SRMAP's Next-Tech Lab Scaling New Heights: Won Three Hackathons in a Row

The unstoppable team of Next-Tech Lab of SRM University- AP, has again brought laurels to the University by winning three hackathons in a row. During this lockdown while some devoted their time to newfound hobbies, our young researchers successfully developed a fresh multiplayer virtual reality game - 'Whack A Mole' and a cloud-based multiplayer FPS in Virtual Reality- 'Desert Shooter'. The three-member team has successfully bagged the second prize in the International / Professional Award at SKYHacks2020; Best echoAR Hack at Silicon Valley Hacks; and Best AR/VR hack at HackNow, organized by Cal Hacks, a non-profit organization at the University of Berkeley, California.

When asked how the idea of making such a game crossed their minds, Epperla Karthik, a 2nd Year student of Computer science and Engineering and a member of the team, said, "My family loves attending Tradeshows, every time we attend one my dad and I challenge each other to win a game of Whack A Mole. But, due to strict quarantine that my family is following, it's been a while now for such challenges. My teammates and I, being gaming and virtual reality enthusiasts, decided to develop a VR version of 'Whack A Mole.'"

'Whack A Mole' is a multiplayer virtual reality game that allows users to play against the computer or their families or both! One can use it on iOS or Android. It is built on Unity3D, on top of Photon PUN and GoogleVR SDK. It is also integrated with Google Firebase. "This was the very first time we were working on the development of virtual reality games and networking. As we had to run the game on our phone to record the gameplay, the output video on YouTube is a bit blurry," explained Khushboo Sharma, another member of the team and a 2nd-year student of Computer Science and Engineering. "We completed the development of the game in only 20hrs, starting from scratch. We developed a few of our own UI elements and game assets. I feel the User-Interface of the app and the effects are pretty cool. VR development is real FUN! Moreover, there are a lot of API and SDK that unity supports," exclaimedKoushik Bhargav, a 3rd-Year student of Computer Science and Engineering and the third member of the team.
The team has plans to make this game to be a cross-platform game. Therefore, their next plan of action is to make the web version of it. The team is also planning to release it to production so that users can have an immersive experience of modern gaming techniques.

'Desert Shooter' is another multiplayer virtual reality game developed by the team that allows users to play against the computer or their families or both. You can connect with your friends and play together. The game consists of a swarm of robot ships moving towards you and you have to protect yourself from them. "The interesting part is that all of this happens in Mixed Reality which makes the game immersive. We built it on Unity3D, on top of Photon PUN and GoogleVR SDK, Echoar. It is also integrated with Google Firebase and the assets are stored in echoar cloud. This project won the best AR/VR hack at "Hack: Now" which is organized by the University of California Berkeley," said Epperla Karthik.

It is again proved that pure talent can never be put in quarantine. It will always find a way to express itself to the world. Our young developers have brilliantly used the ample time and opportunity to put their brains in best use and to bring recognitions from nationally and globally acclaimed competitions.