Use of Virtual Reality in the Library for Instruction about Games, Narrative, and More

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OPEN LAB at Hillman
Partnership, version 1

The Teaching Center
(innovative technology, instructional design)

+ 

Digital Scholarship Services
(research & instruction)

= 

Open Lab at Hillman v1
Partnership, version 2

The Teaching Center
  (innovative technology, instructional design)
  +
Digital Scholarship Services
  (research & instruction)
  +
Faculty request
  (need!)
  +
Additional partners
  (additional in-house skills and input required)
  =
Open Lab at Hillman v2
Why our Main Library? Hillman Library...

Highest gate count, most visibility

Interdisciplinary, exploratory space

Existing Open Lab at Hillman space in Digital Scholarship Services (DSS)

Co-location of library units and existing expertise

Existing model for providing equipment and spaces for English and Film & Media Studies

An expanded OpenLab space is an opportunity to pilot technology, space needs, etc. to inform renovation planning
Stakeholders

Bringing the v2 space online required significant collaboration:

- The Teaching Center
- Digital Scholarship Services
- Technology Support Services
- Administration
- Public Services
- Liaisons
- Technical Services
- Equipment Room
Many moving parts

Questions to be answered:

● How do we acquire and administer a collection of VR titles?
● How do we staff the space?
● How do we enable participation by interested staff?
● How do we connect with research support activities by liaisons, DSS, and others?
● How do we assess our work?
The Lab

Commercial VR

OpenLab
What’s in the lab?
Configuration

Multiple users

Authoring environment - Unity EDU license

Custom scripts and applications to let software run for everyone

Management tools allow for quick deployment and assessment of usage
What do you need to think about?

- Space to move around while using VR
- How private do you want it to be? (Balancing visibility vs. privacy)
- Security of equipment
- Computer specs
- Installing sensors so that they can’t be moved
VR Collection

Get accounts in all the app stores

Get accounts in all the app stores for 4+ computers

Cafe licensing

Goal: A menu of experiences faculty can select. Be agile!
How do we staff the space?

We make it easy as we can, but someone has to drive.

When VR works, people lose themselves.

Students need a space open late: 12PM to...

Benefit from our Partnership

  full time staff five days a week

Student employees assist with evenings

Long term library staffing planned to share burden.

Weekends are tough
Things we learned, things we overlooked...

Dropping into a pre-existing space isn’t optimal.

Hardware is a moving target but…. Oculus Quest is here

Lockers!
VR for English Curricula

- Slowly building in my liaison area
- Curriculum needs
- Use in Narrative and Technology classes with two professors
Narrative and Technology Background & Theory

- **Medium Specificity**
  - Treating VR as its own medium; have to play it in VR to experience it
- **Game Design as Narrative (Henry Jenkins, 2004)**
  - Environment as Narrative, Environment as Storytelling
- **Embodied Media**
  - Body contributes to the story
- **Constraints of Coded Systems**
- **Interactive Fiction / Ergodic Literature (Espen Aarseth, 1997)**
  - Effort required to transverse the text (eye movement or clicking)
- **Structure of Machine Actions and Operator Actions**
  - (Gamic Action, Four Moments by Alexander Galloway, 2006)
VR in Information Literacy Library Instruction?

- Augmented Reality Predecessors
- Game-Based Learning for Engagement with Content
- Credit classes in creating Virtual Reality projects
  - Library Lab runs a section using archival materials (Ximin Mi and Alison Valk, Georgia Tech, ACRL 2019)
- Stanford Libraries Project Proposal for a VR information literacy experience
  - Felicia Smith, Computers in Libraries, Jan/Feb 2018
Other VR Applications

Demonstration (PR/Outreach)
Multiplayer experiences
Immersive video experiences (360)
Arcade
Non-curricular applications
Video Game or Other creation
Meetings in VR

"N&N at the beach same day" by Noobo & Nooba is licensed under CC PDM 1.0
On the horizon...

Open Lab at Hillman version 3 (4, 5…)

Continued evolution

Renovation and new spaces

Increased integration into classrooms, research, student projects, creativity on campus, etc.

Takeaways: http://pi.tt/VR
Resources


https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2018/03/01/virtual-world-virtual-reality-libraries/


McMurtrie, B. (2019, May). Virtual Reality Comes to the Classroom: The possibilities for creating new ways of learning are wide-ranging, but so are the challenges. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. 
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