

Results of Competition: Audience of the Future Demonstrators

Competition Code: 1805_ISCF_AUDIENCE_DEMO

Total available funding is £14.2 million

Note: These proposals have succeeded in the assessment stage of this competition. All are subject to grant offer and conditions being met.

Participant organisation names	Project title	Proposed project costs	Proposed project grant
Royal Shakespeare Company	Immersive performances of the future	£3,513,525	£1,756,762
De Montfort University		£205,528	£205,528
EPIC GAMES UK LTD		£0	£0
I2 MEDIA RESEARCH LIMITED		£319,508	£223,656
INTEL CORPORATION (UK) LIMITED		£0	£0
JINGO JUICE LIMITED		£537,539	£376,277
Magic Leap Inc		£0	£0
MANCHESTER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL		£397,884	£238,730
NESTA		£123,553	£123,553

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Phi Centre	£0	£0
PHILHARMONIA LIMITED	£285,694	£171,416
PUNCHDRUNK	£88,188	£61,732
PUNCHDRUNK GLOBAL LTD	£912,373	£638,661
THESPACE C.I.C.	£0	£0
University of Portsmouth	£200,140	£200,140

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Project description - provided by applicants

This Audience of the Future demonstrator project, led by the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), brings together, for the first time, a unique team of cultural industry practitioners and researchers who are ideally placed to inform and guide the next developmental stage of Live Performance.

Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Mixed Reality (MR) offer under-exploited opportunities for the UK cultural sector to make Live Performance more immersive. We have already seen a new era of theatre borrowing conventions from video games to tell stories - and we know that audiences want "to find fun, interactive experiences and share them with the world" (Brian Schwab, Head of Interaction Lab at Magic Leap).

Our consortium will explore what it means to perform live through multiple channels, and the future of real-time immersive performance connected across multiple stages. Audiences will no longer be bound by their location - instead we will use devices such as mobile phones, Extended Reality (XR) headsets and streams into a Live Performance environment, or in the home. We will investigate the new workflows required to deliver this, and the new ways of making the creative content that bring VR/AR/MR into theatre-making and Live Performance.

During 2019 each partner will develop a series of prototype projects, drawing on their extensive expertise in site-specific performance, whether this is music and audio, audience development or theatre. We will develop new models for Live Performance that focus on the future needs of audiences with the development of new technologies, working in partnership with Magic Leap, Intel and Epic Games, and specialist companies such as Vicon and FBFX.

This research and development (R&D) work will lead to our main demonstrator performance, at the heart of the RSC's autumn 2020 programme, connecting to a main stage Shakespeare production in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

This project will broaden the possibilities of Live Performance, from digital broadcast, as is the case for live-to-digital work currently, to a mass distributed digital model on multiple platforms. Audiences will connect with the performance live, wherever their location, celebrating the strengths of digital connectivity and establishing a high quality Live Performance to be enjoyed, in a variety of ways, around the world.

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ESL GAMING UK LIMITED	WEAVR: Immersive Cross-Reality Experiences in Esports	£1,601,020	£800,510
BELOUDEST LTD		£1,449,000	£1,014,300
CYBULA LIMITED		£273,072	£191,150
DOCK 10 LIMITED		£612,444	£306,222
FOCAL POINT VR LTD		£577,321	£404,125
University of York		£1,237,418	£1,237,418

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"Esports is the term used for describing video games that are played competitively and watched by massive audiences. In 2017, over 388 million people worldwide watched esports, and the number of esports fans is projected to grow a further 50% by 2020 (Newzoo, 2018).

The esports audience, today, truly is an "audience of the future" -- esports fans are tech savvy, early adopters and regularly engage with new immersive experiences, such as AR, VR and XR (Nielsen, 2017). Fans are highly social, engaging with each other via chat and social media. The typical esports fan consumes esports broadcast on multiple screens, complementing coverage with statistics and visualisations of game data. In esports, every match ever played is recorded in depth and made publicly available.

This project will produce a new platform called WEAVR that leverages the data-rich environment of esports to transform the way esports -- and, further down the line, physical sports -- are experienced by remote audiences.

WEAVR envisions immersive experiences for remote audiences that seamlessly stretch across virtual and physical spaces, multiple displays, mobile devices, VR video telepresence and augmented reality overlays, enabling viewers to teleport in between the live arena, virtual game worlds and augmented living rooms. Responding to the fans' eagerness to learn and to become better players, WEAVR will create cross-reality spaces in which fans immerse themselves in high fidelity statistics, visualisations and data-driven stories that give them deep insights into the live match. WEAVR will move away from linear "one-for-all" coverage towards hyper-personalised. WEAVR experiences are tailored to each viewer's interests, fully interactive, and provide individualised insights by comparing each viewer's own amateur performance statistics to those of professional players. Viewers will be able to share their individual viewing experiences with other WEAVR users and via social networks in real-time, blurring the boundaries between consuming and creating.

WEAVR will integrate large-scale, live audience analytics, enabling this project to generate insight into how audiences of the future engage in immersive experiences, and how this engagement can be exploited commercially. Through a consortium that includes ESL, the largest esports content producer in the world, as well as leading academics and innovators across VR / AR, AI, data-driven content production and broadcast, WEAVR will transform the experiences of millions of esports fans."

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TINY REBEL GAMES LIMITED	Doctor Who Immersive Adventure	£984,238	£688,967
POTATO LONDON LTD		£1,450,280	£870,168
SUGAR CREATIVE STUDIO LIMITED		£891,740	£624,218
University of South Wales		£274,526	£274,526

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Project description - provided by applicants

Partnering with Aardman and based on the globally beloved Wallace & Gromit franchise (celebrating its 30th anniversary this year), get ready for an incredible, first of its kind, story-driven experience created by British companies Tiny Rebel Games, Potato, and Sugar Creative in collaboration with the creative team at Aardman and with research support from the University of South Wales.

For us, the future of immersive experiences lies in being able to weave a number of threads together. At the core of these threads: an engaging narrative created in partnership with the incredibly creative team at Aardman and which will appeal to Wallace & Gromit fans of all ages. Around this core, we will utilise a variety of approaches to enable storytelling and to allow users to engage with an evolving narrative. These threads may utilise immersive technologies such as Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality along with ARG elements, location-specific multi-user AR experiences, comic books and audio storytelling.

This is a first of its kind, epic story-driven multiplayer adventure which is built on an engaging narrative, with a myriad of sources of stimulus and communication and a collaborative interactive experience.

The end result will be an experience that continually engages with and influences you, as the audience. You will be thinking and caring about the experience outside of the core 'interactive' offering and will be able to dive deeper into the story-line in different ways, at different times, when you choose to do so.

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FACTORY 42 LIMITED	Dinosaurs & Robots	£3,540,820	£2,053,676
ALMEIDA THEATRE COMPANY LIMITED		£376,090	£263,263
The Board of Trustees of the Science Museum		£771,569	£771,569
The Natural History Museum		£815,794	£815,794
University of Exeter		£91,200	£91,200

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Project description - provided by applicants

The project will explore how immersive technologies can be used to engage audiences of all ages with dinosaurs and robots in new ways and create a range of valuable learning and entertainment experiences.

The project will have a number of deliverables targeted at a number of discrete target audiences in three different arenas.

- Visitor Experiences: The project will combine mixed reality technology and immersive theatre with new academic audience analysis to provide a brand new type of immersive visitor experience. In these ticketed experiences, groups of c10 will enter a staged environment to interact with actors and technology in a fun immersive world. This magical entertainment will open up global revenue streams through tickets, licensing and merchandising. We will test business models and act as a pathfinder project for future initiatives across the cultural sector and spillover sectors of leisure and exhibitions. This unprecedented multi-disciplinary creative process involves directors and writers from the award-winning Almeida Theatre working with experts from computer generated imagery and visual effects, computer game development, immersive technologies, museum curatorial teams, TV documentary research, 3D audio and multi-sensory technologies.

- Retail destinations: the project will explore how cultural organisations and shopping centres can work together to attract new audiences and bring new types of museum experiences to life. In partnership with the Science Museum, the Natural History Museum and shopping centre group Intu we will run 5 minute interactive experiences that communicate science ideas based loosely on the Museum collections. We will explore how these experiences help overcome the long-held understanding and engagement challenges facing museums whose collections address complex themes and ideas, helping shape the cultural heritage sector for the 21st century. Our target audience for these first two arenas is adults and children aged 14 and above.

- In-home “edutainment” for children. Through mobile phone apps designed for use at home and using augmented reality technologies to drive immersion, we will work with the museums to create interactive learning based dinosaurs and robots games for children aged 8-12 years old.

University of Exeter researchers will measure the impacts of immersion on audiences and analyse the creative process to provide valuable learnings for the design of future experiences. Research will include use of highly novel data retrieval methods relating to eye tracking and biometrics; identification of psychological antecedents for positive visitor experiences using mixed reality and objective physiological indicators; and identification of physiological markers to improve experience design, and personalisation.

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