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Virtual reality and William Shakespeare – what do they have in common?

By Bevin Creative

As the title suggests, we begin with a question. What is the correlation between the world renowned playwright, William Shakespeare, and the world dominating technology, virtual reality?

One's first answer seems obvious...nothing.

However, when delving closer, a connection between the two can indeed be established due to the growing variety of ways in which virtual reality (VR) can be applied and extended.

Enter stage left, Perth based marketing company BEVIN Creative, who helped shape this concept into reality by delivering an engaging, world premiere, virtual reality experience at the 2016 Shakespeare 400 Perth Festival.

As the year 2016 coincided with the 400-year anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare, global celebrations found their way to a day of festivities at the University of Western Australia, where BEVIN Creative unveiled their premiere virtual reality experience, known as 'The Virtual Experience'.

Known for their world class 2D and 3D visuals, the BEVIN team generated a virtual model of the world renowned Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, providing multiple views and angles, using Samsung Oculus Gear VR headsets. The experience produced an immersive experience for the 3,000 festival goers to gain an intriguing perspective into what it would have been like to live in the Shakespearean era - showcasing the varied ways in which virtual reality technology can be used.

The idea behind using such an advanced form of technology, was to tie in with the Shakespeare 400 Perth Festival vision of modernising Shakespeare in today's society, due to Shakespeare himself being a world leader in creativity, a global influencer and a modern enthusiast who was well ahead of his time.

Benjamin Bott, CEO of BEVIN Creative and brain child of 'The Virtual Experience' commented; *"It was great watching people experiencing VR, some for the first time, in a truly unique way, with the experience also correlating with a worldwide milestone."*

Whilst the agency specialises in marketing communication, their 3D visuals and virtual reality department now accounts for over 50% of their business model, having exploded as a medium of choice when communicating products, services or media. Working with a variety of clients, the BEVIN team work with Samsung Gear, Oculus Rift and HTC Vive VR hardware throughout multiple industries and multiple briefs.

The agency's Manager of Marketing and Digital explained, *"Virtual reality is no longer a gimmick. It has real commercial application and delivers information in a new and exciting way. The challenge is more about knowing how far it can be extended or applied."*

The real estate and construction industry are known for using the technology, with buyers and investors now having the option to view off-the-plan property or land packages through the use of virtual reality headsets and virtual tours to (literally) step inside future properties



before putting pen to paper. The Perth-based agency has also produced virtual tours and virtual reality solutions for developers as a way of attracting investment into the Perth property market.

With construction leaders ProBuild as one of the agency's largest clients, BEVIN Creative have produced build-up 3D animation videos showcasing the stages of construction projects as they have progressed, presented at gala award nights and in tender submissions. Additional briefs have included 3D animation videos for Australian

mining giant BHP Billiton, showcasing safety procedure animations for mining equipment, produced to increase staff training and reduce on site fatalities.

Bott continued with another example, *"We have also been designing, constructing and installing Honeywell exhibits since 2012. Collaboration has been the cornerstone of our relationship and this has helped Honeywell successfully deliver their marketing initiatives through this medium. A key component of this is our ability to visualise their exhibitions in 3D."*

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In a recent Superdata report, industry growth figures have projected US\$11.8 billion in worldwide revenue this year with US\$40.3 billion projected global revenue by the year 2020, indicating this kind of technology is more than just a passing fad. With billions of dollars being invested each year into research and development in the virtual reality space, we have seen emerging growth areas in the gaming, travel, drone and fitness industries.

Travel company, Marriott, has already collaborated with technology leader, Samsung, to produce virtual reality postcards, which allow individuals to virtually travel to numerous destinations, with accompanying voice-overs. A unique (and cheaper) alternative to traditional travel.

If we stop to analyse the home fitness industry, products like the Holodia VR Rowing Machine Rig, Icaros Flying Simulator and VirZoom VR Exercise Bike Controller, all present new ways of working out in an alternative universe compared to your standard living room floor. With each giving the user the ability to transport to another visual dimension, whilst incorporating gaming-like challenges as a distraction to the workout itself, it's clear to see the new ways in which the technology is being applied.

2016 was a big year for VR gaming products, with the PlayStation VR unveiled in October as the next step in virtual gaming, developed by Sony Interactive Entertainment, allowing PlayStation4 console owners to get to the next level of interactive home entertainment. Throughout the same year we saw the release of the Google Day-

dream and Microsoft HoloLens, promised to change the way we interact at home, followed by an array of tech companies preparing VR devices, including the likes of Sony, Samsung and Facebook.

Many technology companies have been promoting virtual reality for a number of years, however, it's companies like BEVIN Creative, who have propelled this technology into the mainstream arena, allowing the general public and businesses to experience it within a practical environment.

As we approach an exciting new era in visual communication, it is now more important than ever to stand out from the ever increasing noise of competition. Virtual reality, whilst not new, still has the “wow factor” to attract and impress consumers in a way that garners their inner child. Assuring as it is to know there are companies experienced in delivering this kind of technology, the trick is understanding how best to integrate VR technology into your everyday business model. Chances are, your competitors are already thinking about it.

Moving into the future, businesses will forever be trying to maintain their status quo market share. In this ever changing “techno visual” age, design trends will be one of the key features in transcending businesses into this new exciting landscape.

The team at BEVIN Creative are ready for it. What about you?

