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Google and Mattel partner to bring back the View-Master as a VR headset / Cardboard for kids

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Source USA Today and View-Master
Feb 13, 2015, 7:51 AM CST
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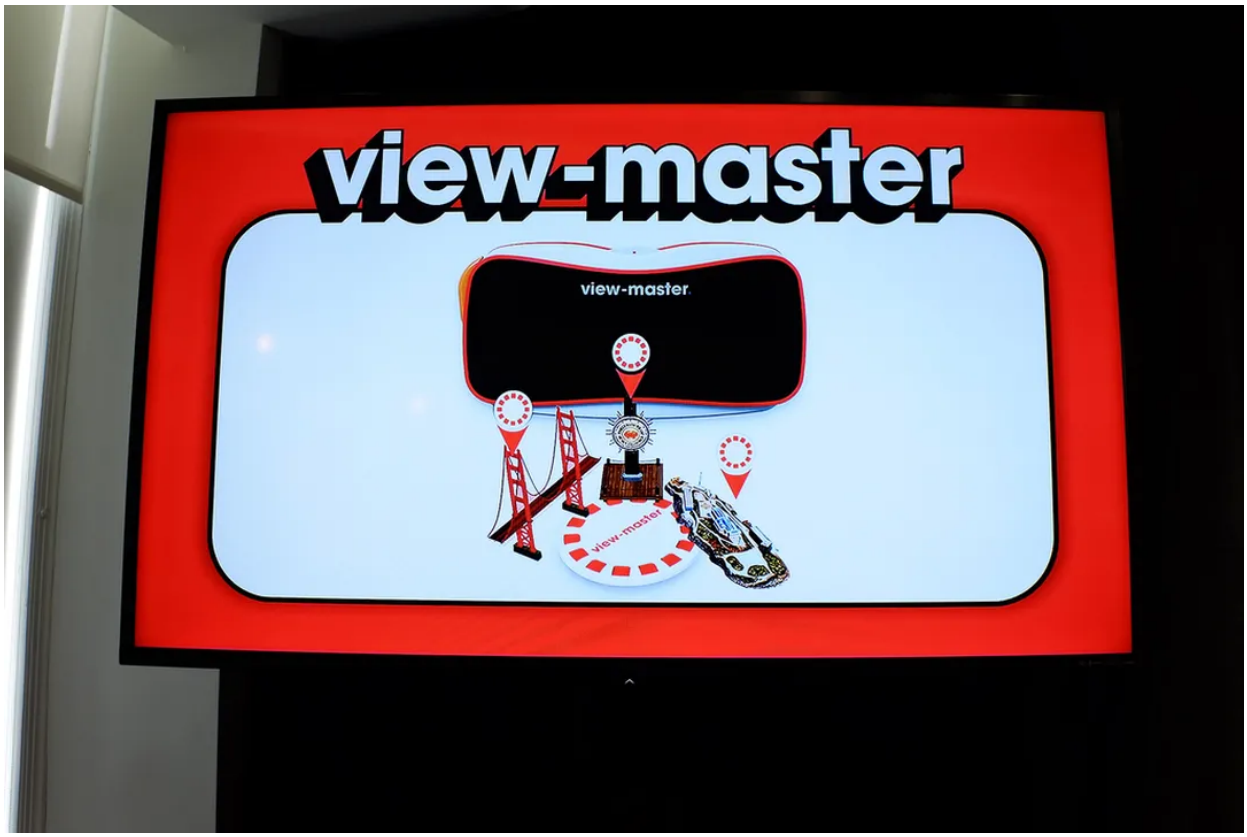
The retro-styled View-Master is back — and this time it's been fused with virtual reality. View-Master maker Mattel has announced that it's partnered with Google to create a new version of the device that utilizes the company's Cardboard VR tech.

The original View-Master utilized a small, colorful reel, which users placed in the device to see images with a 3D effect. For the VR version, you'll need a smartphone running a custom Mattel app to recreate the effect (the device will also work with any other Cardboard-compatible app for more traditional VR experiences). The reels will still exist, however, and will be sold separately to provide different experiences, like giving you a view of Alcatraz or other iconic locations like a space shuttle. Mattel calls these scenarios "360 degree photospheres." According to *USA Today*, the device primarily uses augmented reality and simple animations to create an immersive experience.

Mattel might also be dipping into its huge library of classic View-Master reels, which include licensed content like *Star Wars*, for the new device. "We're creatively trying to figure out ways to use the old imagery in ways that enhance the new experience," Mattel senior vice president Doug Wadleigh told *USA Today*. Google, meanwhile, sees the new device as a way to bring VR to a younger audience, with Google Cardboard product director Mike Jazayeri explaining that the View-Master is a way "to make immersive virtual reality experiences as accessible as possible for everyone."

The new device isn't expected to ship until the fall. The unit will retail for $29.99, while additional reels will come in packs of four for $14.99.



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