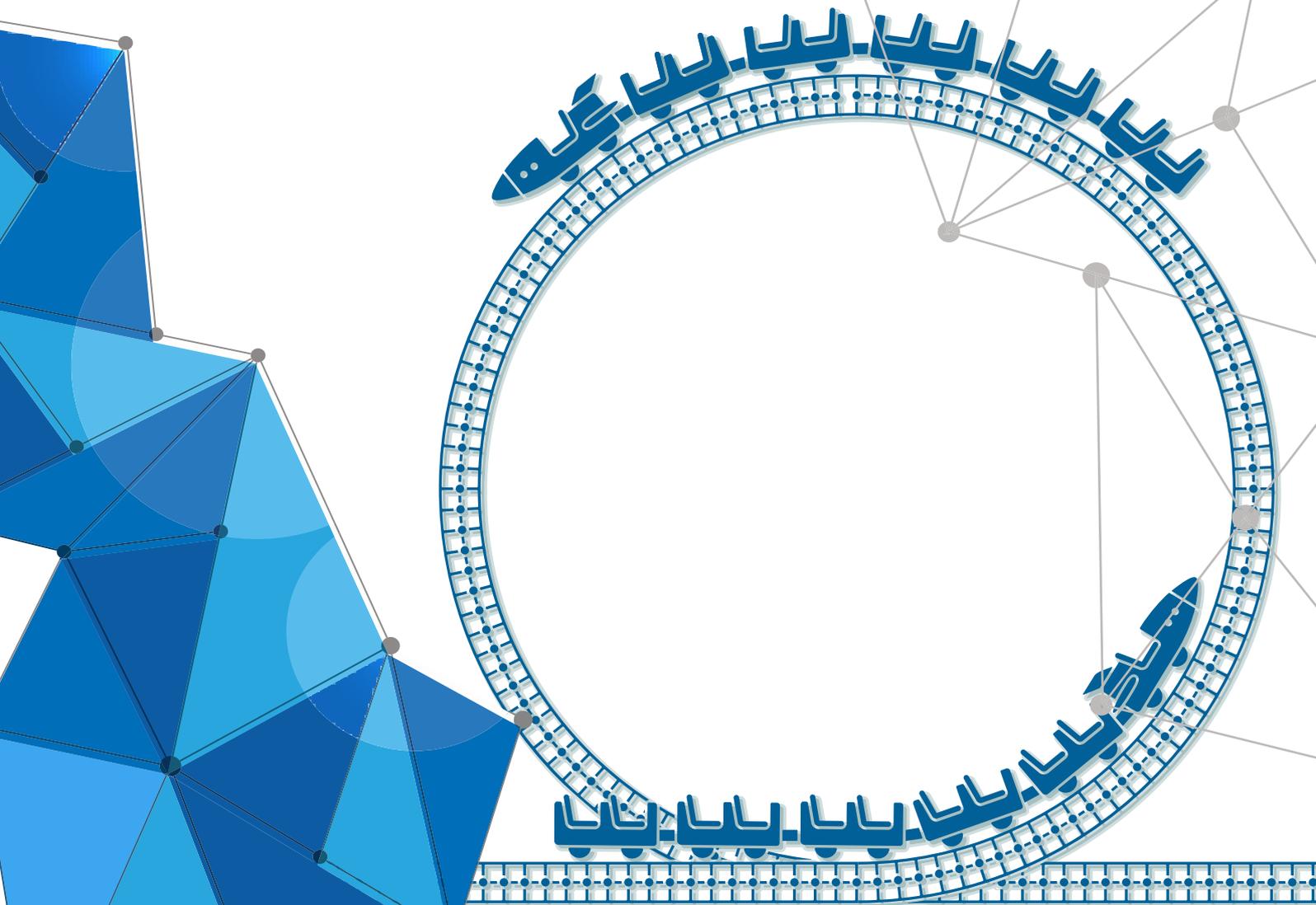




WHAT DOES THE **FUTURE** HOLD FOR THEME PARKS?

REPORT BY FLORIDATIX.COM
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INTRODUCTION

What will theme parks be like in 2050? With more simulator rides and 3-D or even 4-D experiences, they are already expanding way beyond the trusty, traditional rollercoasters we've all grown to love (or fear!).

More theme parks than ever are using state-of-the-art technology to excite and entertain, stretch the imagination, push people to their limits and even educate them in the process.

Next, we'll see theme parks make the most of virtual and augmented reality to open up new possibilities for thrill seekers. In fact, most of us will see this kind of tech in action at a theme park before we see it anywhere else. While the technology remains very expensive and therefore exclusive, it will only be by trying out the latest rides that many of us will see what it has to offer, before the technology becomes more affordable and introduced into our daily lives.

To see where theme park tech might take us next, futurologist Dr. Ian Pearson looks ahead at what the next few decades will bring.

The report has been divided into the following four categories:

- 01** BIOTECHNOLOGY
- 02** AUGMENTED & VIRTUAL REALITY
- 03** ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY
- 04** RIDE TECHNOLOGY

01 BIOTECHNOLOGY

Shaping the experience

Currently, wearable technology such as smart watches and Fitbits offer us the ability to gather and display bio data from our bodies via an app in an unobtrusive way.

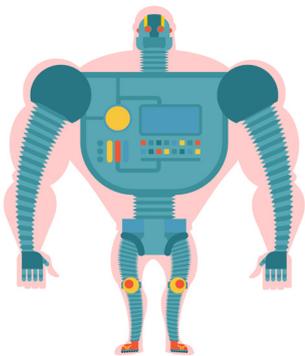
Theme park technology will build on this to develop bio-monitoring bands while people ride Virtual Reality rollercoasters. So ride engineers will know exactly what physical reaction the ride is provoking, and can adapt the experience accordingly.

Improving entry and security systems

Fingerprint and face recognition will be used in theme park entry systems. In years to come we may even start using electronic tattoos, which can be almost invisible but offer faster and more secure entry.

Sharpening our senses and lending 'superhero' experiences

From around 2030 the emergence of "Active Skin" will allow us to experience what it's like to have the strength of a superhero; electronics printed on the skin surface and linking to nerves allow our senses to be sharpened. The best part? We'll be able to record and share these physical experiences with one another using our active skin to relay signals between one person's nerves and another's.



We should also expect Exoskeleton-based experiences which will try to emulate some of what might happen in space exploration by 2040.

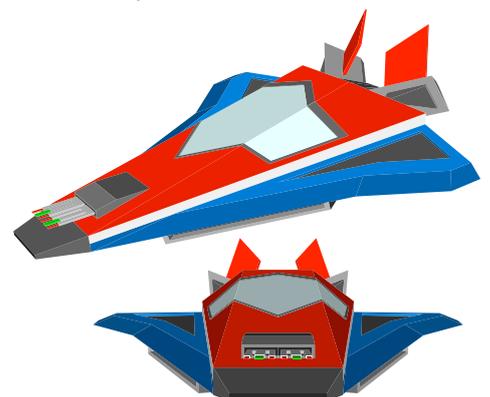
Hydraulic-assisted suits will give us the super strength of low-gravity conditions to further enhance the "Superhero" experience.

Giving riders mind control

By 2038, thought recognition will allow people to 'use the Force' to send messages to each other or to control what happens in rides just by thinking. A few short years after that, thought recognition will evolve into a 'Mind link'. This technology, predicted to come in 2045, will allow us to directly share our experiences with each other similar to the Matrix.

Expect 3D Space-fighter-style dodgems which use direct links to our minds for a completely immersive experience by 2045.

This could also extend into safaris where you can feel as if you actually were the animal.



02 AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY

If you're a fan of simulator rides, expect virtual reality and augmented reality to take this experience to the next level where immersion is even more intense!

Try before you buy

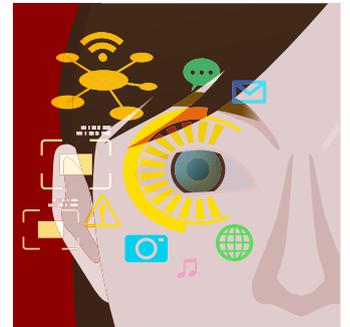
First we'll start to see Virtual Reality being used to allow guests to experience the 3D visuals used in real rides before we go to the park.



Step into the movie, or go on safari

We'll then start to see Augmented reality technology being used in ghost trains and rollercoasters to blend real-world and visual effects, expect rides featuring real explosions accompanied by enhanced visual effects.

We can also expect augmented reality characters and animals, which enable experiences such as virtual safaris to emerge from 2020 onwards.



03 ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY

Robots as extra assistance

First, and in the not-too-distant future, robots will bring a new level of personal service to their roles as guides, entertainers and security guards at theme parks.

Robots as entertainers

From the mid-2030s, these robots will evolve into androids with human-level intelligence and will be used as key actors or stuntmen in rides.

We might also see scripted gladiator-style fights between androids, which of course will be able to get up and walk away after the show.

Augmented reality characters and animals may also be used to enable experiences such as virtual safaris.



04 RIDE TECHNOLOGY

Levitating hoverboards

Hoverboards, of the type first promised in the 1980s Back to the Future film, using magnetic levitation over metallic surfaces, will make an appearance in dedicated parks at attractions across the world.

Early research suggests this will be the singularly most popular advance in ride technology, so it will be interesting to see which attraction introduces it first.



Levitation elsewhere

In the late 2020s, landspeeder rides will be possible using special disguised metal surfaces and magnetic levitation. We might even begin to see levitating personal transport.

Better mobility

Self-driving mobility scooters will give personalised tours to disabled people, using emotion detection for ride enhancement and feedback.

Self-driving dodgems will also emerge around 2024, whether this will take away the fun or go the opposite way, only time will tell.

SUMMARY

The next few years will see theme parks make excellent use of virtual and augmented reality, making the most of their potential to improve ride thrills and also their novelty value, before cost reduction makes them mainstream everyday technology.

The decades after will see ever closer links between our nervous systems and the IT world until we finally get full brain links that would even allow rides to replicate the Matrix.

Meanwhile, accelerating progress in AI and robotics will ensure that virtual and robotic creatures and machines will also play increasing roles in future theme parks. Theme parks today are exciting, and things can only get better.

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ABOUT DR IAN PEARSON

Dr Ian Pearson is a full time futurologist, tracking and predicting developments across a wide range of technology, business, society, politics and the environment. A Doctor of Science, Dr Pearson has worked in numerous branches of engineering, from aeronautics to cybernetics, sustainable transport to electronic cosmetics.