SwimAR is a start-up sports technology business that has been spun out from The Imagination Factory design studio. The business is developing a heads-up display for swimmers to provide real-time performance data in their field of view. One of the target markets for SwimAR is open-water swimmers because it has the capability of providing visual wayfinding guidance.

SwimAR had carried out subjective research with swimmers that suggested they struggle to swim accurately from buoy to buoy and that this can be a barrier to entry to the sport for newcomers. They wanted to understand what the baseline is for open-water swimmer accuracy and approached the Sports and Exercise Sciences department of the University of Kent to help with this.

Dr. Lex Mauger organised and ran a study involving 17 participants that were GPS tracked whilst swimming pre-defined routes in a lake. The study showed that the swimmers completed on average an extra 9% of distance than required by the actual route.

This evidence has helped SwimAR to quantify the kind of benefit that the device could bring to open-water swimmers. Once a prototype is ready the study will be repeated to provide evidence for this tangible benefit. This project was funded through the Industrial Strategy uplift.

Image courtesy of SwimAR

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