

steward offering you a pre-dinner gin and tonic.

Apart from making the plane disappear you can also plug the headphone into your phone to listen to music or use the provided seat socket adapter and actually hear the dialog on in-flight films.

While noise-cancelling headphones are all about shutting the outside world out, this month's second techie exploration is all about trading your current reality for someone else's - and haven't we all wanted to do that at some time? "Immersive" is the word most often used to describe virtual reality headsets. The hardware is barely available and there isn't much content, but it's heading your way fast.

We have been experimenting with Google Cardboard - a low-cost introduction to virtual reality. Yes, there's a reason we were standing around with our heads in cardboard boxes. Read the article and discover what it's all about.

As always, we have some special stand-by offers on courses coming up in February. Please call on 1300 765 736 if we can assist.

With warm regards

Nigel Davies
Director, NDA

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What's coming up

Here are two upcoming courses for your diary that are not presented frequently:

[Budgeting](#) Hobart, Wednesday 18 February. This course will enable participants to understand and prepare different types of budgets. It may also be attended to complete assessment for the unit BSBFIM501A Manage budgets and financial plans by clients studying for a [Diploma of Management](#) or [HR Management](#).

[Managing Successful Projects](#) Launceston 4/5 February and Hobart 19/20

February. Acquire an overview of planning, scheduling and controlling all types of project. Attendance at this unit can be used to complete part of the assessment for the [Certificate IV](#) and [Diploma of Project Management](#).

Language, Literacy and Numeracy (LLN)



From 1 July 2014, the unit TAELLN411 Address Adult Language, Literacy and Numeracy Skills will become a core unit in TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. People who already hold a Certificate IV in Training & Assessment may have until 30 June 2015 to complete the new TAELLN411 unit.

The unit coaches vocational trainers and assessors in identifying language, literacy and numeracy requirements in the training and work environment. Ahead of the upcoming change, and to allow trainers as much lead time as possible, NDA is offering unit TAELLN411 through fast-track workshop training.

One-day Language, Literacy & Numeracy (LLN) Workshop

Our one-day [LLN workshop](#) enables participants to complete all mandatory assessment during the workshop. Assessment projects are completed as in-class learning activities under the supervision of the trainer, meaning the entire unit can be completed in the workshop with no post-course assessment work.

Hobart: **Tuesday 17 February**

Launceston: **Thursday 26 February**

Course fee: **only \$295 per person**

To enrol, call Janelle on **1300 765 736**.

Google Cardboard and virtual reality headsets

Years ago I visited the Ship Simulator at the Australian Maritime College in Launceston - a large room that simulated the bridge of a ship with video

screens in place of the bridge windows. The students used it to practice berthing ships in any port programmed into the system and it probably cost several millions of dollars.

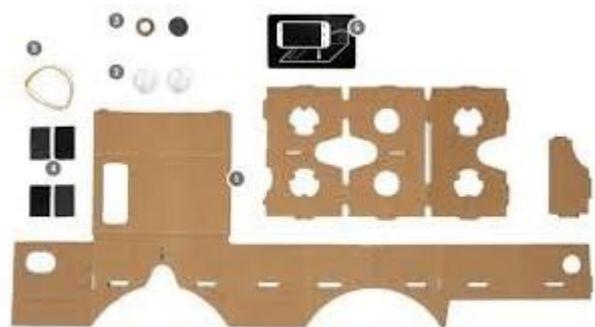
Realistic simulation of the real world can now be miniaturised into virtual reality headsets. The headset shuts out the external reality and an alternative reality is presented on two screens within the headset. The stereoscopic screen images extend beyond the user's field of view within the headset and give the illusion of actually being present in the new reality. The illusion is enhanced by movement sensors, so that turning the head has the effect of looking around within the simulated environment. Built-in headphones provide the soundtrack and 3D audio appears to come from different locations according to movements of the head.



Oculus Rift - you won't want to leave home with this on your head

Right at this moment anyone can purchase a device with the features listed above for \$350. This is the 'development kit' of market leader [Oculus Rift](#), owned by FaceBook. Presumably it's called a development kit because it is not yet sufficiently mature for release as a commercial product. If you want to splash out on a set, click [here](#).

Alternatively for about \$20 you can construct your own virtual reality headset with [Google Cardboard](#). The headset is constructed from cardboard, plastic lenses and Velcro in what looks like a primary school arts and craft project. Your mobile phone (Android or iOS) is mounted inside the headset to provide the visuals. Download some 3D split-screen software to generate the images and you have a DIY virtual reality headset.



Google Cardboard kit

We had an excellent time testing Google Cardboard and recommend it for its entertainment value. Suitable software can be downloaded from Google Play, iTunes or YouTube (search for "3D split screen"). The demo software Google produced for the release of Cardboard can be downloaded [here](#) (Android only, unfortunately) and includes a 3D Google

Earth flyover.

You can find a list of 3D iPhone apps [here](#). We liked the following free iOS apps which give an indication of the technology's potential:

- Polar Sea - 360 degree, 3D video of a journey through the Arctic's Northwest Passage
- London VR - view London from the top of the Eye and 'dive' into different landmarks for a 360 degree view
- Dive City Coaster - roller coaster animation
- Moorente - turn flying ducks into a puff of feathers by staring at them



If you like what you see, don't want to wait for the commercial release of Oculus Rift and have a Galaxy Note 4 phone then Samsung will sell you their [Gear VR](#) headset for \$249 - but it only works with the Galaxy phone.

Microsoft have just announced that Windows 10 will have ['holographic virtual reality'](#) built in to the operating system, viewable using Microsoft's Hololens headset. This differs from Oculus Rift and other headsets discussed above in that it can superimpose 'solid' 3D images into your current surroundings.



Microsoft's HoloLens headset

If you try one of the Google Cardboard kits, let me know how you go and whether or not you discover any interesting new VR software.

Current Government employees eligible for qualification funding

Good news! **All current Government employees (State, Commonwealth and Local Government) are now eligible for State 'User Choice' funding for existing workers** (subject to eligibility determined by an Australian Apprenticeship Centre). The following table shows which NDA qualifications are supported - in most cases the funding covers the entire fee.

Qualification
Cert II in Business

Cert III in Business
Cert III in Business Administration
Cert IV in HR Management
Cert II in IT, Digital Media and Technology
Cert III in IT, Digital Media and Technology
Cert IV in IT
Cert IV in IT Support
Cert IV in IT Networking
Cert II in Tourism
Cert III in Tourism

You can view the outlines for these qualifications [here](#).

What to do next

This is a great opportunity to upgrade your CV with a new qualification - and if you study with NDA the qualification fee includes attendance at all relevant NDA IT and management courses at no additional cost.

We recommend that you **follow up quickly while this funding is available**. If you would like more information, please email info@nda.com.au or call 1300 765 736.

Forthcoming training courses

The following courses will shortly be presented by NDA - some at significant discounts on standard rates. To obtain the discount, please phone Janelle on 1300 765 736 and mention this email when making bookings. Clients with existing bookings for discounted courses may not change them, but additional people may be added at the discounted rate.

Hobart IT Courses

[PowerPoint](#) 30 Jan - \$240 **two for the price of one**

[MYOB Setup and Operation](#) 2/3 Feb - \$570

[Excel Introductory](#) 2/4 Feb - \$480

[Excel Intermediate](#) 4/5 Feb - \$480

[Excel Advanced](#) 5/6 Feb - \$480

[MYOB Advanced](#) 10 Feb - \$285

[Access Introductory](#) 12/13 Feb - \$480

[Excel Introductory](#) 2/4 Mar - \$480

[Excel Intermediate](#) 4/5 Mar - \$480

[Excel Advanced](#) 5/6 Mar - \$480

Hobart Business Skills Courses

[Business Writing Skills \(Basics\)](#) 3 Feb - \$285

[Business Writing Skills \(Advanced\)](#) 10 Feb - \$285 **two for the price of one**

[Budgeting](#) 18 Feb - \$285

[Managing Successful Projects](#) 19/20 Feb - \$570

[Training Delivery](#) 24/25 Feb - \$570

[Conflict Resolution](#) 4 Mar - \$285

Launceston IT Courses

[Introduction to PCs with Windows and Office](#) 28/30 Jan - \$480

[Excel Introductory](#) 3/4 Feb - \$480

[Excel Intermediate](#) 4/5 Feb - \$480

[Excel Advanced](#) 5/6 Feb - \$485 **two for the price of one**

[Publisher](#) 9 Feb - \$285 **two for the price of one**

[MYOB Advanced](#) 10 Feb - \$285

[Microsoft Project](#) 12/13 Feb - \$480

[Access Introductory](#) 19/20 Feb - \$480

[MYOB Setup and Operation](#) 26/27 Feb - \$570

[Excel Introductory](#) 3/4 Mar - \$480

[Excel Intermediate](#) 4/5 Mar - \$480

[Excel Advanced](#) 5/6 Mar - \$485

Launceston Business Skills Courses

[Workplace Health & Safety](#) 3 Feb - \$285

[Managing Successful Projects](#) 4/5 Feb - \$570

[Learning Design](#) 10/11 Feb - \$570

[Conflict Resolution](#) 4 Mar - \$285

Devonport IT Courses

[Excel Introductory](#) 3/4 Feb - \$480 **two for the price of one**

[Excel Advanced](#) 5/6 Feb - \$480

[Microsoft Project](#) 12/13 Feb - \$480

[MYOB Setup and Operation](#) 26/27 Feb - \$570

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