

# This technology is the future of virtual reality

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It really only takes a few minutes of conversation with me to realize that I am a *huge* nerd. I'm the woman that goes out with friends and says things like, "did you read about that researcher that 3D-printed a human skull?" or "[Did you see the tweet that Russian diplomat sent about the ISS \[1\]?](#)" My friends and family, good people that they are, are generally pretty happy to indulge me. But the nerd crown isn't a new one, it comes with a childhood of Star Trek, reading everything I could get my hands on, and patient, patient parents that spent a lot of time at museums. (Thanks Mom and Dad!)

The one thing on Star Trek that always really held my attention was the Holodeck. For those of you who aren't familiar, it was a level on the ship where you could turn the room into anything you wanted from a home village to a rainforest to a specific restaurant. It could be used to act out fantasy adventures or work on risky problems without actually accidentally killing yourself. For a kid with a super active imagination, the possibilities seemed endless. The really exciting thing is that with the advancements that have been made in virtual reality, it's not that futuristic of an idea anymore. You might have to piece together a few different technologies, but at the end of the day, you've built a pretty good holodeck.

The [Infinadeck \[2\]](#), an omni-directional treadmill, moves in a way that allows users to walk/run/skip/scamper/jog in any direction for any distance. You can also change the elevation or decline, so it feels like the terrain is changing. So, this is one part of the equation because it means you don't have to worry about running into anything or breaking a leg. The company is pushing military and virtual reality applications. But, if you combine this with a device like OculusRift? Magic. Obviously it's not as technically sophisticated as a sci-fi space ship, but you can actually transport yourself to any time or place. This is limited only by your imagination (and the virtual reality worlds available.) The combination of the two means that if you wanted to explore the Titanic (pre or post sinking), you would actually feel like you were walking along the ship (or bottom of the ocean.) This is only skimming the surface of what this technology could actually turn into, so it's pretty amazing to consider what it could be in five or ten years. The idea becomes particularly

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intriguing when you consider the increasing popularity of holograms in pop culture. We aren't *that* far away from an environment that will act as a Holodeck.

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[2] <http://www.infinadeck.com/>