

Augmented Reality Offers Enhanced Brand Interaction

More businesses are embracing 3D and augmented reality (AR) technology for advertising and mobile media, both in the U.S. and abroad. AR is the overlay of digital information on a live video stream, and is just emerging as a marketing tool for businesses, explained Matthew Szymczyk, CEO of Zugara, an AR software development firm whose clients include Nestle and Muscle Milk. AR allows the user to take a real-world experience, digitally enhance it, and experience it online, reported *Miami Herald* (June 12, 2011). There are three basic types of AR: web-based, mobile and kiosk-based. Web-based AR uses a consumer's PC or webcam to deliver the AR experience using a marker, image or motion capture. Mobile AR uses a mobile phone to deliver enhanced digital information about the user's surroundings. Kiosk-based AR will have a consumer hold up a product at an in-store kiosk.

In 2010, Muscle Milk used augmented reality in a marketing campaign with Shaquille O'Neal in the U.S. When consumers purchased certain bottles of Muscle Milk imprinted with a code or "marker" and held it up to a webcam, a marketing message began on the screen. Meanwhile, TVs, movie theaters and more recently digital billboards in European airports and bus stops are exposing users to three-dimensional content, reported *BBC News* (May 26, 2011). Nestle is using this technology with one of its cereal brand Chocapic; using a box of the cereal and a webcam, the consumer brings up the provided web address. While holding the box in front of the computer, it transforms into an augmented reality game console. As the user tilts the box, the technology detects movements in real time and they can play a game on the screen. "This campaign, which involved more than two million boxes in France, increased the market share of Nestle France by 1.6%," claimed Mehdi Tayoubi, Dassault Systemes' interactive strategy director. Another similar Nestle project is taking place in 53 countries with 26 million cereal boxes.