

An Australian Is Making The World's First Virtual Reality Waterslide



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Queensland's Malcolm Burt is currently doing his PhD in working out exactly what is needed to create the ultimate virtual reality theme park ride.

Oh, and he's also been approached by a German waterslide company to create the world's first VR waterslide. No biggie.

"Certain design elements are still being ironed out but the VR waterslide concept is in testing and there is nothing else like it in the world," said Burt, who completed his Research Masters on why rollercoasters exist and created the documentary, [Signature Attraction](#).

It was after watching this film that Wiegand-Maelzer's Head Engineer Frank Heimes made contact with Burt.

"Malcolm has an unusual combination of disciplines, including theme park research and media production, which make him ideal to contribute to this ride experience." said Heimes.

"Essentially, it's a waterslide, but when you ride, you're wearing virtual reality goggles which totally intensifies many elements of the experience," Burt explains. "Using research into VR immersion, and how to trick the brain into believing it is danger, every twist, turn and launch is magnified, and it definitely makes for more of an adrenalin kick."

"By adding practical effects to the mix, the ride can also make you feel as though you are doing things like riding a lava flow and dodging volcanic eruptions. Volcanos are very hot right now in the world of theme park rides," Burt says.

The slide doesn't have a name yet but the team are working on ideas that tie in with the story the ride tells. It's expected to open to the public at the [Galaxy Water Park](#) in Erding, Bavaria later this year.

Burt's work on the new waterslide aligns with his research into virtual reality which is gaining him international acclaim.

"Theme parks are always looking to create new experiences and virtual reality is the holy grail at the moment," said Burt, who recently gave a TEDx talk in Salinas, California called *What's Wrong With Reality?* - where he discussed society's endless need for amusement and distraction—in theme parks, virtual reality, and even social media.

As well as his work with Wiegand-Maelzer, he scored legendary amusement park company Six Flags as an industry partner for his PhD, so he can collect data from their attractions - including VR rollercoasters and a 126 metre VR drop ride.