

Virtual Reality as New Media is Revolutionary

Susan Johnston*

New Media Film Festival, Los Angeles, USA

*Corresponding author: Susan Johnston, New Media Film Festival, 2355 Westwood Blvd #381, Los Angeles, CA 90064, USA, Tel: +323-833-2088; E-mail: susan@selectservicesfilms.com

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Introduction

Virtual reality was the favourite toy of techies and hackers looking to expand their skills and knowledge. The concept of virtual reality as a widely accessible form of media seemed quite far away, but now it is evolving to the point that it could even be used to make games on our smartphones more immersive [1].

Virtual reality is exciting and revolutionary. It's not only changing the way we use media, but also the quality of people's lives. It's already being used in a number of different industries, from education to business and even real estate. Here are some of the most exciting ways in which virtual reality is new media.

Smartphones

It's exciting that virtual reality has already moved from consoles to smartphones, and there is a whole line of headsets on the market already. The smartphone headsets tend to be a bit smaller than the console ones, something a little more akin to the ones that appeared in Back to the Future [2].

There is a huge range of apps that you can access using virtual reality, over 100 to be more precise. Youtube is one of them, allowing you to watch videos with 360-degree vision – something you may have already seen on social media advertising. There is also a range of games, from simple puzzles to ones that really show what the future of horror games and virtual reality have to offer.

Social functions

Business functions are typically held around a table in an expensive restaurant. However, virtual reality seeks to change this. By incorporating it into social functions for business (or even leisure), you can show those you are meeting with a whole new side to you and your business [3].

It's easier to go through plans and documents, and it makes the whole experience that much more engaging. While it could be seen as anti-social, you are all still able to communicate verbally, you just get to see more.

The treatment of PTSD

Over eight million adults are diagnosed with PTSD (Posttraumatic stress disorder) each year. There are a number of causes, from childhood trauma to experiences that were had in the military. Traditionally, exposure therapy is used to treat the disorder, where patients recount and visualise their traumas in an attempt to treat it and remove the trauma.

Virtual reality uses the same form of treatment, but it offers a more realistic and visual world. The scenarios are played out on the screen, immersing the patient [4]. They are then asked to narrate what is happening. The patient is able to stop at any time, just like in regular therapy.

Immersive gaming

Becoming lost in our video games is one of the great escapes from reality. With the evolution of virtual reality, it is possible to become completely absorbed. The game surrounds you, and you are able to use your body to control the mechanics of the game. In many ways, it is becoming the new Nintendo 3DS, or 3D TV – a mass market for new and exciting content.

So much is and can become accessible through the virtual reality systems, and it has the power to present you with everything at your fingertips. From video games that surround you and use all of your senses, to access to your favourite streaming apps for watching movies and amusing online videos. The possibilities have the potential to be endless.

The next steps

In the future of virtual reality, we can be sure to see an increase of realism in the graphics produced for video games that use it. Much like regular console games have become more photorealistic; virtual reality ones will likely follow in their footsteps. Along with this, there is likely to be increased interactivity, and research is already being carried out to see how this can be improved for future releases.

The continued development of content that is interesting is also something that has to be continued and constantly improved on. In terms of smartphone apps and video games, people are going to tire of the same content, and so more must be added, and it must be more interesting than the ones that came before it. Virtual reality is done gaining trust and acceptance; now it needs to start evolving.

In terms of new media, it has the potential to become one of the most used pieces of technology. With applications in just about every industry and field (from business to medical training), it really is the definition of new media. The future of virtual reality is incredibly bright as long as developers continue to work on this new piece of tech and listen to the feedback they receive [5].

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