

YULIO^{VR}

Client Conversations:

Creating Shared Visions

with Indy Dehal, Principal, ALSC Architects



ALSC architects work to be leading technology innovators, and recognize the potential of VR to create a shared vision with their clients early on.

In the spring of 2016, the firm began incorporating more virtual technology into its design work to give clients better visualization of future building projects.

We checked in with principal Indy Dehal to find out how the firm has been using VR, and where they see the technology going.





Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, AIA

Yulio: Why did you choose to integrate VR into the firm's operations?

ID: For us 3D visualisation is a key piece to how we convey information. When we're presenting to clients using Sketchup 3D models - people often don't understand what they're looking at or specifically where they are within a design.

VR offers another way for us to share and communicate our design intention. So many people have a hard time reading floor plans and even 3D renderings so VR offers us a tool to help them visualise more clearly and understand what they're going to get.

We're still looking at ways of integrating this into workflows. There is a strong general appetite from our team to use technologies to help improve productivity and efficiency in sharing design so there is a lot of self motivation behind it.

But ultimately we did it because often times, the client "just can't see it".

Yulio: How did you go about adopting VR?

ID: For ALSC, I credit some of our young employees for being on top of next-generation technology that can benefit clients. They were passionate about the technology and wanted to bring it to ALSC. And we fully supported their efforts because as a firm, we strive to be trendsetters, not followers.

We adopted it specifically for a tradeshow we attended in fall 2016, and used Yulio to show off some new school designs we had done. Since then our designers have been using it for design work and we've been using it show off our portfolio to clients since the show, as well.



Indy Dehal, AIA

Yulio tip: We find the most successful integrators among our clients are those who, like ALSC, choose a specific project initiative to present in VR and work to that goal, before further integrating VR into their workflow.

ID: It's becoming integral to our workflow. We work naturally anyway in three-dimensional model programs such as Revit and SketchUp, so it's natural from those models to work them into a number of apps for a virtual tour. We use Yulio to create our virtual reality panorama image so clients can immerse themselves in an environment."

I'd like to see us continue to integrate VR in our daily workflow. We want to get there and people are definitely interested. It will take myself and principals / owners leading further investment of time, but we don't want to have a 'left behind' feeling, but we've been a little delayed by the loss of the team member who originally initiated the use of VR in the organization.

Yulio: What was ALSC's experience of using the VR in the original project trade show setting?

ID: There were a lot of 'oohs' and 'aahs'. It was a hit. Some people had concerns over nausea and vertigo. We found that removing headset straps and having people hold the headset to their face rather than 'strapping in' made the experience more pleasurable. You definitely saw a lot of people hold it up for a second and then set it down.

While we have a higher end Samsung Gear in our office for our designers to use, we gave away branded cardboard goggles to view our portfolio and found it really effective - people really wanted them and it brought a lot of attention to our booth.

Yulio tip: Yulio also removes all the headstraps from our headsets in our labs - like ALSC, we've found people are much less nervous about feeling blindfolded, or experiencing nausea. Plus in a professional setting, removing straps helps allay fears about messing up hair and makeup and feeling foolish in front of colleagues. Ultimately, you don't want any anxiety about technology to take away from clients feeling immersed in your design.

Yulio: Beyond trade shows, how is VR used by the firm?

ID: We use VR as a design tool. Being able to rotate designs and see them fluidly gives us a new perspective when creating new designs that's very useful. We've been using it more as more people get trained in how to implement it and we fold it into our workflow.

It has also been used to demonstrate projects to clients who loved being able to experience new designs in that way. In the future, we'd be keen to use it to pitch for work and differentiate ourselves from other firms.

Our approach is to tell our clients' story, and the best way to tell their story might be through virtual reality, or it provides another way of telling how we're trying to convey an idea.

Yulio: What's your vision for VR at ALSC in the future?

ID: We pitch to a lot of school boards and when we go to present, those attending don't commonly ask a lot of questions as it takes a while to chew on what's just been presented. Being able to send designs via a link prior to a board meeting is of real value as it allows board members to be more informed about our proposed project and ask more questions when we go to present. With traditional formats, we still have to communicate with words a lot and we like people to better experience our story with VR.

We like presenting our projects in person but also see value in having people experience designs on their own. It has the potential to evoke something different, make them ask a different set of questions, take more ownership and get them more involved in the process.

I also like the confidence it can bring to the process. Our designers can know that when we build something that matches a VR experience, our clients will be happy that it looks like they expected. We definitely plan to apply the technology to more projects in the future. It could help contractors better understand and visualize a space they're about to build, and perhaps apply the technology to improve safety during construction. The technology also might lessen cost overruns because workers go in with a better knowledge about a design.

Yulio: What do you feel VR brings to the industry as a whole?

ID: When people understand more fully what they're getting, they will ask what more can be done, what more can be created with this space? I want clients to be part of the inspiration of a project and we find that when they are, designs tend to rise to another level.

Ultimately I want people to be inspired by architecture. People only know what they know and if this helps engage, educate and inspire people in design then that's a good thing for everyone.

Ready to find out how VR can transform your client communications? **Try Yulio for free** on your next project.



PACCAR CENTER
FOR
APPLIED SCIENCE

YULIO^{VR}