

Abstract

Immersive Experience Media. ImmEx

The experience of immersion in virtual environments has recently become one of the most buzzing fields of technological development. There are many forms of practical tests, of interviews and explanations that are involved in immersion engineering, such as that of 3-D-cinema or the Oculus Rift. Specific software is shaped to fit the hardware, and there are many kinds of storytelling that stem from the dynamics of new technology. These manifold practices and arguments that surround immersive media belong to the overall phenomenon of immersive experience. Research has already shown that “immersion” might cover a wide range of different experiences; this difference quite obvious when one looks at the media of immersion, which reach from books to High-End-Technology. The very theory of immersion has been the subject of various academic disciplines: philosophy has dealt with the question of simulacra and simulated environments, media studies have looked into the systemic conditions of immersion, game studies have done research on the software and the design that fosters immersive experience, cognitive psychology has given an empirical account of what goes on in the human brain and body, and game theory can provide explanation on how immersion affects our choices or implies specific social choices. This list shows clearly that disciplines tend to differ as to what is relevant in immersive experience. And this difference calls for a discussion on relevance, where these theories can be presented to each other and combined in order to learn about the different aspects of immersive experience – and ultimately the precise phenomenon that stands behind the buzzword.

The teams which joined in this project belong to Human and Social Sciences (HSS) and possess a robust expertise in the field of digital technology. They also answer, each in its specificity, the criteria of the “new epistemology” that involves the practice of science in the digital age: the employment of digital tools in the production of knowledge, the presence of specific methodological devices, the exploiting of the corpuses available through databases and digital networks, digital broadcasting of research and finally the famous “epistemic reciprocity” where the digital technology is at the same time tool and object of the scientific procedure in HSS. We shall not miss to notice that each consortium member laboratory offers an originality in the emerging of the scientific paradigms related to the digital technology: the simulation of the collaborative social situations, the implementation of virtual experimental conditions with free and infinite variations of psychological stimulations and ergonomic circumstances, and finally the creativity inferred, by and in the “augmented” body. All these premises establish the conditions and substructure of the dynamics of researches that following the previous contacts of its researchers the consortium decided to assemble.