The Passion For Motion Simulation Rides Essay, Research Paper

The Passion for Motion Simulation Rides

Motion Simulation Rides are the closest types of rides that takes you to the real thing … but not quite; providing more enjoyment to people than some rollercoasters. Motion Simulation Rides have been fascinating people from the beginning, from ones that train you to fly an aviation device (a.k.a. : for air freighters or space shuttles) to ones that take you to your imagination and beyond. Rollercoasters have been doing the same thing … just earlier in time because motion simulation had yet to be invented. However, aside from my own experience from testing ride simulators and rollercoasters, I have found ride simulators to provide a more safer environment and to be more thrilling. Passionate riders like myself, prefer these types of rides to give them the thrills of rollercoasters, and at the same time never leave the ground.

For centuries, people have been seeking thrills. As science and technology have increased, so has the state-of-the-art of thrill seeking. Rollercoasters debuted around the mid 1750’s when a Russian showman constructed wood-framed ice slides for sledding in St. Petersburg. This primitive ride, later became the inspiration for the creation and the construction of the rollercoaster (Thrill Ride – The Science Of Fun). In 1804, a Frenchman who was inspired by the wooden ice-slides decided to take them to the next level. He decided to build a large wooden hill with tracks and designed a vehicle with wheels to roll down the incline. He named it “The Russian Mountain.” In fact, across Europe, rollercoasters are known as Russian Mountains to this day. In 1884, LaMarcus A. Thompson built the first rollercoaster in the United States at Coney Island. Since then, rollercoasters have been popping up all over the U.S.. And they have transformed from simple mild rides with simple tracks to high – tech thrill machines.

Motion Simulators on the other hand, were introduced to the public differently from rollercoasters. They first started out as instruments for NASA training astronauts for space travel. Motion simulators were also used by commercial companies, airliners, and the military to train people to obtain a pilot license. After this technology was obtained by the public, filmmakers and thrill ride makers decided to combine the simulated thrills of flight simulators with the pure excitement of rollercoasters and the art of moviemaking in order to create ride films and ride simulators (The Tech). Basically, we wanted a new type of illusion. One that could take riders to any place, time, or dream without actually leaving the spot in which the riders started from. So, with a rollercoaster, motion simulator, and the medium of film, thrill ride makers got the ride film. The ride film is specially designed to play in sync with the simulator movement in order to create the illusion of going somewhere, when in reality, you haven’t even left the ground. With the knowledge of a simulator and the film in hand, all that was left to complete the motion simulation ride were the parts that generated it’s movement in desired directions. Since it is a simulator, it has to be able to run either on Hydraulics or Actuators (HyperTek). Actuators, as defined from “HyperTek”, are legs, also known as jacks which provide motion in 4 main different sides. Thy are the front, the back, and the left and right sides that the actuators tilt, rock, rattle, and rolls, you on.

There are several versions of ride simulators. Unlike a theatre, in which the audience members remain motionless on a stationary platform, the motion simulator ride actually is designed to rock, rattle, roll, lift, tilt, and drop in complete sync with the action taking place on screen. One major attraction that fits this description is the “Star Tours” ride from “Disneyland.” (www.Disney.com) “Star Tours” will take you to the far regions of space aboard the “StarSpeeder 3000” (the simulator) for the battle against the “Death Star.” Another thrilling ride simulator is the “Back to The Future” ride at “Universal Studios, Hollywood California” (www.universalstudios.com). Instead of taking you to the outer regions of space, this ride takes you on a journey through time from the future to the past and then back to the present. There is another difference between these two simulators: the film screen. Both of them use the “IMAX” film format : 15-perforation, 70 mm, which gives new meaning to the word “Big Wide Screen.” In “Star Tours”, the screen is mounted onto the simulator while in “Back To The Future”, the screen is not. This screen is stretched around in a sphere dome shape to cover eight simulators per room.

Ride simulators and rollercoasters are running neck to neck in the entertainment field. Rollercoasters progressed from the “Russian Mountain” to “The Boomerang” at a “Six Flags Theme Park.” Ride Simulators have come a long way from NASA’s training tools to major theme park attractions. NASA still uses motion simulation to train astronauts for space as so do commercial corporations for their own purposes. Today, there are about 300 rollercoasters and about 10 major motion simulation rides in existence in the U.S., each offering its own creation of a one-of-a-kind thrill ride made by science but created for fun. Rollercoaster designers are limited by what is physically possible, however, ride film moviemakers have discovered that the only limitation is their own imagination.

Thrill Ride. “Thrill Ride – The Science Of Fun.” 2001.

www.theatres.sre.sony.com/imax/thrillride/index.html.

The Tech. 2001.

www.thetech.org/ops/imax/thrill\_ride/

HyperTek. “ Look’s at Simulator Rides.” 30 March 1998

http://exn.ca/stories/1998/04/02/52.asp.

IMAX home page. 2001. Imax corporation. April 2001

http://www.imax.com/inovations/theatre/simulator/simulator.html.