

■ INNOVATION

VR impacts work sphere

The technology is making it possible for business professionals to ‘travel’ abroad instantly and astronauts, surgeons, engineers and mining companies are using it for training

MIC MANN

EXPONENTIAL technologies, such as artificial intelligence, augmented and virtual reality as well as immersive computing are transforming the way in which we work and network across all industries. It’s changing how we conduct business as well as the workspace.

Virtual reality (VR) – which places you in a 360-degree animated or live-action environment with the help of a virtual reality head set – is making it possible for business professionals to be transported to Hong Kong, San Francisco and London all in a day’s work, at a fraction of the time and price.

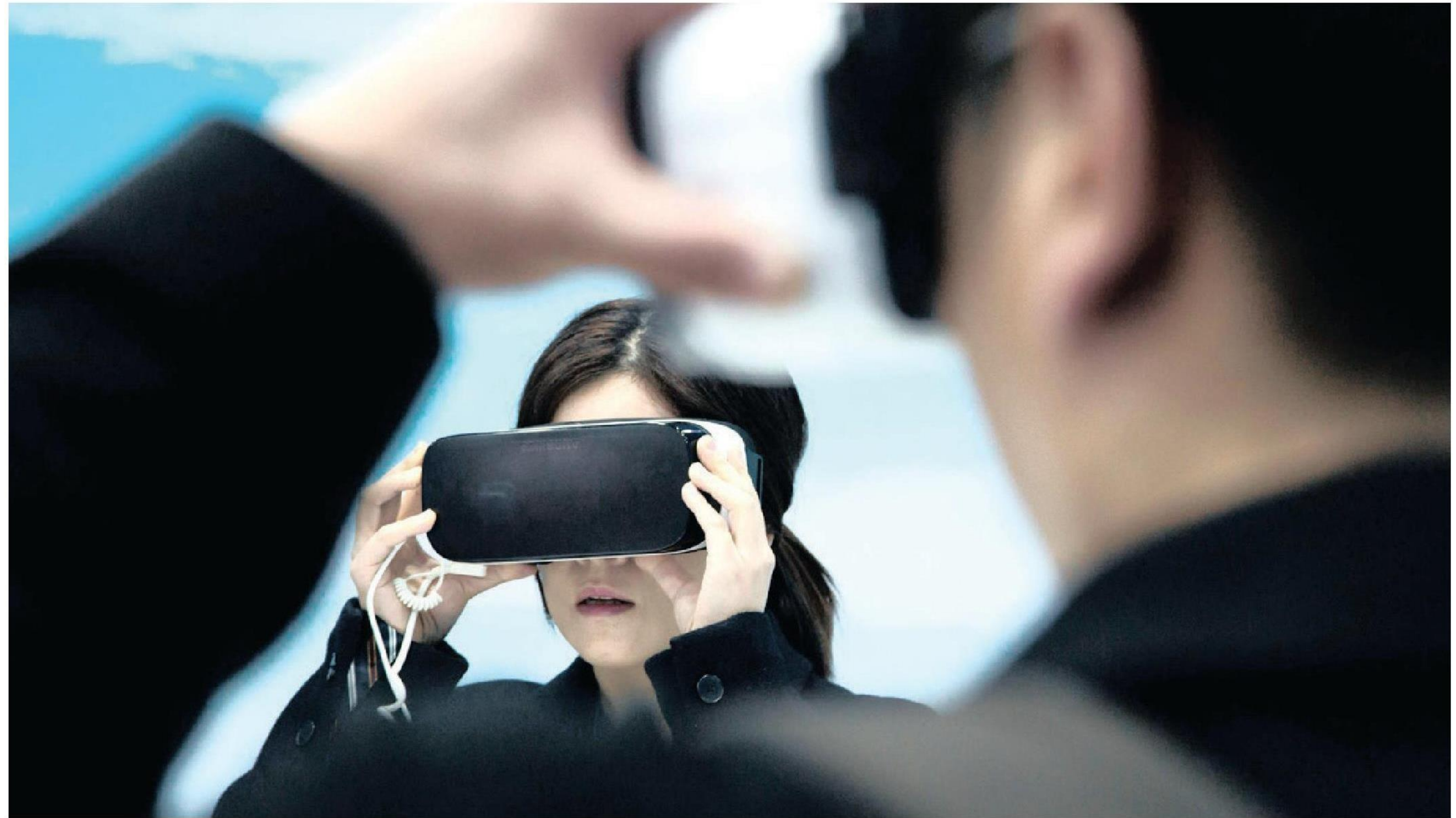
Soon there will be no need to fly across the world for a face-to-face meeting – unless you want to.

Digital avatars, personalised exoskeletons, beam robots, holograms and similar technologies will allow for more interactive and human-like business meetings.

Press conferences are being held in VR too, as we saw last week with Africa’s first global virtual reality press conference that was hosted by the SingularityU South Africa Summit.

It took place in AltspaceVR, which is a platform that provides 360-degree animated virtual reality meeting spaces with the help of VR headsets, and was livestreamed making it globally accessible to anyone.

Astronauts, surgeons, engineers and mining companies are already using VR-enabled training.



VIRTUAL Reality headsets are making it easy for business people to ‘travel’ abroad while saving time and money.

| SEONGJOON CHO | Bloomberg

While real estate agents, client-facing employees and destination marketers are able to create immersive life-like experience for their clients.

In the future, virtual reality will be used more frequently for company inductions, team building and for

marketing campaigns.

The VR market is estimated to exceed \$40 billion (R570bn) by 2020, according to the Global Virtual Reality Market (Hardware and Software) and Forecast by Orbis Research.

“I predict that virtual reality will

become more mainstream by 2022, with VR headsets part and parcel of our office space,” said Mic Mann, co-chief executive of SingularityU South Africa and co-organiser of the SingularityU South Africa Summit.