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Virtually a touch of reality

By MICHELLE
POUNTNEY,
technology reporter

VIRTUAL reality could become even more realistic with Victorian researchers working to put touch into the computerised world.

Every golfer could be trained to have a swing like Tiger Woods, and surgeons could feel patients they were operating on hundreds of kilometres away if a Monash University project is successful.

"Virtual reality consists of a box you put on your head and you look at a screen and hear things and as you move around the environment, it changes ... to make you think you are interacting in a real environment," Dr Barry Richardson said.

"What isn't available is a virtual touch system whereby you can add to that impression of something being there in vision and hearing, the impression you are feeling something that isn't there at all."

The three-year project received a \$360,000 Federal Government grant under their sustainable regions program.

Dr Richardson, a member of the new Bionics and Cognitive Science Centre at Monash University's Gippsland campus, said he expected a result within three years.
