



The Land Dances Us: Decolonizing Space, Place, and Body

Report | Development of a Framework for Indigenous-Centred Digital Experiences

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Project Overview

Project Partners

Lead Organization



Indigenous Partners



Lisa Meeches



Consulting Partners



Adam Smith

Yousuf Afridi

K. J. (Jules)
McCusker



Funders



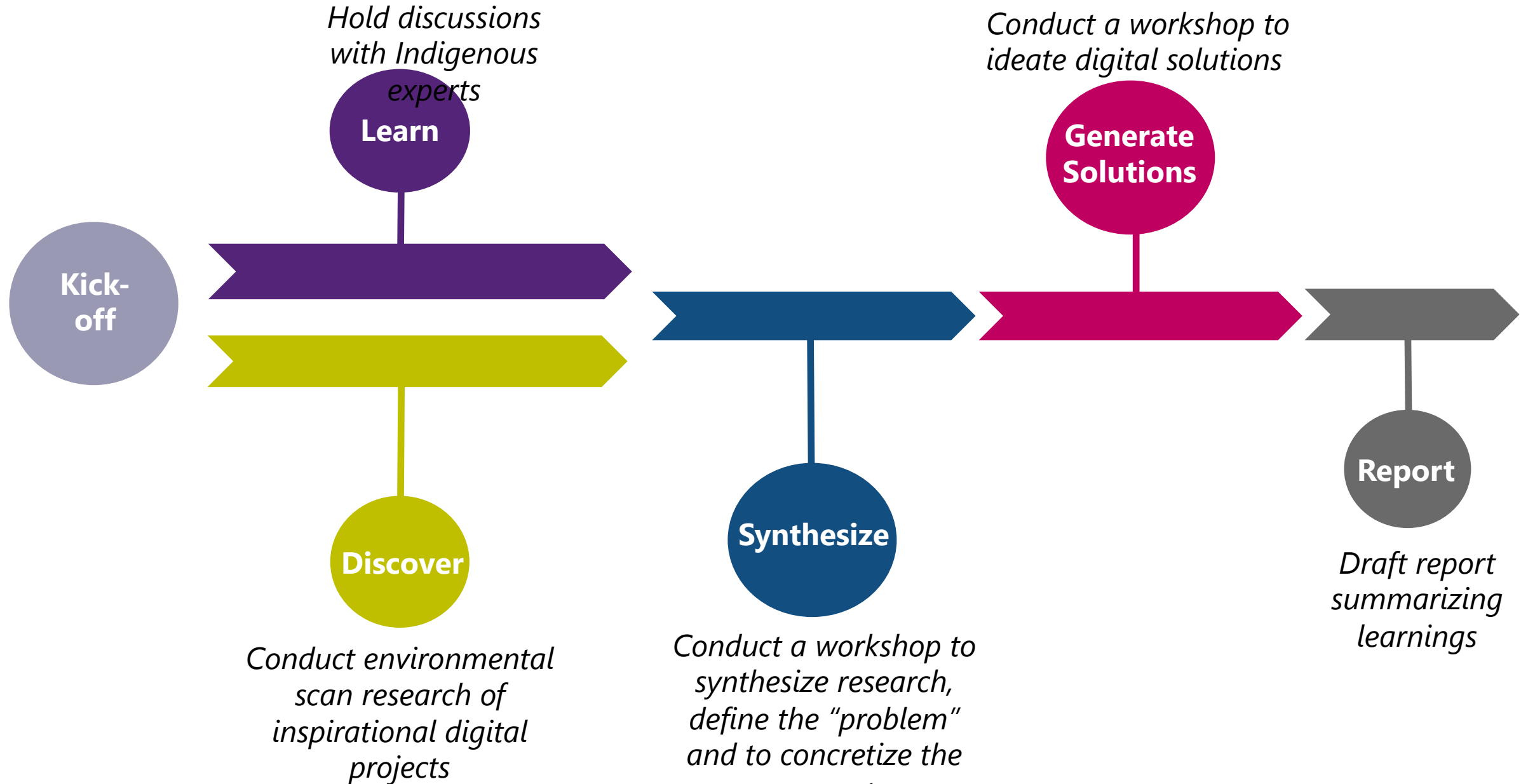
Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada

Objectives

- The objectives of this project were to:
 - Explore and develop a new model for digital content creation that embraces an Indigenous worldview and land-based practices.
 - This model (or framework) would help to center, elevate, and embed Indigenous content in Canada's narrative and accelerate the Indigenous resurgence of Canada. These objectives were achieved through the process outlined on the next slide.
- Through research and consultations, this project culminated in the development of a transformative Indigenous-led framework for creative intervention into the digital landscape.
- This report outlines the research, consultations, and "design thinking" that led to the development of this framework.

Process



Research

Research | Overview of Section

- Research, through both consultations and literature review, was a key aspect of developing a framework for digital content creation – one that embraces an Indigenous worldview.
- This section will summarize key learnings from the research conducted and highlight what key digital content considerations were learned through this process.
- The research was grouped into four main avenues of inquiry:
 - Indigenous economic models
 - Indigenous screen-based content protocols
 - Land-based pedagogy
 - Innovative digital projects
- Our approach to this research is highlighted on the following slide.

Research | Disrupting the Concept of Research

- It was important to **disrupt the established concept of “research”** in this project.
 - We approached research in a different way, to ensure that a framework was created using an Indigenous approach to research (and not a colonized/“standard” approach).
- We took an **iterative approach** to our research and consultations.
 - Rather than the “standard” approach of outlining key questions that we wanted answered, the project team discussed a more integrative framework of Indigenous research. Our approach was not “research as usual”, but rather we sought to center Indigenous values and protocols. Our research valued relationality and protocols, and an open, candid participatory dialogue. This did not mean that we rejected Western methodology, but that we could adapt if deemed appropriate.
 - Conversations with Indigenous knowledge experts were fundamental to this research approach. Each conversation became a forum for a free exchange of ideas and concepts, without preconceived notions or expectations of what needed to come from each conversation.

Discussions with Experts

Research | Indigenomics

- The research began with an exploration of value creation and models of development that advance Indigenous worldview, relations, multigenerational stewardship of land and care for all.
- To explore this avenue of interest, a discussion was held with Carol Anne Hilton, CEO and Founder of the Indigenomics Institute. Carol Anne is a recognized First Nations business leader and adviser of Nuuchahnulth descent from the Hesquiaht Nation on Vancouver Island.
- The Indigenomics Institute aims to “bring to the forefront human values and local economic practice”, and to create a forum for change and Indigenous economic leadership.
- Key learnings from this discussion and how they might apply in the creation of digital content are outlined below:

Notion of “Value”

- There is a need to recognize there are different concepts of value that should not be assumed.
- The value of something (“economic” or otherwise) may be very different depending on who is creating it, and who is consuming it.
- An Indigenous notion of prosperity has a bottom line, meaning the wellness of community.
- **Digital Content Consideration:** Traditional ticket purchasing is already being disrupted in the digital space. When creating a digital product for an audience to engage with, consider how the digital offering might disrupt the standard notion of value and value exchange. What is the social exchange with communities, and what could exchange look like rather than merely revenue.

Research | (Cont.)

Power in Design

- Indigenomics is a platform for empowerment – about Indigenous people getting a seat at the economic table.
- There has been a removal of identity through systemic design (the reserve system) – We want to take *back* the power in design – economics by design – the concept of **intentional design** facilitates Indigenous leadership in the discussion.
- Intentional design infuses intent into all aspects of the development process – a deliberate process that considers the desired impact of the work from the beginning. Every part of the process is designed to achieve the desired impact.
- A key part of productive design is asking better questions in order to get better results, and it is also about having two ears – one for listening and one for hearing.
- **Digital Content Considerations:** This concept of intentional design can be applied to the creation of digital content. There is power in designing an effective model for content creation to achieve better Indigenous-centered digital outputs.

Indigenous Leadership/Perspective

- Indigenous leadership is holistic and connected to land.
- The world is in an ecological crisis largely because the Indigenous perspective has been ignored.
- There is a spiritual reality behind the economy as we see it – what is beyond the visible, Indigenous knowledge and wisdom.
- Centering the earth as the starting place of the economy.
- **Digital Content Considerations:** Indigenous leadership leads to a reconceiving of the digital space from an Indigenous perspective, creating content that is authentic and imbued with Indigenous knowledge.

Research | Screen-Based Pathways and Protocols

- We recognize the necessity of **designing the right process**, and **asking the right questions** as (digital) content is being created to ensure it embraces an Indigenous worldview and modern technology. We consulted with imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, the world's largest Indigenous film and media arts festival, to explore the processes/questions for screen-based content development further.
- Naomi Johnson and Adriana Chartrand from imagineNATIVE spoke about what pathways and protocols must be considered and followed when creating screen-based content by, with and about Indigenous people.
- Those who are creating Indigenous screen-based content have **certain responsibilities**, to the stories they are telling, to the land they are filming on, families, ancestors, the environment (see diagram to the right).
- In order to ensure responsibility is upheld, there are several key principles to consider in developing screen-based content, as determined by imagineNATIVE (through extensive consultations). These principles are outlined on the next slide.

Circle of Responsibility



Diagram created by imagineNATIVE:

["Pathways and Protocols" -- OSPP Guide FINAL ENG.pdf - Google Drive](#)

Research | Screen-Based Pathways and Protocols (Cont.)

The protocol principles that should be at the core of screen-based content are:

- **Respect:** Respect for Indigenous peoples, our lands, our customary laws and traditions; preservation and protection of Indigenous knowledge and cultures is a key driving force; respect is also about building relationships – which is a long process – and the responsibilities that go along with those relationships.
- **Responsibility:** Indigenous screen storytellers recognize an inherent responsibility and accountability to community; shift in thinking from 'individual creative freedom/license' to "community responsibility."
- **Reciprocity:** Reciprocity is a corner stone in the creation of partnerships. Reciprocal relationships include aspects such as fair compensation, sharing of benefits, informed consent, and community empowerment.
- **Consent:** Determining consent and ownership of oral traditions and stories.

Screen-based Protocols Principles



Text and diagram by imagineNATIVE:

["Pathways and Protocols" -- OSPP Guide FINAL ENG.pdf - Google Drive](#)

Research | Screen-Based Pathways and Protocols (Cont.)

Key learnings and how these learnings might apply in the creation of digital content are outlined below:

Iterative Development Process

- When capturing Indigenous stories for screen-based media, an iterative creative process is important. This approach helps ensure proper respect, that the right people are spoken with, and that the right story is being told.
- By necessity, longer timelines are needed to ensure enough time to bring the right people around the table, to have the story reviewed and refined in a proper manner.
- It is also important to ensure that the stories are *allowed* to be told publicly, and how and when they could be shared.
- Such a collaborative creative process disrupts the notion of “author” or “auteur” – Indigenous screen-based content is best created with many different people and voices, working collaboratively and without a rigid hierarchy.
- **Digital Content Considerations:** Indigenous centred digital content creation can be an agent for creative disruption – bringing lots of voices around the table to iterate the story and undertake a collaborative design process is an innovative new approach that can create more respectful and authentic representation of Indigenous stories in the digital space.

Research | Screen-Based Pathways and Protocols (Cont.)

Narrative Sovereignty

- Another key takeaway from the discussion with imagineNATIVE was the notion of narrative sovereignty.
- Meaning, Indigenous stories should be told by Indigenous people -- “Nothing about us, without us”.
- This notion applies to not only which stories are being told, but *how* they are being told and by whom.
- Indigenous stories are non-linear and this type of storytelling is more conducive in the digital space.
- **Digital Content Considerations:** Indigenous creative control is necessary, not only to tell authentic stories, but also to ensure that collaboration is meaningful (not just someone (non-Indigenous) trying to exploit a story for their own gain).

Research | Land-Based Pedagogy

- **We have responsibilities as creators of Indigenous screen-based content** – to the stories they are telling, to the land they are filming on, families, ancestors, the environment.
- These notions were reinforced through a discussion with Lisa Meeches. Lisa Meeches is President, Founding Partner, and Executive Producer at Eagle Vision. Lisa is Anishinaabe from Long Plain First Nation. She is a producer, filmmaker, changemaker, and member of the Order of Manitoba and recently appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada (2020).
- Some highlights of this discussion with Lisa Meeches are outlined below:

Proximity to the Land

- The importance of the land – to both the creative process and to one's personal wellbeing – was stressed throughout the conversation.
- At some point we all have to go home – a pilgrimage back home (closer to the land) can allow one to enter a different (symbolic) time zone.
- Staying connected to the land is more than just physical, it is a value system.
- We all have guiding principles – so as long as you act in accordance to the laws of the land, you will have success.
- Being closer to the land also means being closer to Elders and teachers (both young and old).
- Creators can avoid a lot of conflict along the way by asking the Elders and young people for guidance.

Research | Land-Based Pedagogy (Cont.)

- Ceremony is imbued into Lisa Meeches' creative process.
- **Digital Content Considerations:** The physical connection to the land is important (i.e., going out and filming in situ), but this value system can reverberate through the entire creative process.

Paying homage to the Creator as a filmmaker

- It is a large responsibility and difficult to tell many of the hard stories, says Lisa Meeches.
- It can be hard to address really difficult subjects and takes a toll on the creatives. However, it's important to get these stories out. Once you open up, the spirit instructs you.
- When feeling burdened by the story, one can always seek the Creator's help.
- A storyteller's values are realized through action – how you treat people, lowering fear, everyday acts of kindness and generosity, showing respect, and finding moments of gratitude.
- It is still important to know your limitations, though -- to be courageous enough to set boundaries for how much time to give, what stories you are willing to tell, and what you want to share.
- Truly connecting to the humanity of Indigenous people makes for a better narrative, to tell the story of Indigenous peoples in a more authentic way.
- **Digital Content Considerations:** The creation process should be about honouring Indigenous stories, through accepting the responsibility of the story you are telling, and honouring the history of the story through intentional action (e.g., the work environment created, the production process, etc.).

Research | Land-Based Pedagogy (Cont.)

Pedagogical Approach

- One needs to be given the right to be a storyteller to tell certain stories– you have to earn the right to tell peoples' stories.
- Training and practice is one way to earn this right.
- Find processes that are based on natural law.
- It is a mentorship model, but not forced.
- It is based on traditional protocols. Let everyone's gift shine -- allow them to shine – the Creator will send you the gifted people.
- Everyone (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous) will learn about protecting sacred objects, ceremony and natural law.
- These laws are passed down and shared because this knowledge does not belong to one person.
- **Digital Content Considerations:** Digital content creation can be a forum for teaching, a collaborative and creative process in which knowledge is transferred amongst team members. Digital experiences can also be a way for Indigenous people AND non-Indigenous peoples to reconnect and/or deepen their connection to Indigenous culture and traditions.

Research | Summary of Key Research Highlights

- It is important to “**research the research**” – to consider a decolonial approach to research and the process of investigating is not necessarily linear and should be an iterative process.
- Also, **non-linear storytelling should be prioritized** – Indigenous stories are non-linear as a fundamental creative principle.
- “**Value**” **can be subjective** – it is not necessarily transactional and is not always necessarily financial or economic in nature.
- **Intentional design** can be a pathway for re-Indigenization.
- **Indigenous-led design** is required to lead to an **Indigenous-led build**.
- Work should be **based on natural law and traditional protocols** – we consider a fundamental ecological reorientation, requiring us to center and adapt natural law. The Indigenous concept of “living well” is living in harmony with nature and people, rather than the current focus on producing more goods, stimulating consumption, and an extraction mentality.
- **No stories about us without us** – narrative sovereignty ensures authentic storytelling.
- **Iterative and collaborative design** are necessary components of a disruptive (and effective) creative process.

Environmental Scan

Research | Environmental Scan

- In order to ground this digital project in an exploration of the possible, an environmental scan was conducted, to find examples of “digital inspiration”.
- Through this research, the team examined and discussed other innovative digital projects that provided examples of non-conventional digital storytelling (The results of this research can be found in the Appendix of this report).
- The purpose of this research was to identify what did and did not work in these examples, from an Indigenous perspective, and what gaps existed in terms of truly telling a story.
- **Key takeaways include:**
 - The static nature of many digital experiences looked at does not truly **immerse** the viewer/root them to experience or the land.
 - A linear story arch was limiting the potential of the story – **non-linear storytelling** is preferable and potentially more engaging.
 - **Authentic storytelling** is important and must be told from an Indigenous perspective to ensure it is respectful and to follow Indigenous protocols leading up to, during, and after the project.

Research | Environmental Scan (Cont.)

- Only using visuals (rather than making this a **multi-sensory experience**) is also limiting to our approach and does not capture all that land-based work can offer.
- **Low barrier to entry (from a UX perspective)** is an important consideration.
 - While we are trying to disrupt how stories are told/consumed, that disruption needs to be balanced with ensuring there is not too much friction in the User Experience (UX) that would cause a user to lose interest (e.g., downloading an app, learning a new game, etc.).
- **Accessibility (from a technology perspective)** is another important consideration, and should be incorporated into intentional design of digital content.
 - Accessibility includes inequalities in access to technology, bandwidth in rural areas, and access to devices/equipment (e.g., VR requires specialized equipment).
 - Accessibility can also include responsive design – for seamless transition between desktop and mobile viewing.

Design Thinking Workshops

Workshops | Overview of Section

- Once the research was completed, the core project team came together to participate in two workshops.
- These workshops were structured based on a “design thinking” approach: *“An iterative process in which we seek to understand the user, challenge assumptions, and redefine problems in an attempt to identify alternative strategies and solutions that might not be instantly apparent with our initial level of understanding.”* (1)
- These workshops were led by project consulting partners Adam Smith and Yousuf Afridi, who are experts in UX design and Design Thinking.
- The objectives of these workshops were:
 - To identify and summarize the key components of the research that they discovered/explored;
 - To identify the impact Indigenous-designed digital content can have on its audience;
 - To begin to articulate the “problem” that we are trying to solve through this exploration;
 - To begin to conceptualize how this “problem” might be solved in the form of digital content; and,
 - To explore how these concepts might be tested through a digital production pilot project (i.e. a “solution”)

Workshop #1 | Defining the Problem

Workshop #1 | Defining the Problem – Overview

- The goal of workshop #1 was to take the research inputs (conversations with Indigenous experts, and scan of innovative digital projects) and use them to define, as a group, what “problem” this work is trying to solve.
- The design thinking process allowed the theoretical research to become more grounded in reality.
- Participants were prompted to think about a digital experience that could be developed as a next step in this project (a pilot project using the resulting framework).
- The tasks for this workshops were:
 - To identify the goals of the digital experience.
 - To define the audience we want the content to reach.
 - To articulate the impact that we want this content to have on our primary and secondary audiences.

Workshop #1 | Identifying the Goals

- The group was presented with four key goals that this new model/approach for digital content creation could achieve.
- The group was asked to generate some thoughts about each prompt – what the words mean to them, why it is important, and to rank the goals.
- It was determined through consensus that the most important goals for this project

were to:

① Entertain

② Inspire

- The experience should “hook” the viewer by being entertaining. Then it should inspire people. Ultimately through that process of being inspired, the viewer should leave informed.
- Essentially, through engaging with the experience, the audience should leave not only entertained, but also feeling differently, and seeing the world differently.
- A summary of the thoughts generated by the group for each prompt can be found on the next slide.

3

Inform

- **The “Indigenous Worldview”**
- To see the earth as an entity, rather than taken for granted
- Perspective of and on the land
- Hypothesis: this could lead to a deeper understanding and a new way of creating digital projects.
- Tackle the willful ignorance to the value of the earth.
- Bring historical stories into modern context.

1

Entertain

- **The “Hook”**
- Strength of the vision
- This should draw me in; the hook... then inform ... then inspire
- Want to keep focus on the story; Indigenous story-led.
- Don't lose sight of creativity and let technology to overpower the story.

2

Inspire

- **Leave the experience changed**
- More appealing because it is less pragmatic
- Less pragmatic than "take action" and "inform"
- Want to leave the experience changed in a way
- See things from a new vantage point
- Leave them wanting to learn more
- Spiritually and emotionally uplifted
- Be exposed to a 'new old' story
- Restoration of faith and culture
- Form new relationship with land
- Bring me closer to something meaningful.
- Divisions, politics... see the lift in stories and their magnificence
- Extract a purer meaning /clarity

4

Take Action

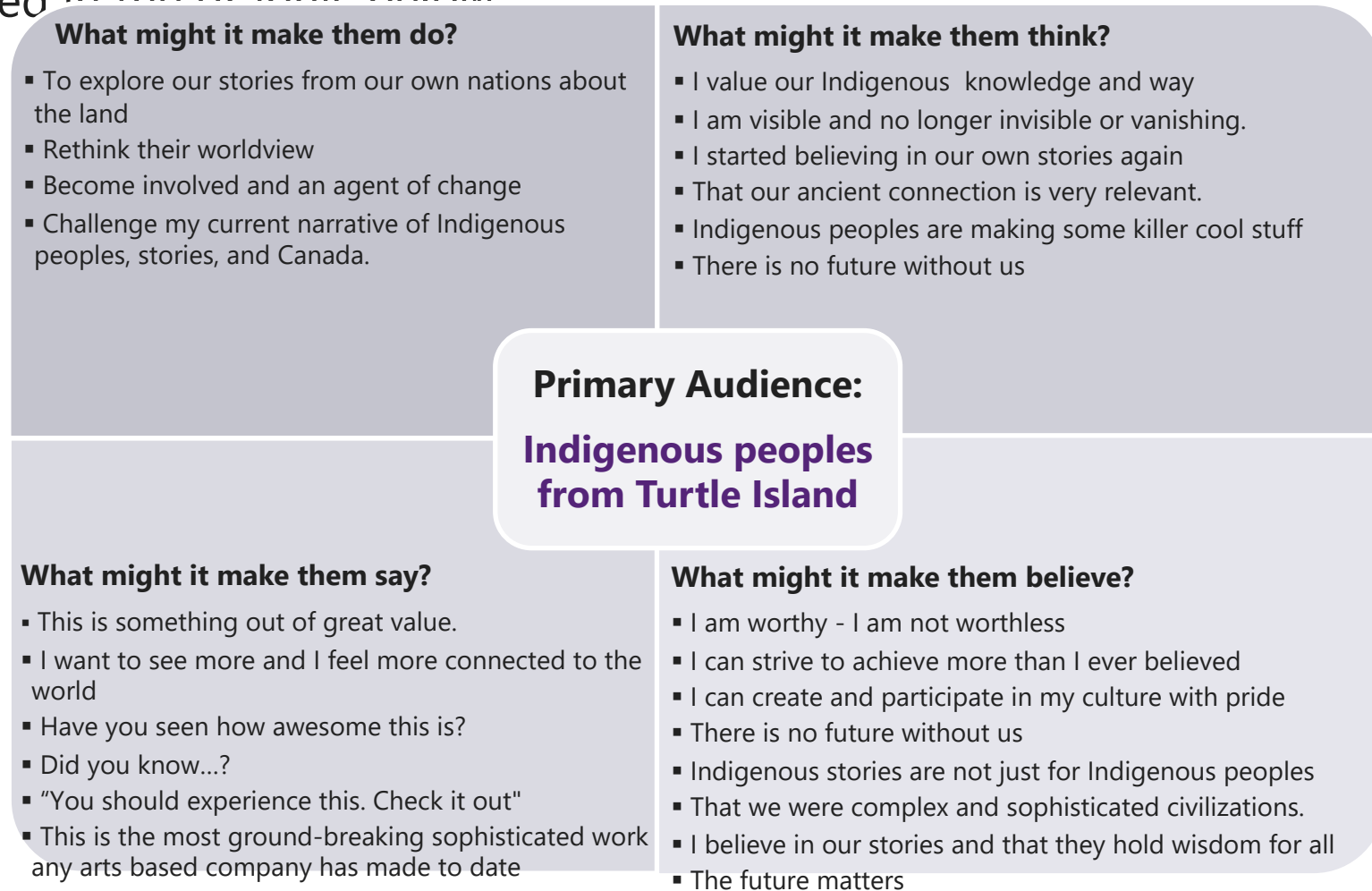
- **To want to do something after the experience**
- Connect to land and to want to learn the stories and culture from this land, Canada.

Workshop #1 | Defining the Audience

- Once the goals were defined, we developed a long-list of potential audiences for this type of digital experience. The long list included: environmentalists, art lovers, creators, educators, Indigenous youth, everyone, Indigenous peoples from Canada and around the world, non-Indigenous audiences in Canada and outside Canada, all Canadians, and “by us for us”.
- In the end, four audience categories were identified: Indigenous, Non-Indigenous, International, and Local to Canada.
- From these four, **Indigenous peoples from Turtle Island** (further defined as “English-speaking North America”) was determined to be the **primary** audience, and **Non-Indigenous people living on Turtle Island** the **secondary**.
- Designing the project for Indigenous peoples allows for integrity and authenticity to remain at the centre of the digital content.
- Prioritizing an Indigenous audience, while inviting non-Indigenous audiences into the experience, allows a digital experience to achieve the goals to “inspire” and “inform”. This avoids content being “watered down”. Content should not be designed to “appeal” to a non-Indigenous audience.
- This primary audience also allows for the creation of a digital project that incorporates the notions of **narrative sovereignty** and **Indigenous creative control**.

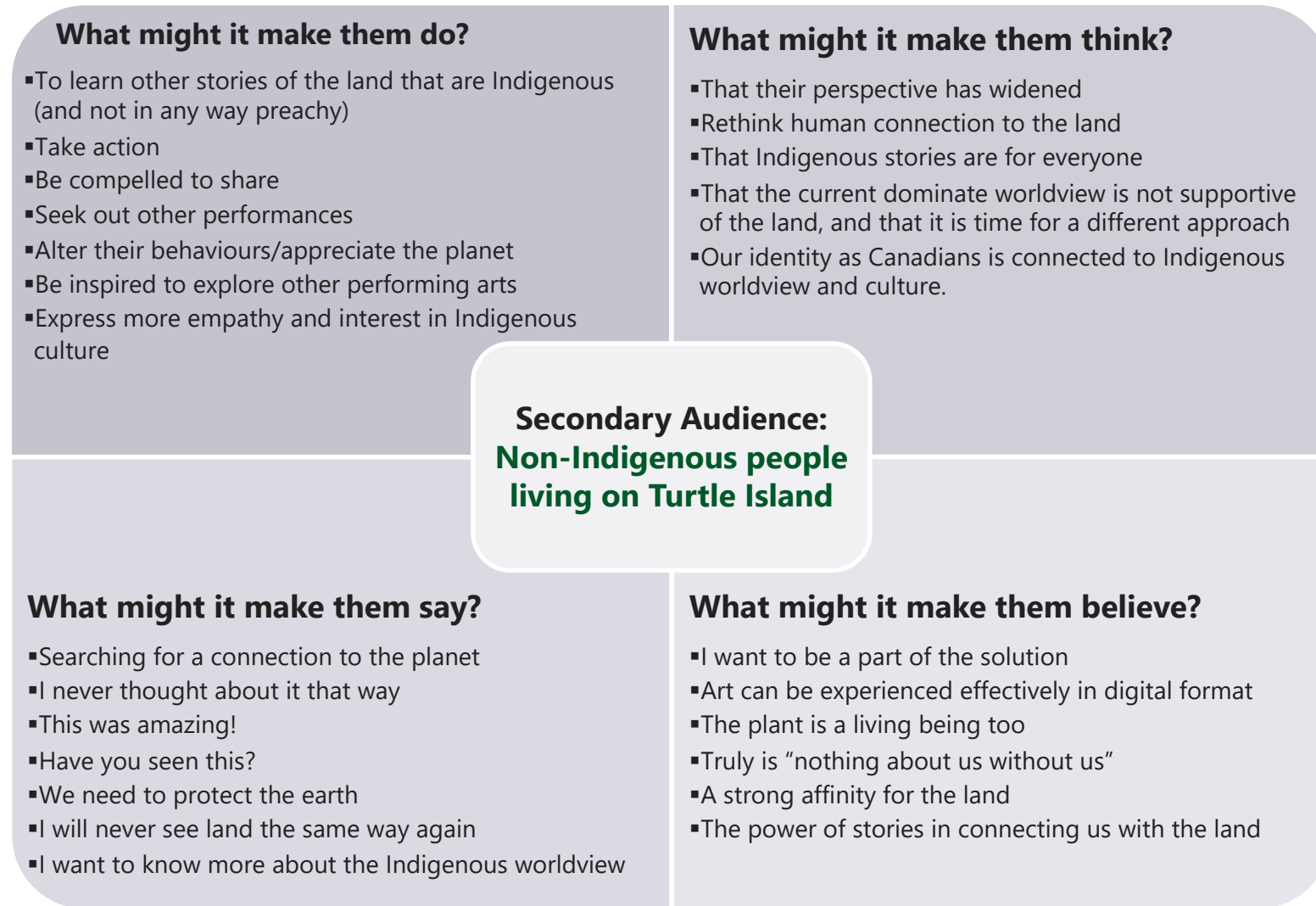
Workshop #1 | Impact on Primary Audience

Workshop #1 closed with a discussion of the desired impact we would like this digital experience to have on the primary audience. The discussion was divided into four key questions, with Indigenous members of the project team brainstorming the following impacts, as summarized in the graphic below:



Workshop #1 | Impact on Secondary Audience

The same exercise was conducted regarding the secondary audience, resulting in the impacts outlined in the diagram below:



Workshop #1 | Key Takeaways

This workshop resulted in several key takeaways in regards to not only what is important when creating Indigenous digital experiences, but also what a pilot project might look like:

- The ideal digital content to test Indigenous digital content development would be made specifically for an **Indigenous audience** (with non-Indigenous people as a secondary audience). Indigenous content is not only for Indigenous people, but by making them the primary audience it ensures that the story is culturally appropriate, and authentically told.
- The hope is that by experiencing this digital content, the audience will leave **entertained** and **informed** (about Indigenous stories, metaphysics, history, the land, etc.).
- This digital experience should be **centred around the earth**.
- This experience can allow Indigenous peoples to feel pride in Indigenous stories, to value our own knowledge, to know our worth, to want to share this story/experience with others, and to recognize there is no future without us.

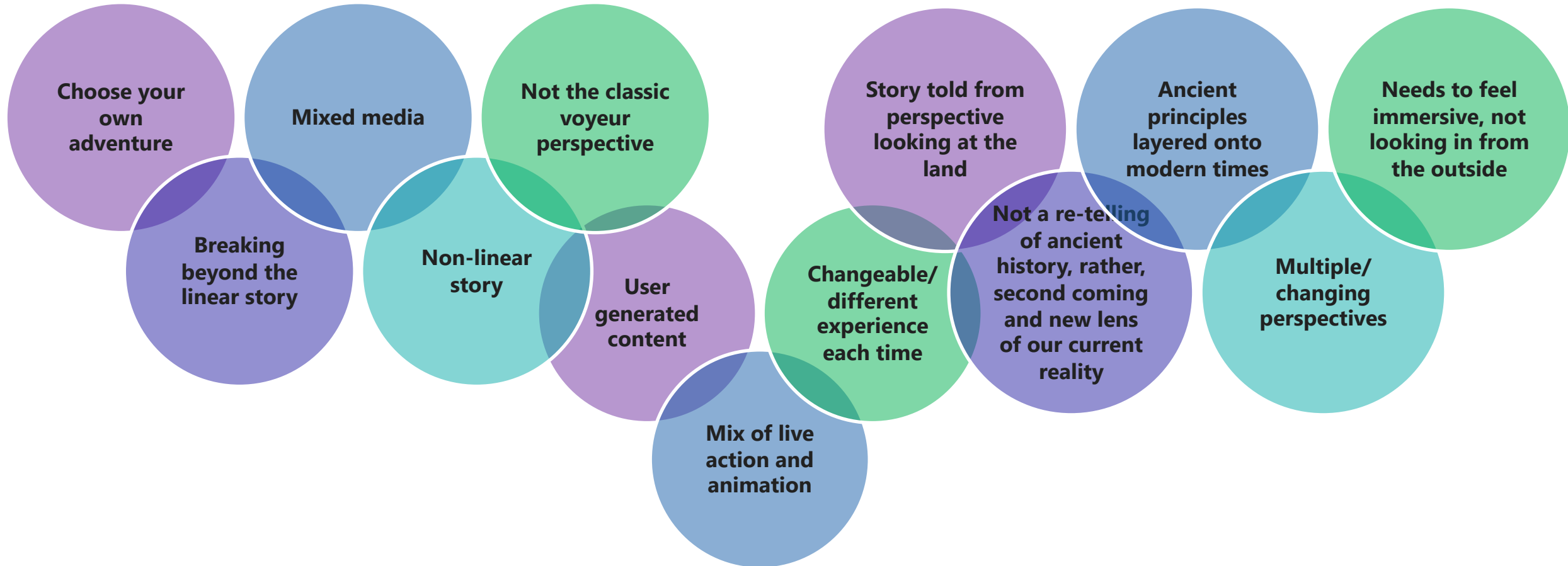
Workshop #2 | Shaping a Digital Solution

Workshop #2 | Shaping Solutions – Overview

- Workshop #2 aimed to build upon the insights gained in the previous session. The goal was to start ideating about what a digital solution (i.e., a digital experience pilot project) might look like – one that would:
 - Serve Indigenous audiences while inviting participation from non-Indigenous audiences;
 - Entertain and inform; and,
 - Inspire and impact the audience in profound ways (e.g., pride in heritage, affinity for the planet, appreciate of the power of stories, etc.).
- In order to start to ideate a solution, the facilitation team asked the following of the group:
 1. **What elements should an Indigenous-centred digital experience include?**
 - With the digital examples from the environmental scan in mind, the team was tasked with identifying elements that would allow this experience to both “entertain” and “inform”.
 2. **Which mix of media and technology would be required for such an Indigenous-centred experience?**
 - What would the technical elements be, in order to properly tell the story, but also to ensure this experience is entertaining.
 3. **What Indigenous protocols should be a part of a framework for Indigenous-centred digital experience?**
 - In order to ensure that any digital content is imbued with the learnings we have to date, we wanted to highlight

Workshop #2 | Elements of a Digital Experience

1. What elements should an Indigenous-centred digital experience include?



Workshop #2 | Media and Technology Requirements

2. Which mix of media and technology would be required for such an Indigenous-centred experience?

Device Agnostic

Synch across multiple devices

Shared Experience

Audience can experience it together, even if apart/watching on different screens

Non-linear time

Toggle between contemporary and past views of the land

Immersive

Not just a flat viewing experience

Engaging

Required audience to interact, but the elements do not detract from the central story experience

Accessibility

Technology should be accessible, but also the notion of access vs. protection (of stories)

Workshop #2 | Indigenous Protocols

3. What Indigenous protocols should be a part of a framework for Indigenous-centred digital experience?

Narrative sovereignty

Screen-based
Protocols & Principles:
respect, responsibility,
consent, process

Building respectful
relationships based
on trust

Recognizing cultural
jurisdiction

Indigenous content:
Nothing about us,
without us

Value cultural and
intellectual property

Working with archival
materials

Hiring a community
liaison

Workshop #2 | Key Takeaways

- Ultimately, any successful digital experience (in the eyes of the objectives of this project) should:
 - Prioritize non-linear storytelling
 - Be immersive
 - Incorporate the audience through interactivity (e.g., User content, choose your own adventure)
 - Incorporate dynamic/non-static perspective
 - Connect the viewer to the land
 - Consider accessibility, and balance access with protection
 - Ensure Indigenous protocols are met
 - Disrupt the industrial notion of time
 - Have Indigenous creative control/narrative sovereignty
 - Allow for a new lens to be placed on our current reality

Framework for Indigenous-Centred Digital Experience Development

Framework | Overview

- All of the aforementioned inputs led to the development of a framework for developing Indigenous-centred digital experiences and spaces (summarized in the image on the right).
- The objective of this framework is to ensure that Indigenous digital experiences can be agents of disruption, rather than an extension of the already colonized space - so often a hallmark of arts institutions.
- This framework outlines the vital elements necessary to center, elevate, and embed Indigenous content in the digital space.
- We are disrupting the colonial storytelling model, to ensure that content and experiences are created



Framework | Explanation

1. Disruption of the creative process: Iterative research and collaborative design

- Creating a digital experience collaboratively is not only an Indigenous model of working, but also ensures that there are many voices around the table.
- Multiple voices ensures the story is being told in the proper way, that the story being told is one that is allowed to be shared in a digital format, and that the research and design process is imbued with Indigenous methodology.

2. Narrative Sovereignty

- Indigenous creative control is necessary to ensure “nothing about us without us”.
- Stories should not be told about Indigenous people without Indigenous people.

3. Re-thinking of the Value Proposition

- Removing digital experiences from the confines of a traditional “ticket purchase/viewing” exchange between the art and the audience can create more value in the work, and allow it to have more impact on the viewer.

Framework | Explanation

4. Indigenous perspective: Non-linear storytelling and non-industrial concept of time

- Indigenous stories are non-linear, and this notion should be incorporated into Indigenous digital experiences, in order to not simply re-create “mainstream” formats for art in the digital space.

5. The land is at the centre

- This point refers to centering all aspects of the digital experience – the narrative, the viewpoint, the learnings – around the land, rather than those who live on it.
- By centering the experience in this way, it ensures that it is grounded in an Indigenous worldview, and provides more opportunity for viewers to leave the experience with more understanding and respect for the land around us.
- Land-based pedagogy (teaching) should also be embedded throughout the process, be it in the training of the team developing the content, or sharing public-facing content.

6. Respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and consent

- It is necessary when creating any screen-based content to adhere to the proper Protocols.
- The imageNATIVE [On-Screen Protocols and Pathways](#) guide provides an excellent overview of the foundational protocols that should be adhered to.

Appendix: Digital Inspiration – Environmental Scan



Digital Inspiration

The Land Dances Us





The research brief

We conducted research to find examples of immersive/experiential digital projects from around the world. The purpose of this research is to gather inspiration from a range of digital projects, particularly around models of performance and how audiences engage with this content in an interactive way. These projects are not exclusively Indigenous-related, range in media, and are at times larger in scope and scale than what we would be looking to do.



Immersion models summary

1

Stumble-upon Augmentation

Augmented experiences that are fixed to a physical location and require foot-traffic to share the experience

2

Installation Augmentation

Organized, event-based augmented experiences bound to a venue. Usually ask participants to pay to experience, however often allow shared social experiences

3

Where-you-are Augmentation

Usually individual augmented experiences facilitated by personal devices, usually an AR capable phone or tablet

4

Immersive Digital

Not augmented in the truest sense, but allow users to experience more immersive screen-based digital experiences through the use of 3D or sound which react to user input



Experiential story models summary

1

Ambient

imagineNATIVE stories play out around the user, follow no particular flow, and require no interaction by the user. Best employed as a supplemental model to enhance other story models

2

Linear

Stories that follow an explicit path, and require user input primarily to advance, or explore content which will not alter the storyline

3

Branching Linear

Stories that have a primary backbone of a story, however allow users to branch off and explore or exist within a particular moment or side-story. Users always will rejoin the main timeline after branching

4

Non-linear

Stories that are either intentionally told out of sync, or provide the user with the ability to explore the story in their own way - such as choose-your-own-adventure

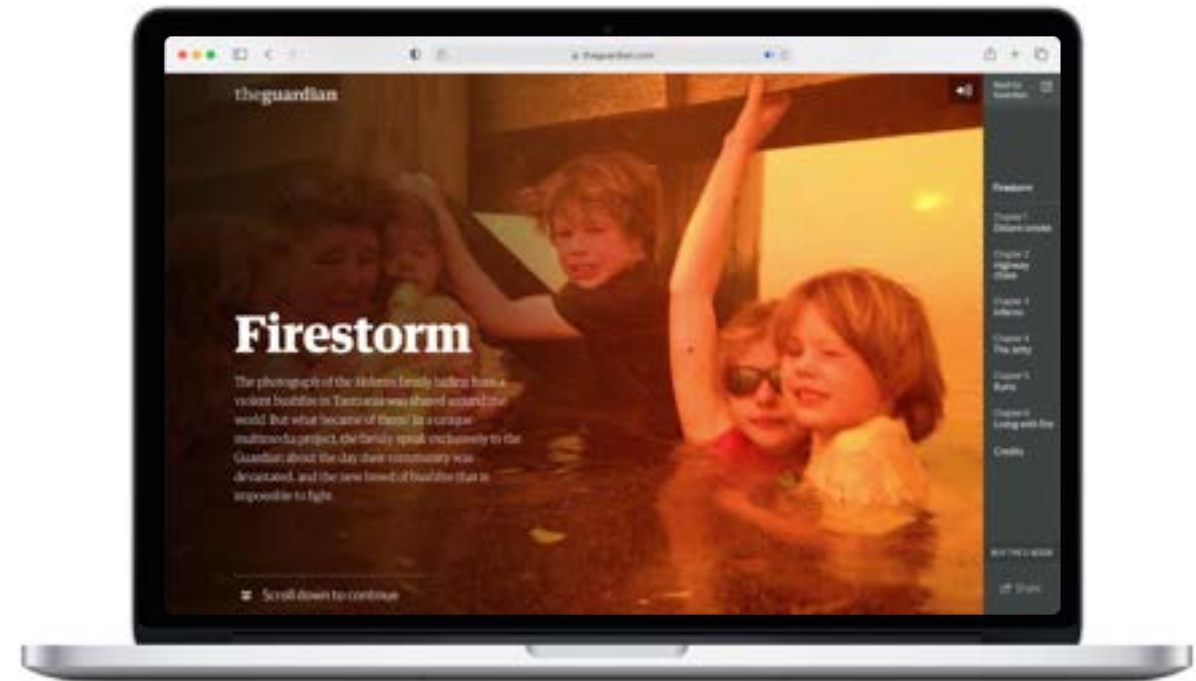
Firestorm: the story of the bushfire at Dunalley 01

Summary

Firestorm, is the Guardian's groundbreaking multimedia project about a catastrophic bushfire that devastated the small Tasmanian town of Dunalley. It's a half-hour, online experience produced in 2013, which blends longform writing, video documentary, audio material and interactive elements.

Learn more

- [Experience it yourself](#)
- [Masterclass offered on how they produced it](#)



Award-winning multimedia storytelling by the Guardian



Firestorm: the story of the bushfire at Dunalley

01

1

What is remarkable about this storytelling experience?

- It's a beautiful blend of written storytelling in bite sized pieces with full-screen video backgrounds that capture the emotion of the moment.
- User generated content from a mobile phone captured the moment from 2013 was integrated into the storyline
- It uses imagery from a fixed point of view which makes the viewer feel like they are there without using augmented reality or other major digital interventions.
- Integrated audio clips add to the ambience in a gripping fashion

2

Key takeaways

- Viewing this is akin to a relatable memory. Snapshots of time in one's mind are recalled when interacting with this story
- Letting the video and content linger enables the viewer feel like they are there. They are present in the moment. The viewer is not shoved along by a timeline – the viewer is in control how they consume the content. One can take pause and observe and see new things
- It is not overly complicated from a technology standpoint



Apollo in Real Time

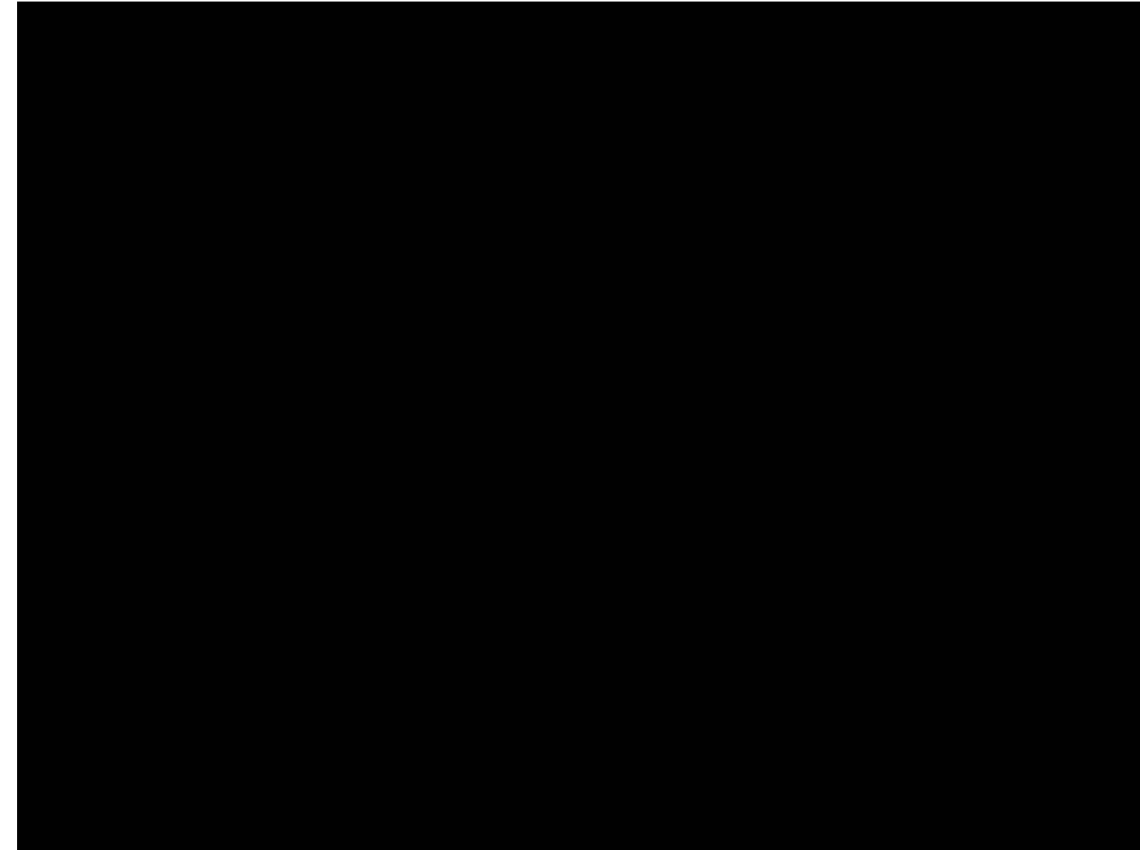
02

Summary

Apollo in Real Time is an interactive, multimedia website that presents the Apollo 11, Apollo 13, and Apollo 17 missions as they happened at the time by compiling and synchronizing thousands of hours of audio and video recordings, transcripts, and photographs. Viewers can explore the multimedia properties, search the transcript, or experience the in-progress feed. Each media element is synchronized precisely (or as close as possible) to the actual mission time's master clock, Ground Elapsed Time.

Learn more

- [Experience it yourself](#)



3 minute case study: <https://vimeo.com/369205354>



Apollo in Real Time

02

1

What's remarkable about this storytelling experience?

- It is a mix of media gathered over 50 years assembled by one person over the course of six years. Ben Feist recreated the Apollo 11 mission experience and made it accessible to the masses
- Ability to experience the story from a person of your choosing e.g. a mission control or from the astronaut's POV
- Ability for viewers to choose their journey through the story. Begin, pause, or end whenever you like

2

Key takeaways

- Retelling a historic event in a digital experience while retaining authenticity
- The user can choose to watch the Apollo 11 mission in a linear, end-to-end fashion or can navigate to and stay in a moment and experience it in greater detail



Black Mirror: Bandersnatch (choose your own adventure) 03

Summary

Bandersnatch is an interactive film. A brief tutorial, specific to the device being streamed on, explains to the viewer how to make choices. When presented with a choice point, the user has ten seconds to make a choice or a default decision is made for them. The average viewing is 90 minutes, though the quickest path ends after 40 minutes. There are 150 minutes of unique footage divided into 250 segments.

Learn more

- [See it for yourself on Netflix](#)
- [Read more about it on Wikipedia](#)
- [Check out the critical review by NY Times](#)



Released December 28, 2018 in 28 language on Netflix



Black Mirror: Bandersnatch (choose your own adventure) 03

1

What is remarkable about this storytelling experience?

- Each viewer could experience the same story entirely differently based on the choices they make
- From a film production standpoint the volume of content created that most users won't ever see. It's a dedication to the craft and the art of storytelling
- They built the experience and adapted the user interface to work on TVs, smartphones, tablets, and computers.
- First time this level of interactivity was executed across this volume of devices for the purpose of a single story

2

Key takeaways

- Based on feedback, viewers did not feel like they missed out on the story if they only watched it once without exploring more alternative paths
- Viewers were able to have a conversation about the story regardless of the path that they took
- Adapting the story for different devices increased immersion accessibility and reach



Quibi app

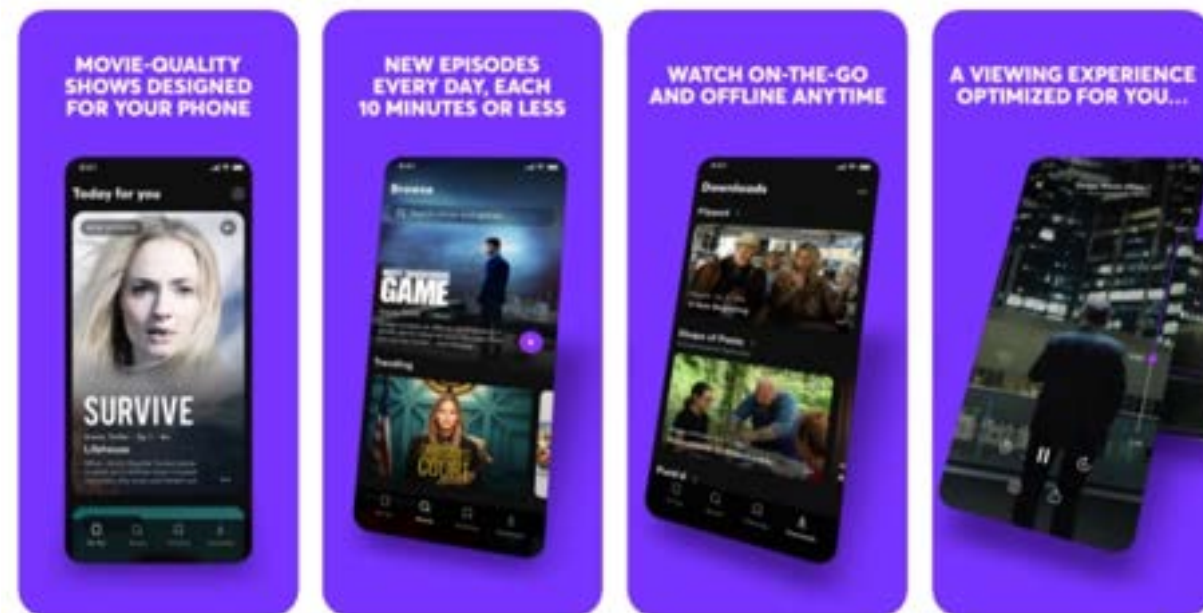
04

Summary

Quibi was a short-lived American streaming platform that generated content for viewing on mobile devices. Unlike many streaming video platforms, Quibi's content was made specifically for mobile devices and could be viewed in either a traditional 16:9 horizontal aspect ratio, or a 9:16 vertical frame (users were able to shift between them). Instead of half-hour TV episodes or feature films, content on Quibi was delivered in episodes of 10 minutes or less.

Learn more

- [A critique of Quibi's success and demise](#)
- [Check out their YouTube channel for a flavour of content](#)



Founded August 2018, launched on April 6, 2020 and shut down December 1, 2020 after falling well short of its subscriber projections.



Quibi app

04



1

What is remarkable about this storytelling experience?

- One big bet on one device for storytelling — mobile phone. Content could not be consumed on devices like televisions
- All shows were filmed in 16:9 (landscape) and 9:16 (portrait) which is complex for from a production standpoint but interesting from a storytelling standpoint

2

Key takeaways

- Shows used the 'Turnstyle' feature to show content through two perspectives in parallel (figuratively and literally). Some programs used the *Turnstyle* (ability to flip between portrait and landscape mode) in clever ways: A thriller series called *Wireless* shows the filmed action of the story when you look at it in landscape – but when you rotate into portrait, you can see what's happening on the character's device while the story is playing out.
- Handcuffing content to specific platforms can be a risk to adoption and advocacy



Atelier des Lumières 05

Summary

Atelier des Lumières is a center of digital art which hosts immersive exhibitions in Paris. A historic building is juxtaposed with immersive digital technologies to invite people on an emotional and interactive journey into the very heart of the works of the great artists such as Gustav Klimt, Van Gogh, Monet, Renoir, Chagall, and Yves Klein.

Learn more

- [Check out their current immersive exhibitions on their site](#)
- [See their YouTube channel for a preview of the exhibitions](#)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qs8wjL0C3jo>



Atelier des Lumières

05

1

What is remarkable about this storytelling experience?

- It makes art approachable, immersive and emotional
- Transform physical spaces into a canvas
- Adding animation and scale to art creates a wow moment and invites the viewer into the mind of the artist
- Converting printed art into 3D projections enables you to walk into the paintings

2

Key takeaways

- The experience is short lived. You have to be there to experience it and appreciate it. It is not a shareable experience thereafter
- The physical space can contribute to the storyline through its symbolic or historic significance



Re-wild Our Planet

06

Summary

Originally a shared, social, mixed-reality experience combining synchronized on-device AR, physical screens & sounds in fixed installations, the experience is now also available as an app for Google devices.

In the installations, when users interact with the virtual environment, their actions “rewild” the biome, and they can see the effects on the ecosystem, wildlife, and the planet. Whereas the individual app experiences are more centred around an AR Mini series telling specific episodic stories through AR.



Installation video: <https://vimeo.com/403108170>
<https://vimeo.com/466382295>



at home video:



Re-wild Our Planet

06

1

What is remarkable about this storytelling experience?

- A world-first spatial voting system allowed users to collectively decide which biome to explore by standing in specific zones
- A unique mix of AR, Video, and interactivity allowed users to physically re-wild the biomes and watch as the experience reacted in real time with the actions of their body
- Interesting combination of connected digital experiences, from streaming video on Netflix, to augmented installation / event, to an AR app with episodic content

2

Key takeaways

- A single story can be deployed and experienced in multiple mediums and methods simultaneously, each with their own UX, but bound to the same outcome and messaging
- Multiple unique angles and experiences used to communicate the same message. The show was about wildlife, the shared experience was about what we can do as a collective, and the AR app was about deeper individual learnings, and individual impact

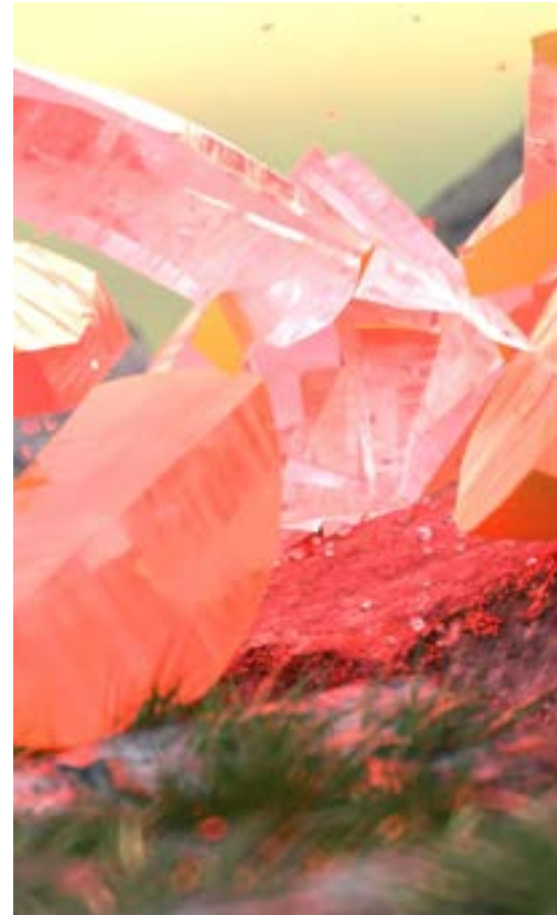
Rekorder-land 2019

07

Summary

Alcohol, ambiance & augmented reality. This pop-up bar experience in London England, brought the vibrant 3D animations including fruit and crystalline forms from the alcohol brand's marketing campaigns colliding and floating throughout the bar.

Somewhat of a gimmicky way to repurpose existing assets to bring focus to an overblown taste-test, however the idea of bringing mixed reality in an ambient, unobtrusive fashion is very interesting, even in this case where participants have to wear Magic Leap headsets.





Rekorder-land 2019

07

1

What is remarkable about this storytelling experience?

- The augmentation was ambient, not obtrusive or asking for the user to interact - rather to simply experience
- Augmentation in the truest sense - bringing something more to an otherwise mundane and unremarkable experience

2

Key takeaways

- Although this example is a branding experiment, there is something special about the ambient immersion it provided, communicating without communicating. There are interesting opportunities to create experiences that speak subliminally and subconsciously to users
- Allows users to “exist” within a moment. The lack of conscious interaction, needing to cognitively seek out the next action, allows the moment to play out around them - essentially allowing them to live in a moment in time, a state of being, much like a memory



Pepsi Max AR Bus Shelter 08

Summary

Just before the Pandemic hit, Pepsi Max created a camera / display mixed reality experience that overlaid canned special effects & animations onto the live stream of the street. From Attaching robots, to clowns floating from the sky in balloons, to Tigers running at the screen, and whatever that tentacle thing is - the experience was intended to shock viewers into paying attention.

The excellent mix of reality and digital in the physical world without the need for viewers to use devices to engage is brilliant.





Pepsi Max AR Bus Shelter

08

1

What is remarkable about this storytelling experience?

- No requirements to experience. Deviceless, activationless
- Fixed position experience, targeted at passers-by
- Unexpectedness of the augmentation creates shock-value, and makes passers-by question what is really real

2

Key takeaways

- As barrier-less as you get. All that is required is proximity to activate the experience. Not well suited for long-form storytelling, but as a entry-point which could be leveraged to kick off personal, on-device augmented experiences that passers-by can take with them
- Binding augmentations to physical locations is interesting, especially in connection with the Land Dances Us. Are there important locations that could act as real-world entry points to a digital experience?
- Can we use camera + screen to create deviceless views into the past, or an alternate present? Or even possible futures?



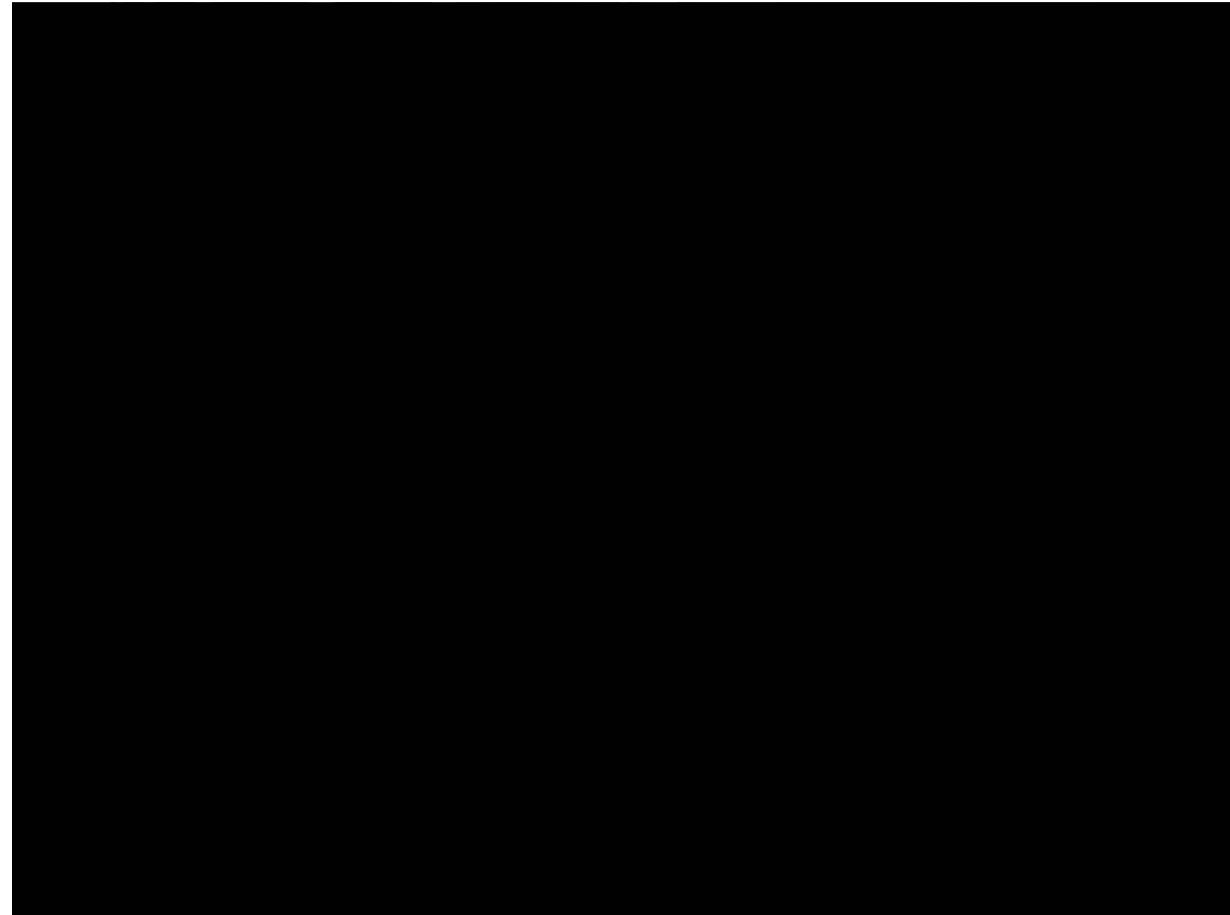
ComplexLand 2020

09

Summary

A digital-only version of the live ComplexCon - a real life annual conference in Long Beach. All together it acted as a virtual mall, a conference, and a music venue - all strung together as a 3D open-world game, directly in the browser. The world was experienced in real-time by conference goes, where they could "virtually" walk up to a stage, or attend a panel discussion, shop or hunt for exclusive shoe drops.

The event is now over, but I was able to get in and play before it closed on the 11th.





ComplexLand 2020

09

1

What is remarkable about this storytelling experience?

- A full 3D open world game model allowed users to traverse the experience, and engage with installations, exhibits etc to bring a real-world feel to a virtual conference
- Users interacted with NPCs in the experience who would give them clues to loot-drops (real sneakers), and direct them through the experience
- Users could order food at a virtual food truck, and have it delivered, or buy products in 3D virtual shops

2

Key takeaways

- We don't need to think of augmented reality as the only way to create a shared, digital-only experience for users, here they created a virtual world for a conference which brought people together in a 3D environment, experienced through a computer screen
- The 3D virtual world was connected to the real world, by shopping for real product, live panel discussions were experienced by many in a virtual theater, loot drops were couriered to the finder, orders at food trucks were delivered within 30-45 min
- This used the virtual as an entry point to the real

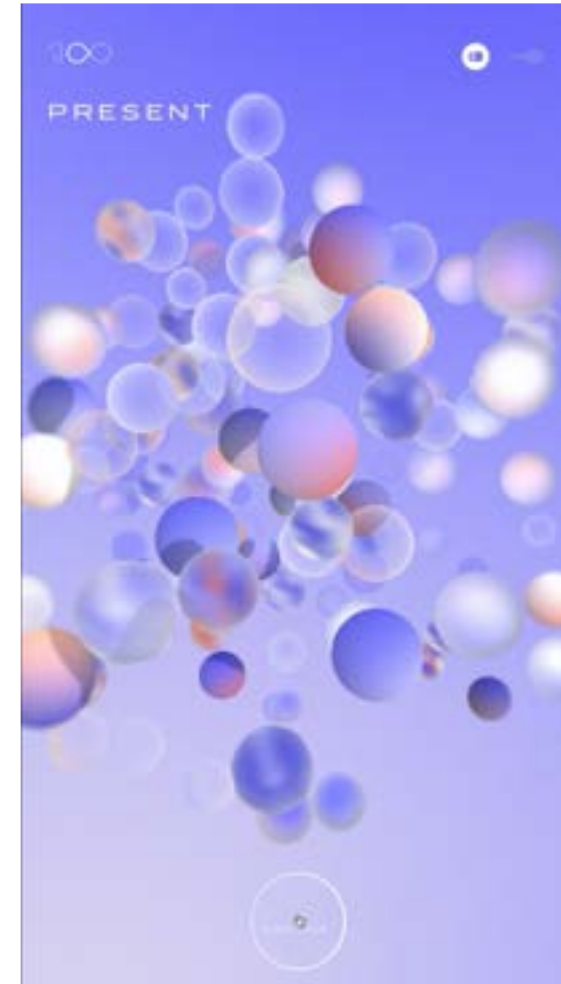
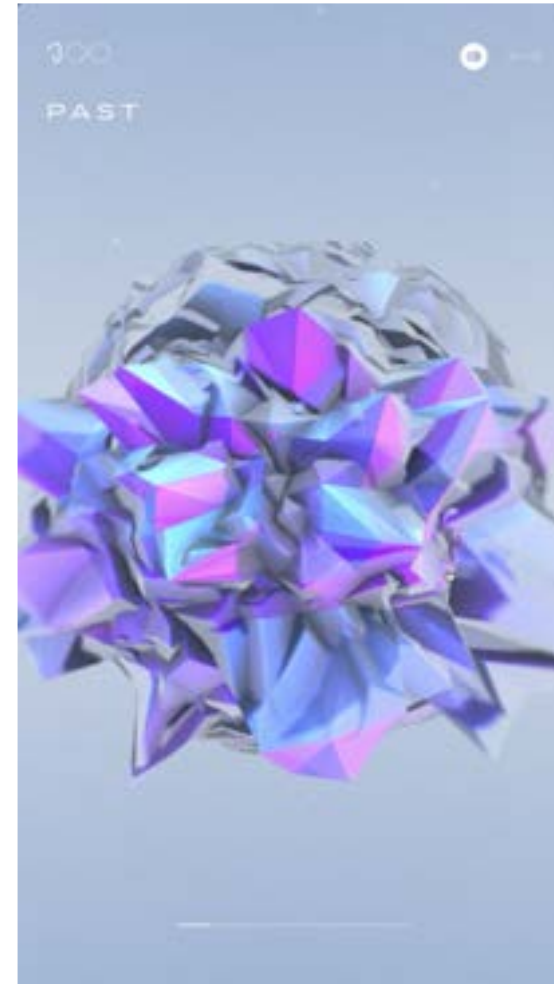


Jam 3 FWA100 10

Summary

While not augmented reality, this experience blends real-time interaction and feedback from both visual and audio perspectives to create an experience that transcends using their work to explore their past, but uses the experience itself to tell the story.

The experience feels alive, and making non-organic shapes and materials feel like they're breathing with your interaction. Compelling use of audio from ambient sound to audible interaction-feedback further enhances the immersiveness of the experience.



<https://fwa100.jam3.com> - definitely worth exploring



Jam 3 FWA100 10

1

What is remarkable about this storytelling experience?

- Technically outstanding, from a production standpoint
- There are no examples of their work, and no words used to explain their progression and history, however the experience itself, the visuals and the audio infer a sense of "state", "circumstance" and even "progression" while interacting with the experience

2

Key takeaways

- The interactivity between shape, space and sound is not directly telling a story, but is communicating a lot to the viewer
- Three dimensions can be very powerful when executed well on a two dimensional screen
- Sound and visual feedback can be as powerful and meaningful as the use of augmented or in-situ experiences



Other experiences for reference

Aldo: Step into love

<https://www.aldoshoes.com/stepintolove/ca/en/experience/index.html>

Arcadia Earth

<https://www.arcadiaearth.co/>

East of the Rockies

<https://eastoftherockies.com/>

Immersive Van Gogh Exhibit

<https://vangoghexhibit.ca/>

Dance Magazine Online Videos: An Open Invitation <https://www.dancemagazine.com/best-online-dance-videos-2646888257.html?rebelltitem=3#rebelltitem3>

Acknowledgement



Canada Council
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Conseil des arts
du Canada

We acknowledge the generous support of the Canada Council for the Arts.
Nous remercions le Conseil des arts du Canada de son soutien.