

PRESS RELEASE

NAVIGATING THE IMMERSIVE AUDIENCE JOURNEY

...New [report](#) offers insight and framework for creators of immersive experiences, for audiences of the near future...



- Shared learnings and new framework tool for creators and commissioners
- Building communities and anticipation hold important roles as ‘pre-engagement’ activities
- An Audience of the Future (AotF) report commissioned by UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) as part of the Industrial Strategy, with research conducted by Digital Catapult.
- Supporting the UK’s world-class creative industries worth £110bn annually

Thursday 16 July: Today, UKRI’s Audience of the Future programme launches the **Immersive Audience Journey Report**, providing insights on immersive experiences across arts, culture, heritage and entertainment, and offering a framework tool for creators and commissioners of immersive experiences.

The report looks to make sense of who the emerging audiences consuming this form of entertainment are, how they experience these new technologies, and what it is to be entertained in this new format. While the research itself was conducted before the pandemic, the insights and framework are presented at this crucial time of uncertainty, to support new thinking and creative development.

Professor Andrew Chitty, UKRI Challenge Director for the Audience of the Future and Creative Industries Clusters Challenge comments:

“By sharing the insights from this report, we aim to raise awareness of best practices within the immersive community to help creators and production studios as they pivot their models. Immersive technology continues to shift audience behaviour from ‘viewing’ content to ‘experiencing’ and ‘recommending’ it, ranging from exciting esports experiences live-streamed in virtual reality (VR) to educational augmented reality (AR) applications designed for the whole family to enjoy. The higher levels of technology acceptance and utilisation prompted by lockdown may also shine a light on immersive experiences that provide truly memorable moments with longer-term impact.”

Andrew continues, “We’ve witnessed these developments in recent months across the Audience of the Future demonstrator projects, including the **Dinosaurs and Robots** mixed reality project. Produced by Factory 42 with the Almeida Theatre and supported by the Science Museum Group and Natural History Museum, as well as Sky, this project was originally destined to be a location-based adventure game experience. And now, near the end of this summer, Dinosaurs and Robots will initially launch as an augmented reality experience for families at home, encouraging them to explore, build and play games that combine STEM skills and creativity using mobile technology. Equally the **Wallace & Gromit: The Big Fix Up** epic adventure due later this year, will combine augmented and mixed reality, as users are invited to experience and interact with the story as it unfolds over time.”

The **Immersive Audience Journey Report** explores how different audiences in different market segments behave around immersive content. It’s recognised that ‘immersive’ offers a broad umbrella term, and this report considers a wide scope from virtual and augmented reality, to projection technologies in location based physical places, to sound experiences. The report looks to identify common things, rather than specific things to the technology.

Focused on the arc of engagement before, during and after the immersive experience, the report helps to identify specific underdeveloped areas of consideration including;

- acknowledging the importance of how audiences perceive immersive productions before they experience them, and then how they come out of them.
 - o the concept of building community and anticipation as part of the ‘pre-engagement activities.
 - o activities that aim to build retention, recommendation and loyalty
- the crucial role of user testing

Aki Jarvinen, Senior Experience Researcher, Ph.D, Digital Catapult, the report’s author, encourages creators to think about the immersive experiences beyond the story, “Framing immersive experiences under the banner of ‘storytelling’ in the age of ‘peak TV’ and omnipresent story content is not necessarily a working strategy. Emphasising the experiences aspect seems to differentiate immersive. Immersive producers need to think how to blend production activities into marketing, and adopt holistic thinking around audience engagement. Community building and pre event launch activities can significantly increase awareness and facilitating post event activities contribute to loyalty”.

Dr Jeremy Silver, Chief Executive Officer, Digital Catapult comments:

“Understanding how audiences interact and navigate inside immersive worlds remains one of the fundamental challenges to development of new XR formats. This report helps developers and creators think about what is going on in different kinds of virtual environments, how to intrigue audiences, attract, retain and importantly, how to grow them.”

Framework Tools for designing immersive audience journeys - Awareness, Consideration, Decision, Immersion, Satisfaction and Loyalty

The 'Journey Map' templates within the report are intended to support immersive producers when designing their audience journeys, from a production and experience design perspective. The first is an interpretation of the customer journey map for immersive productions: identifying and describing the different touch points that audiences have with the production, and then defining what competency or part of the organisation is responsible for supporting each for a successful outcome.

The second template looks at the emotional arc of the audience or segment throughout the journey. This map is designed to inspire solutions that create positive audience reactions to production activities, from marketing to re-engagement, and thereby prevent or avoid indifference, dissatisfaction or even anxiety.

The AoTF Immersive Audience Journey Report, including the Journey Map tools, is available to download [here](#). Watch the Digital Catapult's Immersive Audience Journey Report webcast [here](#).

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Spokespeople from Digital Catapult, UKRI, Dinosaurs and Robots and Wallace & Gromit: The Big Fix Up projects are available for interviews. Images, videos and infographics are available on request.

EDITORS NOTES:

IMMERSIVE AUDIENCE JOURNEY REPORT: [REPORT PDF](#)

ABOUT: AUDIENCES OF THE FUTURE

Across summer 2020, four projects will launch which, combined, represent the most advanced set of public trials of Virtual, Augmented and Mixed Reality content anywhere in the world. Originally due to premiere across 2020 in a series of event-based launches, these projects have now been reimagined and redeveloped for audiences at home, in the UK and internationally, with a particular focus on families and children. www.audienceofthefuture.live

ABOUT UKRI:

We work with the government to invest over £7 billion a year in research and innovation by partnering with academia and industry to make the impossible, possible. Through the UK's nine leading academic and industrial funding councils, we create knowledge with impact. For more information visit www.ukri.org

ABOUT DIGITAL CATAPULT:

Digital Catapult is the UK's leading advanced digital technology innovation centre, driving early adoption of technologies to make UK businesses more competitive and productive and grow the country's economy. We connect large established companies, startup and scaleup businesses and researchers to discover new ways to solve big challenges in the manufacturing and creative industries. Through this collaboration businesses are supported to develop the right technologies to solve problems, increase productivity and open up new markets faster. Digital Catapult provides physical and digital facilities for experimentation and testing that would otherwise not be accessible for smaller companies. As well as breaking down barriers to technology adoption for startups and scaleups, our work de-risks innovation for large enterprises and uncovers new commercial applications in immersive, future networks, and artificial intelligence technologies. For more info please visit www.digicatapult.org.uk

ABOUT INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY CHALLENGE FUND:

The Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund brings together the UK's world-leading research with business to meet the major industrial and societal challenges of our time. It provides funding and support to UK businesses and researchers, part of the government's £4.7 billion increase in research and development over the next 4 years. It plays a central role in the Government's modern Industrial Strategy. It is run by UK Research and Innovation, which comprises the Research Councils, Innovate UK and Research England.

<https://www.ukri.org/innovation/industrial-strategy-challenge-fund/>