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VERIZON FUNDS 11 PROTOTYPING PROJECTS IN VIRTUAL & AUGMENTED REALITY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO NYC UNIVERSITY TEAMS

The Verizon Connected Futures Prototyping and Talent Development program, in partnership with NYC Media Lab, supports development of new media and technology projects from universities across New York City, linking students and faculty with industry experts.

NEW YORK, New York—January 24th, 2018—In partnership with NYC Media Lab, Verizon has awarded 11 New York City university teams for the creation of new prototypes, with a specific investment in virtual and augmented reality (AR/VR) and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies. 11 projects by students from Columbia University, New York University, Pratt Institute, The School of Visual Arts, and The New School will participate in the program. Teams will work specifically with leadership within Verizon Envrmnt, which builds immersive experiences for leading companies in advertising, digital media, professional sports and retail.

Verizon launched the Connected Futures Prototyping and Talent Development program, now in its third year, to invest in cutting-edge prototyping. It is structured to form a pipeline between NYC universities and Verizon as the company seeks out the next generation of talent. NYC Media Lab, a public-private consortium of NYC-universities and civic partners, is key to forging these relationships. The program and its call for applications was announced in September 2017 at NYC Media Lab's annual Summit, which hosted stakeholders from across the Lab's consortium.

The program also works to drive interest towards the Verizon Open Innovation Concept Studio, a 6-month program that engages creative technologists to tackle business challenges impacting the media and technology industry. To date, 16 talented engineers and designers have been hired by Verizon through its partnership with NYC Media Lab.

Representatives from Verizon and NYC Media Lab visited campuses across the City in an 8-week recruitment process that culminated in a competitive applicant pool. Teams were chosen based on their vision for prototyping within one of Verizon's chosen areas of inquiry: AR design and marked tracking; social VR/AR; and the intersection of AR and AI. What design concepts can be used to help AR reach broad penetration and user adoption? How can we empower multi-person communication in VR/AR experiences? And how can we imagine use cases of voice assistants or chatbots in VR/AR environments? These questions will inform the prototyping process, to proceed through March 2017.

"One main goal is to build strong bridges between external innovation and Verizon," said Christian Guirnalda, Director of Verizon Open Innovation. "The Connected Futures program has proven to be a fantastic way to collaborate with students who may likely be the next

entrepreneurs within the company. For us, AR is an important topic as new use cases will be further unlocked as we deploy 5G and the Intelligent Edge Network. We're looking forward to building great experiences with these teams at our 5G Incubator and Lab this spring!"

"We make magic when we pair leading students with outstanding mentors in the Envrmnt team at our AR/VR lab," said Christian Egeler, Director of XR Product Development for Envrmnt, Verizon's platform for Extended Reality solutions. "We discover the next generation of talent when we engage them in leading edge projects in real time, building the technologies of tomorrow."

"NYC Media Lab is grateful for the opportunity to connect Verizon with technically and creatively talented faculty and students across NYC's universities" said Justin Hendrix, Executive Director of NYC Media Lab. "We are thrilled to continue to advance prototyping in virtual and augmented reality and artificial intelligence. These themes continue to be key areas of focus for NYC Media Lab, especially with the development of the first publicly funded VR/AR Center, in which the Lab is developing in conjunction with NYU Tandon School of Engineering."

Additional support for this challenge includes matching funds from The New York State Center for Advanced Technology in Telecommunications and Distributed Information Systems (CATT) at the NYU Tandon School of Engineering.

Teams will present their prototypes in a final Demo Day on March 23rd, 2018. To RSVP to the Demo Day, contact Alexis Avedisian, NYC Media Lab Communications Manager (alexis@nycmedialab.org). Learn about the projects below.

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AR Design and Marked Tracking:

fixAR
Columbia University
Nelson Lin, Monica Chan
An AR tool that can be used to debug problems with hardware. Starting with IT, it can be used to fix connectivity and hardware issues.

CitytravelAR
NYU Tandon School of Engineering
Vhalerie Lee, Baris Siniksaran, Subigya Basnet
A marker-based mobile AR application that makes public transit easy by providing information on delays, transfers and optimal routes.

Runway in Store
NYU ITP
Luqian Chen, Jingfei Lin
An AR mobile app for fashion stores. It uses the wall of the store as a big marker and turns it into a fashion runway stage.

Social VR/AR

ARSL
NYU Tandon School of Engineering
Zhongheng Li, Jacky Chen, Mingfei Huang
An instant sign language translator app that uses computer vision and AR to empower both the sign language users and nonusers for more collaborations.

Dreamine
Parsons School of Design
Fanyun Peng, Shuang Cao, Xiao Ying
An AR clay set, including modeling clay and an AR application which can bring the clay models to life.

Hubble
School of Visual Arts
Amy Ashida, Christine Lawton, Amsha Kalra
Using computer vision, AR Markers, and projection, Hubble makes abstract concepts more tangible for elementary students in the classroom.

JamMR
NYU Game Center
Corey Bertelsen, Maria Mishurenko
A multi-user mixed reality experience that empowers non-musicians to share in a creative, music-making experience.

LiftAR
Parsons School of Design
La Tricia, Aaron Lee, Karla Polo
An AR experience for parents and students to engage together on educational milestones from the common core system.

VR/AR and AI

CurAItor
Parsons School of Design
Vivian Lee, Hannah Ekman, Aim Duangratana, Tong Zhang

CurAltor is an AI/AR tool that tracks user behavior to help museum curators create a better content discovery experience for visitors.

Glimpse
NYU ITP
Roi Lev, Anastasis Germanidis
Glimpse uses AR and machine learning technologies to create spatial narratives in public spaces, allowing visitors to meet people from the past.

Vrbo
NYU Tandon School of Engineering, Parsons School of Design, Columbia
Olivia Cabello, Yuka Fukuoka, Ray Luo, Chanel Luu Hai, Jullia Suhyoung Lim
University and School of Visual Arts A smart and adaptable VR learning experience that serves as a space for people with communication disorders to practice real-life scenarios.

VR Search
Pratt Institute and Columbia University
Ilya Yavnoshan, Ruyun Xiao, Phillip McFarlane, Jaehyun Kim
Using AI and VR to reverse search as a way of aggregating and visualizing content.

About NYC Media Lab
NYC Media Lab connects digital media and technology companies with New York City's universities to drive innovation, entrepreneurship and talent development. A public-private partnership launched by the New York City Economic Development Corporation, NYC Media Lab funds seed projects that foster collaboration across a range of disciplines and runs The Combine, an early stage accelerator for emerging media and technology startups.

About Verizon
Verizon Communications Inc. (NYSE, Nasdaq: VZ), headquartered in New York City, generated $126 billion in 2017 revenues. The company operates America's most reliable wireless network and the nation's premier all-fiber network, and delivers integrated solutions to businesses worldwide. Its Oath subsidiary reaches about one billion people around the world with a dynamic house of media and technology brands.

About Envrmnt by Verizon
Envrmnt is a comprehensive provider of enterprise-class, business-to-business (B2B) and B2B-to-consumer (B2B2C) extended reality (XR) solutions (AR, VR, and 360 video). They offer self-service tools which allow customers to easily configure and deploy their own immersive content, as well as professional services for the creation of custom experiences, all via their streaming platform.