

Quotes from Crafting Stories for Virtual Reality (Bosworth and Sarah, 2019)

Genres of Virtual Stories

- Interactives** — "Ride along a on virtual roller coaster based on the NASDAQ's steep climbs and precipitous falls, explore the surface of Mars, attend a "virtual support group" for sexual assault survivors, or cut your own script of a story told from two perspectives at once. Immersive interactives can take on a multitude of styles. In the context of immersive storytelling, interactivity is a broad term meaning that the viewer has the ability to trigger events or make changes within an immersive environment. Because the user can influence what they see, pieces in this form tend to diverge from traditional narrative and are often non-linear. In most cases, each viewer will have a different experience from the next. Interactives can be anything from mostly linear stories that require a defined set of user interactions to free-form pieces in which the viewer discovers the story by exploring an environment. This chapter looks at projects with varying levels of interactive freedom and very different applications of that power."
- Immersive Narratives and News** — "A common principle is to take the viewer somewhere they do not have access to, but another way of thinking about the story is to provide an intimate experience by taking on another person's perspective."
- Room scale VR** — "Sit with a formerly incarcerated man in his current bedroom and listen as he describes what conditions were like in prison—then be transported to a prison cell and walk around within the cramped walls. Physically stand witness as refugees step off a boat on the coast of Lesbos. Walk-around stories allow the viewer to move around in a fully 3-dimensional world. In this way the viewer can change perspective or get close to the action as they choose. It is also known as having six degrees of freedom: The ability to look in all directions as well as move freely in the virtual space. We also refer to this type of experience in this chapter as "invisible visitor," because the user cannot affect the story or the scenery. Another term sometimes used to describe the 3-dimensional worlds that make up these stories is room-scale VR"
- Mixed Media Packages** — "This category incorporates elements from all of the immersive forms already discussed in this book—mixing and matching immersive video, photo, audio and even AR—in innovative ways. What these pieces have in common is the importance of story, whether or not it is a fictional narrative encouraging a physical exploration of space (like Overheard) or multiple stories about the border (in The Wall). These mixed-media pieces aren't relying solely on any one format and the stories themselves bring the viewer to a variety of different places, adding a sense of presence and wonder as the viewer ponders geologic time or climbs to the top of Mount Everest. These pieces are web packages—or comparable. Some of them give the viewer interactive control—whether it be moving forward in a linear story, exploring a variety of multimedia elements, or triggering a set of predetermined events."
- Augmented Reality** — "Luckily, we've evolved past the AR farting app of late 2017 and AR is beginning to be used in more complex ways beyond altering faces and catching Pokémon.¹ Headlines abound proclaiming 2018 as the year of AR, but how to tell a story with this format is still an elusive challenge. Over the course of the next few years, both the quantity and quality of AR apps is expected to increase dramatically.² Often AR adds digital elements to a live view, through a smartphone, tablet, or headset. In the current media landscape, the most common and most referenced examples of AR in daily life are Snapchat filters and the Pokémon Go craze of 2016. AR can consist of both two- and three-dimensional digital visualizations and in this chapter we've also included a location-based audio example and a holographic theater that requires no headset."
- Immersive Audio** — "Many filmmakers begin with an audio track, editing together the audio onto a timeline followed by the visuals serving to complement the audio. In some ways, and in some cases, immersive media and VR specifically have over-emphasized the visual, forgetting the importance and power of sound and a rich immersive auditory experience."