P1: User Research

Group #3
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Description

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.

Stakeholders

Event Organisers/Promoters:

- The event organiser would have an integral part in our app. Their job would be to provide virtual reality content from their events and upload them to our platform, allowing them to promote and sell tickets and/or virtual reality content for their events.

Musicians:

- Musicians will be one of our primary content producers. They would be conducting their own performances and sharing virtual reality content from their live concerts on our platform. Concert will be one of the main forms of virtual reality content our platform aims to provide and sell.

Galleries:

- Galleries would be another one of our primary content producers. Their exhibits and showcases will be recorded and uploaded to our platform for promotion and sale.

Institutions:

- Educational institutions like schools or even post-secondary institutes would

be a potential user of our platform. Leaving our platform open to a wide range of content would allow for the possibility of virtual reality field trips to historical and educational locations.

Consumers:

- Consumers are the most important users of the platform. Our user base would give an incentive to potential content producer to upload content from their events in order to reach customers and deliver their unique experience in an interactive way. Our platform would allow users to experience events they would not otherwise have access too.

Research Methods and Findings

Methods:

For our two research methods we decided to use secondary research and interviews. For our interviews we to talked to potential end users, as well as some organisers of events on the U of C campus. We read each of our interviewees the same description then pulled from a set of questions and recorded their responses (when given permission). For our secondary research we decided to look into the the constraints, accessibility, and availability of virtual reality technology. We studied several scholarly articles that addressed the challenges and opportunities with virtual reality. Additionally, we decided to experience virtual reality for ourselves. We used these methods together because virtual reality is a rapidly developing field and it is important for us to understand that current state of this emerging technology. We used this as our basis to estimate the scope of our platform and use that to help develop the questions we used in our interviews with potential end users and event promoters.

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 implication 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 location that are not serviceable by these events. We also learned about the huddles that arise because of privacy. Any and all content from concerts need to be approved by the artist so it maintains their “image”. We learned that many events hosted on campus (e.g. Nickle galleries) do little to no advertisement and are not for profit so sale of their content would be out of the question. When is comes to performances and events on campus we would have to operate on a case-by-case basis.

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 are 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 to try virtual reality for ourselves. This gave us a much better understanding of what our platform is able to provide.

VR focuses on stimulating our senses such as hearing, smelling, touching and seeing. In our case, we would focus on hearing and seeing. What makes VR special is the stereoscopic view it provides. Stereoscopic view provides two slightly different angle in which tricks people into thinking there is depth. In terms of sound, we want to be able to create spatial sound emulating sound from all angles, thus creating an illusion of 3D sound. Hardware has been an issue in creating the immersion from VR. since we doing a phone app that provides VR experience for users. We will only focus on phones capability. Android OS kitkat 4.4 is able to run standard VR. This was created in 2013, so any phones after 2013 should be able to run any standard VR.

Reflection

We have employed this project to acquire a comprehension of the exciting technology, we think unanimously, is Virtual Reality since the members of this group, having the interest in the field in common, do not have much previous experience with VR to draw inspiration from for the purposes of this project.

We wanted to familiarise ourselves with the current state of the art by choosing to conduct the secondary research. We feel that by doing so we are indeed more educated on the topic. That being said, learning about the broad range of VR applications additionally confused the focus of the goals of the project for some of

us. Considering the time constraints on the completion of this project, we feel that we lost some valuable time due to the creative turbulence stirred by the the distracting diversity of VR applications. In hindsight, a directed approach to our secondary research with clearer, more concrete steps to achieve our desired outcome would be recommended.

Initially, it was difficult for us to come up with the list of questions we wanted to ask during interviews which resulted in a slight delay in conducting the actual interviews. However, we soon discovered the information gathered as a result of the interviews to be quite useful, whether found explicitly—in the answers given to our questions—or implicitly—by later reflecting over the answers, as well as some informal conversations each of us had about this project with people we did not necessarily consider to be our stakeholders. In the future, we recommend starting with the interviews as soon as possible since, as we have found valuable ideas and insights may be found during, or as a result of these interviews.

Task Description

1. We expect end users to be able to experience events in real time or afterwards through the use of virtual reality.
2. We expect end users to be able to discover new events in their area which they may not have been exposed in the past.
3. We expect end users to be able to be able to enjoy experiences they might not be able to otherwise.
4. We expect end users to be able to purchase virtual reality experiences from events
5. We expect event organizers to advertise their upcoming events
6. We expect event organizers to provide content for users to experience.
7. We expect event organizers to sell tickets to their events
8. We expect institutions to provide their students with unique learning opportunities with field trips through virtual reality without the extra costs.