

WE.ARE.VR

Final Report - Group #3

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Introduction

Our goal with this project is to provide an interactive way for people to experience unique live events without having to be physically present. The main idea is to create a platform where musicians, curators of art galleries, or any other event organisers could provide their interested audience with a chance to view their content using virtual reality technology. This platform would provide an immersive experience of live events for end-users unsure about trying out something new, in addition to those unable to attend. This would give our users the chance to experience unique and thrilling live events without having to deal with the uncertainty and cost of actually attending. Our incentive for our content providers would be advertisement for their event and the sale of virtual reality experiences. Our platform will be tailored towards live events coming to locations near the user, increasing the incentive to buy tickets for the events themselves and using the virtual reality content as a form of “trailer” for the event.

Design Problem

The objective of our design was to create a platform that allows users to experience live events through virtual reality. That being said, we want to create a media platform that was visually appealing and easy to use. It was important to us that any user could pick up and use our application easily and efficiently. We wanted our application to have little to no learning curve and follow the conventions of popular mobile streaming application. We wanted to avoid cluttered information and prioritize elegance and simplicity. It was important to us that we had a simple navigation system, efficient use of space, and a cohesive theme across the entire application. To achieve that we wanted to avoid cluttered information, ambiguous icons and buttons, and general inconsistencies in our design. We wanted to also avoid users accidentally clicking important links so we needed to include confirmation prompts for important links. With these ‘does’ and ‘don’ts’ we looked at popular streaming applications like youtube and twitch.tv and used them as inspiration to build our own design. This allowed us to follow mainstream conventions while creating a unique look and feel for our application.

User Research and Findings

Interview Findings:

Through our interviews with potential end users we discovered that they would be very interested in paying a reduced price to see some of their favourite musicians and festivals through virtual reality. They would also be interested in a “trailer” feature for events,

as well as seeing foreign and exotic locations through virtual reality before travelling there. They also agreed it would be a good supplement for lectures. However, they would like the experience to be more interactive. Through our interviews with event organisers around campus we learn some very valuable things. When it comes to promotion, we need to differentiate ourselves from social media. We learned that there would need to be some financial implications for musicians to even consider our platform. With this information we came to the conclusion that the biggest market for the platform would be areas and locations that are not serviceable by these events. The interviews were very useful in validating our initial for our platform.

Secondary Research Findings:

What makes virtual reality great is the virtual environment that it provides for the users. The immersions created from these virtual environments are enhanced by many invented equipments. These equipments are prevalent and accessible by the society. However, depending on the level of immersion the cost of equipment can range from \$20 to \$2,000. The more expensive the equipment is the more immersed the user becomes. Most of these equipments are available in electronic or online stores, making these equipments readily available for users. We also decided we needed to try virtual reality for ourselves. This gave us a much better understanding of what our platform would aim to provide. We learned that virtual reality technology has been growing and evolving steadily over recent years. Meaning that the quantity, quality, and accessibility of virtual reality technology is continuously increasing. In addition, we also looked into the health implications of prolonged virtual reality use. Using virtual reality for 30 minutes continuously can lead to headaches, dizziness, nausea, loss of spatial awareness, and in extreme cases, seizures. This made us realize that at some point we needed to implement a function that reminds the user to take a break after extended periods of time.

Design Summary and Justification

In our design we wanted to prioritize simplicity, elegance, and efficient use of space. Given the sheer amount of different media streaming application that exist, it was important that our design had a unique and cohesive theme. This also gave us a large variety of streaming application that each had a unique take on the same problem. We used this to our advantage by taking the basic ideas that we liked the most and modified them to fit our needs and our theme. This, in addition to our design priorities allowed us to create a design that is visually appealing, follows modern mobile app conventions, and maintains a unique and cohesive theme across the entire app. Following popular conventions also helped us create a smooth and seamless navigation experience where the user can explore the entire app freely and efficiently. All the factors above also helped us create an experience that was familiar and required little to no learning curve.

System Tasks

1. Preview virtual reality content
2. Purchase virtual reality events and views them from the 'My Events' page
3. Purchase tickets for upcoming events
4. Comment and share
5. View upcoming events from the calendar

Heuristic Evaluation

The heuristic evaluation performed on our group by team 31 revealed intriguing insights on our platform. They were able to identify key areas where our design excelled and other areas that still require improvement. They found that our navigation system followed the conventions of popular mobile apps, the design was appealing, our decision confirmation was helpful, and the buttons and icons were easily recognizable. The issues that came with the report unveiled some of the underlying problems that our team had not discovered. The major problems that we agreed on were the functionality of the calendar, the inconsistencies in the navigation bar and the lack of pricing shown. We addressed the issue of the calendar by implementing additional functions for the user to view for events either by day or month. We would aim to further improve and add functionality to the calendar in future iterations. We addressed many of the small inconsistencies in the color and spacing of the navigation bar by creating a standardized component of the navigation bar. We also made the prices of content much more prevalent in our design to ensure the user would never be unsure. Overall, the evaluation was very helpful in finding issues that had been overlooked.

User Testing

For our user testing we gave brief walkthrough to our testers and then let them explore the app on their own and noted any feedback or comments they had. We thought this would be more efficient because our system tasks are fairly straightforward. Our test users thought the design felt familiar, easy to use, and easy to navigate. They also found the confirmation prompts useful and could navigate the app efficiently and quickly after only a few minutes of use. Our user tests also gave us feedback on which parts of our app could be improved. They noticed small inconsistencies within our design, specifically with the space between icons on the navigation bar on different screens. They also said that the functionality of our calendar could be improved to encompass more events and also functions more smoothly. They also thought we could improve the design of our settings pages to be more appealing. They found the buttons to be far too large with a lot of wasted space. Our testers also gave us many potential new features we could add in future iterations. Some of them including content creator profiles, content subscriptions, and the addition of a news page.

Next Iteration

For our next iteration we would likely focus on addressing our findings from the heuristic evaluation and user testing. We would focus on improving our calendars functionality and implement a way to add upcoming events. Improve the design of our settings pages by making the buttons smaller and redesign the feedback/contact pages to be more detailed. Then we would shift our focus to implementing some of the features suggested by our testers. We would start with content creator profile and use those to create a subscription/following feature. And finally, consider adding a news page that incorporates social media content from other platforms.

Conclusion

This iteration has not seen the most drastic change in our design but it has played a crucial part in refining our design and getting us much closer to a finished prototype. It has also taught us about one of the most crucial aspects of the design process; how our users will interact with it. We learned many things from the heuristic evaluation and user testing that allowed us to improve our design and showed us that there is always room for improvement. These evaluations also allowed us to quantify how close we came to solving the design problems we started with 6 weeks ago. In conclusion, we learned many valuable things throughout the course of this project. We began with a very simple idea and a vague understanding of design. From there we began expanding our understanding of our field and learning more about good and bad design. All the while ideating and improving on our initial idea. After 6 weeks of learning, hard work, and perseverance we have achieved a design that we are proud of.

Appendix and Attachments

Please see github page.