Verizon is buying all the tech from augmented reality startup Jaunt XR



Verizon Communications has acquired all software and technology as well as “certain other assets,” from augmented reality company Jaunt XR. Jaunt, formerly a virtual reality startup, announced the news today. Notably, it didn’t say that Verizon was actually acquiring Jaunt, and the company didn’t confirm whether it will keep operating separately.

Jaunt was founded in 2013 with the purpose of creating VR video. It released a 360-degree camera and worked on some of the best-known early VR video productions, but in late 2018, it shifted focus to augmented reality.

The press release describes Jaunt’s specialty as “the scalable creation and distribution of volumetric video of humans,” which may hint at why Verizon is interested. The company’s last blog post, from November 2018, showed off a new system called AR Cast, which live-streamed hologram-like 3D video of football fans over a 5G network.

Jaunt spokesperson Lori Lefevre Wells confirmed that “all” Jaunt software and technology is being sold to Verizon, although she didn’t specify whether that includes its patent portfolio. The release says that “Jaunt will be assisting Verizon with the transition of select portions of the software and technology for a brief period of time,” but she declined to confirm whether Jaunt will still exist after that. “We can’t comment on whether the company will continue,” she said.

Verizon has been producing AR and VR content for a while. In 2016, it acquired a different VR video company called RYOT. (RYOT was technically acquired by AOL — after AOL had been acquired by Verizon but before Verizon had merged AOL with Yahoo to form Oath then rebranded it as Verizon Media. Corporate consolidation is confusing.) RYOT has since helped create an system. Last year, Verizon the RYOT Innovation Studio, which aims to build immersive entertainment that shows off Verizon’s faster 5G network speeds. It’s easy to see where Jaunt’s tech fits in, but it’s harder to see a future for Jaunt itself.

https://www.theverge.com/2019/9/30/20891244/verizon-jaunt-xr-ar-vr-volumetric-video-capture-acquisition