

VirtySens: the immersive relaxation and well-being capsule for vulnerable people



Xavier Melin, the father of Lilou, who was six years old at the time and had dropped out of school, noticed that his autistic daughter was calmed when she used a virtual reality headset. He had the intuition that he could help his daughter, and many other vulnerable people, if he could develop an immersive, multi-sensory and easy-to-use device.

After 6 years of R&D and prototyping, his project became a reality. The VirtySens capsule is operational and brings well-being and relaxation to more than 2.500 users. Its 5 boxes diffuse in 360° hot and cold winds and smells in a perfectly synchronized way with the images and sounds diffused by the connected virtual reality headset. The immersion is such that memories come back for some, others travel or discover distant lands and still others find themselves relaxed by the atmosphere thus created.

The residents of nursing homes ask for more and start to speak and sing again. In children's homes and institutions for the disabled, the experiences help them to get away from their daily lives and experience intense and soothing sensations. One nursing home director spoke of a "magical solution that exceeds expectations", while other caregivers noted a decrease in the use of psychotropic drugs or anxiolytics following the use of the VirtySens device. Since June 2021, a VirtySens device has also been installed in a palliative care department at the Lille University Hospital, following tests that demonstrated a significant effect on pain perception thanks to multi-sensory experiences.

Developed in partnership with a sophrologist-psychologist and a psychomotricist, the experiences are varied and adapted to the users... as well as to the "nursing" staff who also use the VirtySens device to relax.

Accompanied and advised by the Euratechnologies teams (Lille, then Saint-Quentin) at first, then by those of Eurasanté Lille since June 2020, the 3 co-founders of VirtySens have set up their first workshop in Somain, in the suburbs of Douai (north of France). They are proud to deploy an innovative "Made in Hauts-de-France" system, which contributes to the revitalization of this area and relies on local suppliers.

Since June 2020, about thirty devices have been manufactured and installed in France and Belgium. VirtySens' ambition is to have more than 50 installed by the end of 2021 and to increase its commercial development to exceed 500 devices in service before the end of 2024... and to hire 25 people, most of them in Somain.

VirtySens was awarded the "Healthcare" category prize and the Grand Prize at the 2021 edition of Laval Virtual.

👉 Watch a report from France5: <https://bit.ly/virty> , or from BFM TV: https://bit.ly/Pal_care or the speech of the President of the Laval Virtual jury (Professor Miriam Reiner): https://bit.ly/vs_juryLV

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