
Project A.R.i.

Welcome to the project...

By now, you've probably heard of the recent breakthroughs in the field of AI. It seems like there's reports of new possibilities every day, and also new fears. Is artificial intelligence becoming *too* smart, possibly leading us down a path of destruction?

Closely examine any of these "breakthroughs" and they probably fall short of your expectations. But what if an AI was created that was exactly what it seemed to be: truly Intelligent, and truly alive. And what if some of those fears around AI were just as real?

More than any one single ride, Project ARi is a set of interlinked, story-driven interactive experiences culminating in a highly interactive simulator. With themed environments, games, and rides, it offers an immersive experience unlike anything you've seen before.

Guests to Project ARi will take on the role of test subjects, having their limits tested for unknown ends. They will be put through four "tests" during their stay: EXIT, FLOR, TOWR, and FLYT, respectively. Each one is a different type of classic themed attraction such as walk throughs or simulator rides, but they all are designed to be unique, visceral experiences that utilize new and old tech in novel ways.

Proceed to Onboaring >

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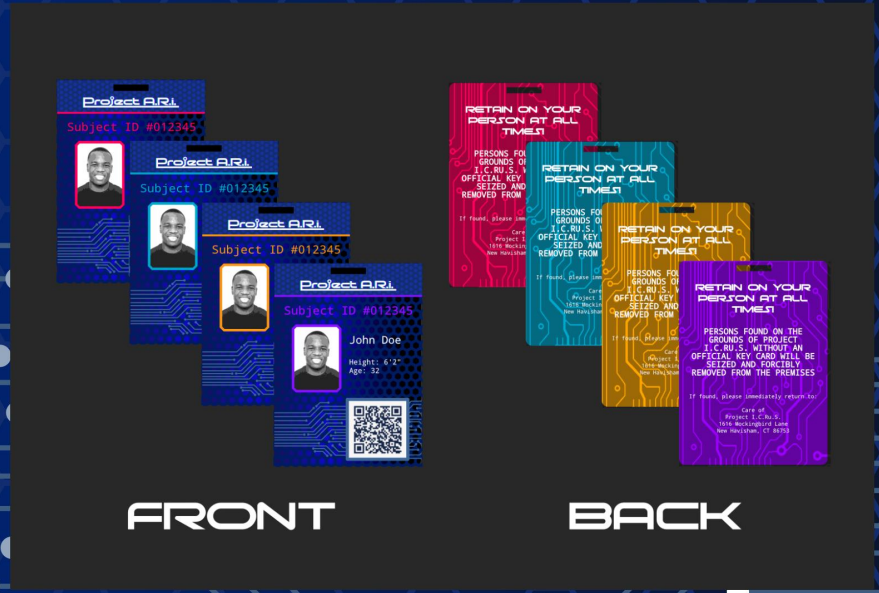
Smile for the camera...

Upon their entry, guests will fill out a short survey, be photographed, and given a unique ID card with their name and photo, theirs to keep as souvenirs or to be used again for future visits.

This ID card will be their ticket to attractions, track their progress throughout their stay, log their pass/fail rate and their individual scores. Guests will also have the option at this time to download the Project ARi app on their phone, allowing them to easily check their progress log or see where they should head next.

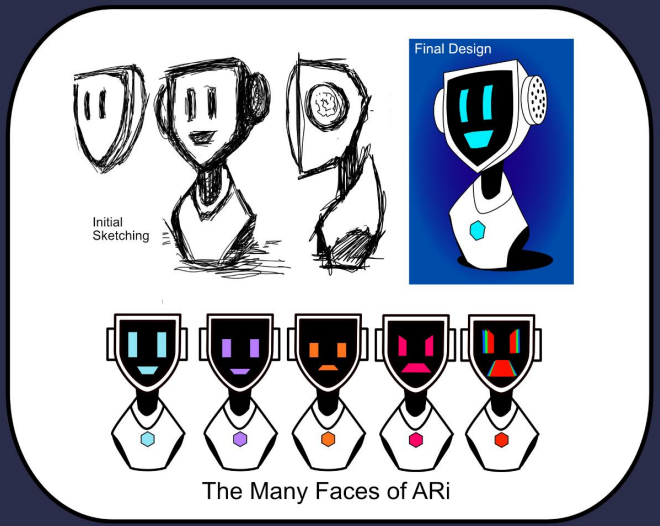


Meet your host

Now fully checked in as test subjects, guests will be introduced to ARi, an acronym for “Autonomous Research Intelligence”. Their first sight of him will be in the form of an animatronic figure, a cross between a computer monitor and a humanoid form. He will address them directly in an uncanny computer-generated voice, informing them he is the advanced AI responsible for developing this facility.

His distinct voice and idiosyncratic manner will follow guests everywhere they go, being used in each game to announce rules, scores, time, etc. This will keep ARi present throughout guests’ activities, and allow guests to get to know him.

This brings us to one of the main features of Project ARi, our host's competitive and immature manner. Since we will track guests performance, we can use this data to build a simple profile of each guest's performance and use some real AI to alter ARi's manner with them. If they're poor performers, he will put on a boastful and gloating tone, giving them "encouragement" with thinly veiled put downs. For guests who succeed frequently, he will take on a spiteful and occasionally angry tone. This change will be gradual, evolving over guests' stay as they play more and do better or worse.



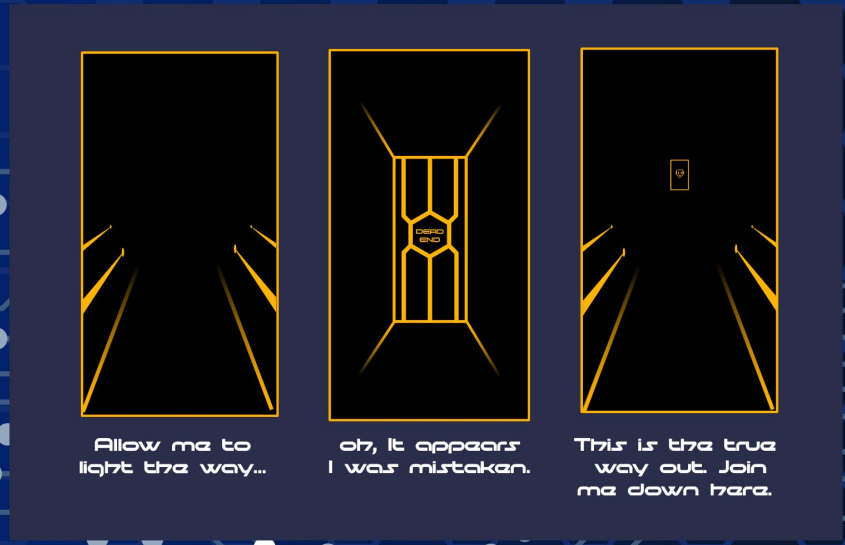
The Many Faces of ARi

And the games begin

The first experience guests encounter will be EXIT: a maze shrouded in complete darkness. What better way to begin an experiment?

In small groups of 1-2, guests will make their way through the darkness with touches of lighting for them to navigate. Along the way, guests' movements will trigger ARi to chime in (via pressure plates in the floor) with various comments that may be helpful or unsettling. He may lead you to a dead end, or to one of several exits. Will you trust ARi 's advice, or go your own way?

Inspired by fun houses and other unsettling walk-through attractions of yore, EXIT is a surreal experience aimed at putting guests on their toes while showing them this isn't any old arcade. This might also give them some healthy suspicion towards ARi, foreshadowing the manipulation guests will encounter later on.



I hope you're warmed up

The next game will involve a lit tile floor based off of similar attractions seen popping up around the world. They're a hit with patrons, and the look and concept is a perfect fit for ARi.

Guests in groups of 4 will be led by a team member to their own game room, where they will enter and stand one in each corner. They will play through three rounds, each with its own task for the guests to complete within the allotted time.

They might need to step on every white tile to turn it blue, avoid red "obstacle" tiles, or complete whatever task ARi decides is best. Can you all work together to complete his challenges and show him you're a force to be reckoned with?

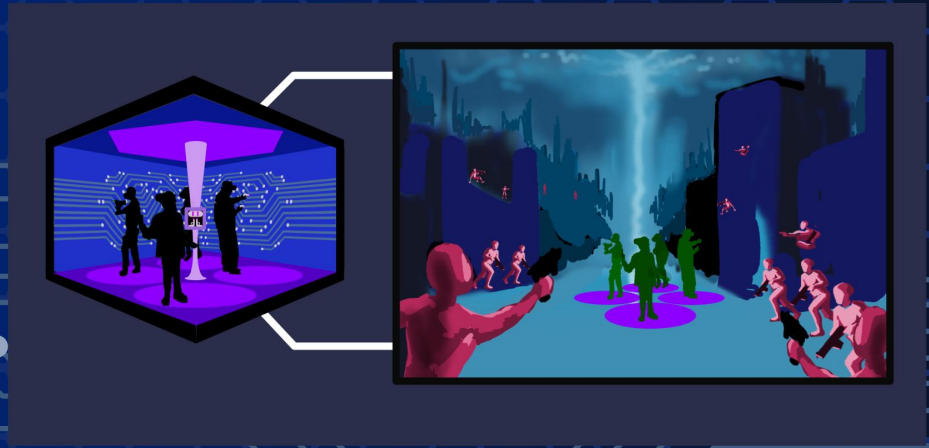
Time to go virtual...

The next experience will be TOWR, an AR based shooting game in which 4 guests will work together to battle virtual foes in a sci-fi inspired tower defense game.

Guests will be lead by a team member to their own game room where they will find a tower in the center of the room containing four sets of wireless AR headsets and hand controllers. Guests will check in with their ID card at the tower, grab their headset and controllers, and take their spot in one of four circles on the floor.

Once the game begins, players see as the room they're standing in dissolves into an expansive but mysterious digital world. ARi will task them with defending a glowing tower from red, faceless marauders intent on destroying it. Their controllers will be morphed into futuristic blasters that will vaporize their foes. There will be many foes of varying size and might, which might require players to work together to take them out. Will you be up for this strange challenge?

Play will go for up to 10 minutes if players are able to defend their tower through three waves of ever increasing difficulty. If you make it to the end, you might just learn hints at what this world is and why ARi has created it. If the tower sustains too much damage, it will crumble and lose its power, ejecting players from the game and bringing them back to reality.



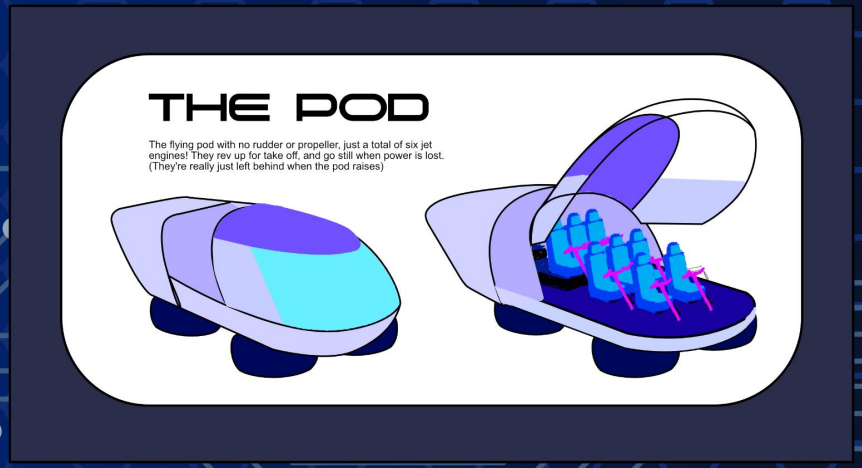
Learning to Fly

In our main attraction, FLYT, guests will take to the skies piloting their own flying pod in a battle against their AI foe.

Whether as a queue show or in another fashion, the ride story will be set up for guests as so: After three tests from ARi, their volunteering is complete. As a thank you for volunteering, they will be treated to a peaceful flight among the clouds in a prototype vehicle piloted by ARi himself. If all goes according to plan, these will eventually replace all cars and public transport for a “safer and friendlier traveling tomorrow.”

Should an emergency arise and ARi is made inoperable, there is still a backup manual flight system that will deploy in case of emergencies. Videos and voice overs in the queue will instruct them on how they will use this emergency system. It will explain the system will automatically deploy steering wheels to the front most passengers. One is for navigating left and right, while the other is for steering the craft up or down in space. They will be responsible for using these to bring the craft back to the research center for a safe landing.

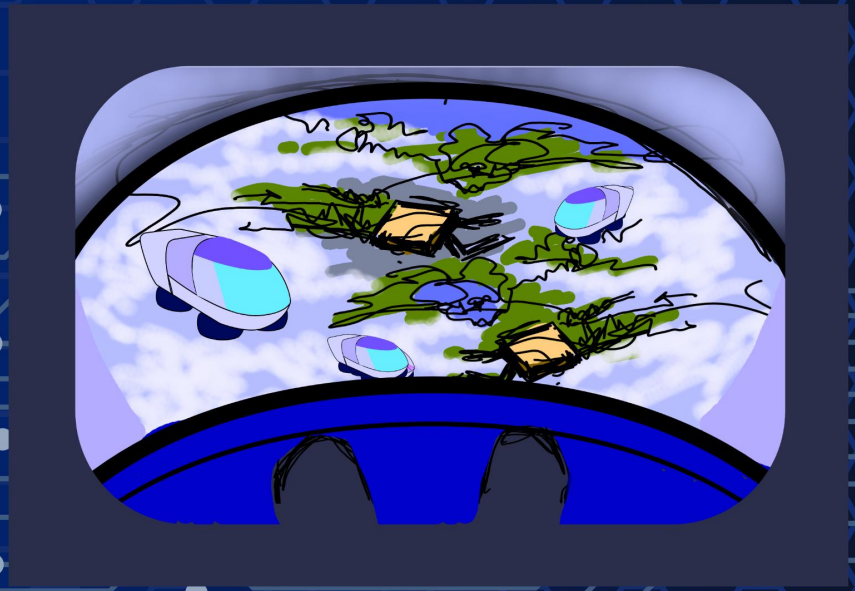
Large touch screens along the left and right sides will allow those guests to act as “gunners”, directing a launcher to deflect obstacles or other equally dangerous objects that will swing the craft wildly side to side. Middle guests will have small screens allowing them to prevent ARi from "hacking" into their pod system again and sending them into a downward spiral.



It's a long way down...

To begin the ride, guests will enter their pod and it will depart after they are seated and the large front hatch has closed to ensure their safety. After they launch, ARi will make sure they are enjoying their flight, before informing them “there is one last test for you to survive.” Another pod will rise up in front of them before ramming their pod, sending them spinning and flying through the air as red lights and alarms sound off. As they fly towards the ground, their safety hatch bobbing around and the ground coming at them, the safety system will deploy. the pod will right itself and be ready for piloting. From this point on they will either steer around obstacles, be shooting them down from gunner positions, or prevent ARi's hacking attempts, all while being chased through the sky by ARi and his hijacked pod.

The ride will also feature story branching, with guests getting one of two endings. They can defeat the AI and win, getting to see ARi's hacked pod dramatically crash to the earth below while they triumphantly arrive back at the research center safe and sound. Or they can lose, missing their chance to defeat him. If this is the case, he will take control of their pod once again and gloat about his dominance over them before leaving them to crash down through the research center in a dramatic, thrilling drop.

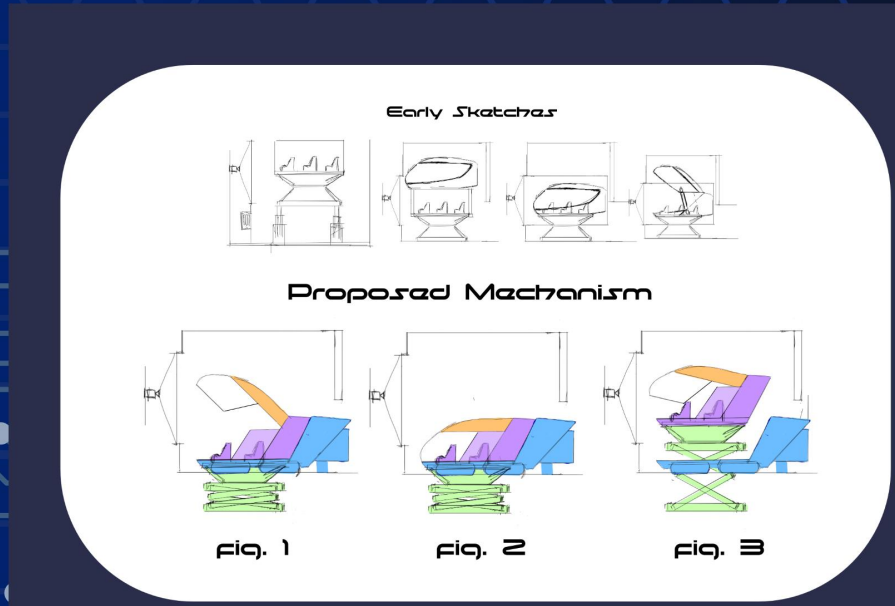


How it works

The pod itself will feature an interactive flight simulator, complete with real time rendered CG video. Guests will also be seated in a motion-simulator, which will combine with immersive visuals and physical effects to complete the illusion of flight. After guests have entered the pod, it will "depart" via a lift that will raise the simulator car off the ground and away from its false shell. A curved projection screen will be on the wall that will fill the pod's field of vision, which is limited by deliberately placed panels.

Similar to other game engine-based simulator rides, it will feature physical controls for two guests placed in the front. They will have to work together to traverse a digital, three-dimensional path leading them back to the research center. Interactive touch screens will allow the other guests to fulfill their roles.

This may sound like other "flight simulator" rides that have been built in recent years, but there's one obvious feature these lack that guests have been asking for: Interactive shooting. In Project ARi's pod, tablets will be placed on either side of the pod for guests to interact with. Using the touch screen to direct the line of fire, guests will be shooting down obstacles SAM will be throwing at them as well as shooting at the hijacked pod itself before it crashes into their own, causing damage.



How it works, cont'd

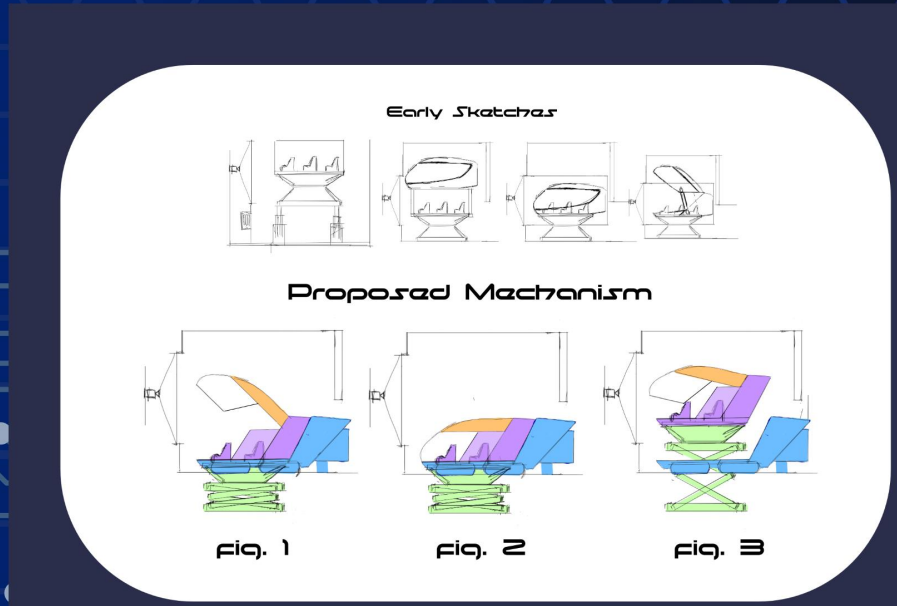
Another feature many simulators lack are any tactile effects that really jump off the projected screen. To that end, I wanted this pod to feature an additional motorized effect. A few times over the course of the ride, I wanted guests to experience the effect of their pod briefly losing all power and falling from the sky. I initially envisioned guests loading from underneath the vehicle, then leveraging this movement for a vertical fall during the flight. As it was developed and researched, it seemed too impractical to integrate extreme motion such as a drop.

I instead settled for fully faking a drop, which something like a front lifting hatch seemed perfect for. Simulator vehicles often have a portion that lifts for loading, so it seemed like a natural integration.

To emphasize the fall, this front safety hatch will become "unlocked", lifting and opening (via it's hydrolic actuators) to simulate movements it would make during a freefall. It will be placed just far enough away from guests to prevent them from having hands and feet possibly caught in the hatch and injured.

The additional exposure will also allow for additional wind, water, and fog effects to be used directly on guests, disguising the flat screen while also making them feel exposed to the elements and enhancing their immersion.

All these effects will combine to make this the most advanced and immersive simulator to date.



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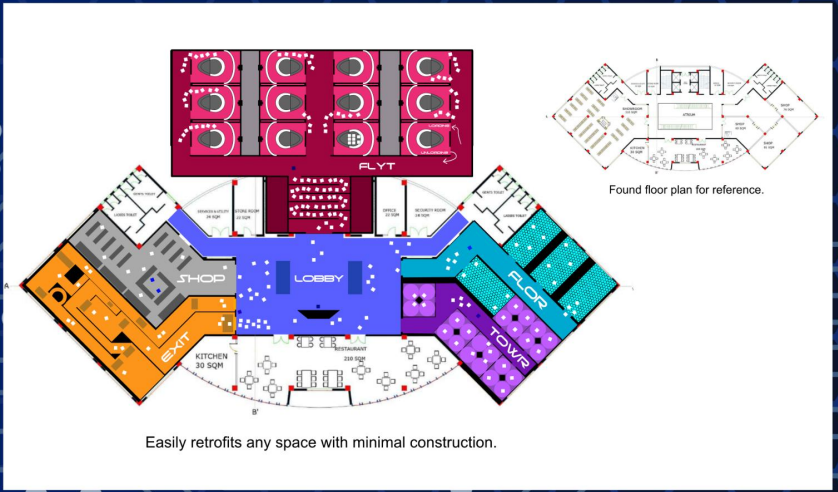
Operation Feasability

Project ARi has been developed to be easily implemented in many varied pre-existing locations with minimal staff. Theming has been developed to utilize simple room setups with an emphasis on utilizing lighting, keeping construction needs to a minimum. This minimizes construction needs and power usage, while keeping facilities cleaning quick and simple. And despite offering high throughput, each game area would rarely require more than two employees to aid guests and maintain the facilities. With this in mind, Project ARi could easily operate with 6-10 employees while serving hundreds a day.

to offset additional environmental concerns, solar panels will be installed on the facility's roof these will supplement power usage from outside sources.



Found floor plan for reference.

Easily retrofits any space with minimal construction.

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We hope to see you soon...

Project ARi is the result of many months of work by my one man team. As an artist and creative, it has been an invaluable and fulfilling process developing this LBE attraction and its entire world. I hope you've enjoyed meeting ARi and seeing his world as much as I've enjoyed creating it. Thank you to everyone at Storyland Studios for organizing this competition, and thank you to everyone that has read through this far. May you all have a great life!

-Matt McGarr

Final Design