

TECHNOLOGY NEWS IN BRIEF

This virtual reality from Japan tilts with you

TOKYO (AP) — It's about as glamorous as wearing an old-style TV set on your head.

But the dome-shaped headgear from Japanese electronics maker Toshiba Corp. isn't meant to be fashionable. It's designed to show images in a 360-degree view — synched with the motion of the wearer's head to deliver the illusion of being someplace else: a cityscape at night, for example, or outer space.

The still experimental 6-pound bubble-headed helmet has infrared sensors on top that detect which way the wearer's head is moving. A projector in the back of the helmet displays corresponding images on a 16-inch screen right before the user's eyes.

Although the headgear looks bulky, it's actually smaller than older versions of the same technology, Toshiba spokeswoman Kaori Hiraki said.

But Toshiba has no plans yet to turn the helmet into a commercial virtual-reality product. Eventually, Toshiba believes, it will come in handy for computer games or enhancing the impact of movies.

Archive of Darwin's works now online

CAMBRIDGE, England (AP) — Charles Darwin's work has evolved again. Now it's available in an online

TechBits

archive that launched this month.

The creators of <http://www.darwin-online.org.uk> say the Internet trove is only half complete. But it already includes manuscripts, notebooks and other material, much of which comes from the Darwin Archive at Cambridge University.

"The idea is to make these important works as accessible as possible; some people can only get at Darwin that way," said project director John van Wyhe, a researcher at Christ's College, Cambridge. "Most of the materials provided are appearing online for the first time."

These include the first edition of the "Journal of Researches" (1839) (or "Voyage of the Beagle"), "The Zoology of the Voyage of HMS Beagle" (1838-43) and "The Descent of Man" (1871). The archive has multiple editions of "On the Origin of Species."

The notebook in which Darwin recorded his thoughts on seeing the Galapagos Islands in the Pacific — where he made many of the observations that formed his theory of natural selection — was stolen in the early 1980s and is still missing. But the text, transcribed from microfilm, is available in the online archive. The Web site also includes the largest Darwin bibliography yet produced.

Van Wyhe noted that the archive is expected to be