kind of impact will VR have on the video industry? What is indispensable for the development of the VR business?



VR will spread to all industries

How do you see the current situation for VR that is attracting increasing attention in both the United States and Japan?

Mr. Chabin: VR has the greatest potential among existing platforms. I expect VR will also have a massive effect on education and training in the industrial field by taking advantage of

its rich expressive power in addition to the movie and entertainment fields. This is not just a movie theater issue like with 3D; we are in contact with companies outside the movie industry, such as Intel, Google and Hewlett-Packard. I expect this will increase the range of the industry.

This will no doubt become a global trend. It is possible to see companies in

the United States, Europe, Japan and China coming to utilize VR. This is at a completely different level of the excitement over 3D. It is very important that companies which think seriously about how to make people happy and entertain people with VR like The Virtual Company where Mr. Guy Primus serves as CEO steadily enter this industry and take on new challenges in VR.

The life of content is the story

Will VR become established as a new form of content instead of proving a passing phase?

Mr. Primus: VR is a ground-breaking technology that enables new video expressions. However, attractive content is not created with technology alone. The stories of works are the most important thing to establish VR as a new form of content. The existence of excellent storytellers is indispensable.

There are excellent storytellers with

a proven track record in major movie companies. We employ Robert Stromberg, who was involved in the production of the *Avatar* movie by the director James Cameron, as one of the heads in our company. It is reassuring to have one of the big names in the industry. There are high expectations from the industry as a whole.

Mr. Kawai: It is impossible not to think about 3D stereoscopic viewing when talking about VR. It is possible to see 3D stereoscopic viewing in movie

theaters, but this has not yet spread widely in homes.

It is necessary to think about what the industry as a whole should do to popularize VR upon analyzing 3D stereoscopic viewing so that we do not go down the same path as that technology. It is not true that any content in VR is good. I think it is important to thoroughly think about whether a work is suitable for VR.

Investigations and research are essential to master VR

What is important to develop the VR market?

Mr. Primus: It is not that straightforward to produce really attractive VR content. It is important to use VR after investigating and researching its features and the optimum production techniques.

Mr. Chabin: Game machines like the PlayStation that allow people to enjoy VR software have spread widely. I think that 2017 will be year one of VR and welcome in a massive increase in popularity of VR. VR is sustainable and will become a powerful foundation of business. I would like to encourage many companies to proac-

tively invest in this technology.

Mr. Kawai: We have already started to find various problems that need addressing when we perceived VR from the viewpoint of the user. The understanding of the basic cognitive characteristics of VR is one of these. I wonder what impact VR will have on the behavior of people from the viewpoint of human engineering that is my specialty. I would like to think about this including both the positive and negative aspects.

For example, in terms of the positive aspects, I wonder what kind of value VR will give users and society. I think it is very important to continue clarifying this. I would like to carefully organize/

analyze content and turn the tacit knowledge possessed by creators into tools to contribute to the creation of an environment in which it is possible to make even higher quality content.

