VR for Social Good:
integrating virtual reality into the nonprofit space

Jiefang Shen
NPA 662: Nonprofit Data Analysis Capstone
Spring 2021
“VIRTUAL REALITY”
"VIRTUAL REALITY"
“Head Mounted Device”
OVERVIEW / INTRODUCTION

CLOUDS OVER SIDRA

by Gabo Arora & Chris Milk
OVERVIEW / INTRODUCTION

Creators Lab

- Creators Lab 1.0 – 9 projects
- Creators Lab 2.0 – 10 projects
why not?
OBJECTIVES

- **Statement of the problem**
  - Keeping up with technology
  - Coronavirus

- **Statement of the purpose**
  - A better understanding of the perceptions and potential of the usage of VR in nonprofit organizations needs to be reached
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the current perspective and views on the use of VR?
2. What are reasons why nonprofits do not use VR?
3. What are effective and strategic ways of adopting the use of VR in nonprofits?
METHODS AND APPROACHES

- Literature review
  - VR background
    "Virtual Reality – A Survival Guide for the Social Scientist" by Fox, Arena, and Bailenson (2009)
  - Three levels
    1. VR as an object
    2. VR as an application
    3. VR as a method
VR AS AN OBJECT

- Themes:
  - Presence
  - Immersion
  - Empathy
- Enhances awareness (McRoberts, 2017)
- Stimulates emotions (Shin, 2018)
- Leads to higher levels of empathy and responsibility (Kandaurova & Lee, 2018)
VR AS AN APPLICATION

- Helps close social and psychological distance (Yoo & Drumwright, 2018)
- Helps understand dynamic relationships (Eschenbrenner et al, 2018)
- Increases the likeliness for individuals to take action and engage in pro-social behavior (Rosenberg et al, 2013)
VR AS A METHOD

- Through partnerships
  - Established partnerships: Oculus, Vive, University of Florida VR for Social Good program
  - VR for Applications examples
- Helps create value through the intersection of the private and social sectors (Watson et al, 2018) (Austin & Seitanidi, 2012)
- Reshape the way that communities approach social challenges (Sagawa & Segal, 2010).
METHODS AND APPROACHES

- Primary data collection
  - Qualitative
  - Interviews
- Participants
  - Six interviewees
  - Five organizations
## List of Interviewees

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>VR usage</th>
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<td>Brandon Graves</td>
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## By category

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METHODS AND APPROACHES

- Materials
  - Semi-structured interviews
  - Different question set for each of the three categories
DATA ANALYSIS

- Thematic analysis
  - Commonly used for semi-structured interviews
  - Coded into common themes
  - Shows patterns and insight
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IMPLICATIONS

- Point of intersection between literature review and interviews
- 2 major challenges
  - Financial funding
  - Technical skill
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Partnerships through co-creation
  - Nonprofit
  - Content creator
  - Funder
NONPROFIT

Content Creator

Ideas & concepts

New clientele

Funder

Software & proposal

New vision

Funding & Access

New program
MNA Master of Nonprofit Administration

NEW PROGRAM

NONPROFIT

Ideas & concepts

Funding & Access

New vision

Software & proposal

New clientele

CONTENT CREATOR
NONPROFIT

FUNDING & ACCESS

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Potential

Metrics

Initial Hurdle

NONPROFIT

Funding

Access

FUNDER

Technical Skill

Versatile Hardware

Customized Content

CONTENT CREATOR

Indicates perceived challenges


THANK YOU

Professor Tavanti
Professor Waters
Interviewees
Three-dimensional virtual environments have been at the forefront of the advancement of technology. With the evolution of society and recent events, virtual reality (VR) is now at a new peak in its untapped potential. The coronavirus pandemic’s call for physical distancing has made virtuality a necessity. New developments in VR have made the platform more accessible than ever before. This study explores the place of virtual reality in the nonprofit space. A review of literature indicates evidence for the effective use of VR across all major parts of nonprofits. Primary research is conducted via expert interviews from various perspectives. Interviews were conducted with nonprofit leaders both using and not using VR, as well as a VR content creator. Thematic analysis is used to find various challenges and perspectives regarding the use of VR in the nonprofit space. In conjunction to the literature, partnership co-creation models are developed as research implications and recommendations. Models are presented that both connect to literature reviews, as well as address primary research findings. As shown in the primary model, nonprofits should seek partnerships with VR content creator and funders. Together, the three co-creators can build a VR program that can fulfill more than the sum of its parts.

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The purpose of this study is to analyze perspectives and the challenges that nonprofits have on the use of VR technology. Perspectives will include nonprofit leaders who are currently using VR, who are not currently using VR, and a VR content creator. By exploring perspectives and challenges, society will gain a better understanding of whether there is interest and value in utilizing VR for social impact. Nonprofits that may be interested will be better informed in integrating VR into their work. VR content creators will gain more insight and methods for design. Funders could expand their impact and connect to their purpose in a different way. Furthermore, this could create more social impact that benefits society as a collective. This study anticipates on seeking potential ways of effectively and efficiently integrating VR into the nonprofit sector.

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Thematic Analysis: The data collected was analyzed by using thematic analysis. This is a qualitative research method commonly used for analyzing semi-structured interviews. Data is examined and coded into common themes, which shows patterns and meaning.

References


Jiefang Shen  
Master of Nonprofit Administration  
Capstone Thesis Project

**Summary**

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**Research Questions**

1. What is the current perspective and views on the use of VR?
2. What are reasons why nonprofits do not use VR?
3. What are effective and strategic ways of adopting the use of VR in nonprofits?

**Methods**

- **Participants**: Primary data was collected utilizing the qualitative method of expert interviews for this study. A total of six participants from five organizations were interviewed. Participants were divided into categories: using VR, not using VR, and VR content creator.
- **Materials**: All interviews were conducted in a semi-structured approach. This allowed the researcher to have control over the topic, while also maintaining the freedom of expression for the participants. It encourages participants to have more quality and in-depth responses.

**Data and Analysis**

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**Thematic Analysis**

The data collected was analyzed by using thematic analysis. This is a qualitative research method commonly used for analyzing semi-structured interviews. Data is examined and coded into common themes, which shows patterns and meaning.

**Results and Recommendations**

The point of intersection between the literature review and primary research for the purpose of this paper is the two hindrances of VR in social science; financial funding and technical skill are the two major challenges to adopting VR in the nonprofit space. In conjunction to the implications of VR as a method through partnership, it is recommended that nonprofits collaborate with funders and VR content creators and each tackle their own areas of expertise.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to analyze perspectives and the challenges that nonprofits have on the use of VR technology. Perspectives will include nonprofit leaders who are currently using VR, who are not currently using VR, and a VR content creator. By exploring perspectives and challenges, society will gain a better understanding of whether there is interest and value in utilizing VR for social impact. Nonprofits that may be interested will be better informed in integrating VR into their work. VR content creators will gain more insight and methods for design. Funders could expand their impact and connect to their purpose in a different way. Furthermore, this could create more social impact that benefits society as a collective. This study anticipates on seeking potential ways of effectively and efficiently integrating VR into the nonprofit sector.