

StoryFutures

National Centre for Immersive Storytelling

NFTS

NATIONAL
FILM AND
TELEVISION
SCHOOL



Arts and
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Research Council



**INDUSTRIAL
STRATEGY**



VR R&D Showcasing Programme: SME Brief

Overview

We are looking for creative businesses producing story-driven content in virtual reality with an educational or learning aspect. Our ambition is to showcase your content to new and diverse audiences across the UK.

The VR R&D Showcasing Programme offers:

- Up to 5 R&D awards of £7,000 each to refine existing content for delivery as a 7-10 minute VR experience
- The opportunity to showcase your content on over 250 VR headsets, via a network of libraries and cultural venues across the UK as part of partnerships currently in development at StoryFutures
- Access to cutting-edge audience research and support from the programme team, to help you understand the impact of your content and how to develop engaging experiences for new audiences

This is an exciting opportunity to repurpose your existing content in order to showcase it on Meta Quest 2 headsets to new venues and audiences, and to be a leader in distribution innovation, via a showcasing network supported and trained by StoryFutures in exhibiting immersive content.

Deadline to apply: **midnight Thursday 5th January 2023**

Apply [here](#)

Background

Building on the success of [StoryTrails](#) - one of the UK's largest immersive storytelling projects to date - StoryFutures is developing a programme of VR exhibition for libraries and other venues across the UK. StoryFutures will provide VR headsets, structured training, and professional support to venues, allowing them to exhibit VR content as part of their programmes - many for the very first time.

Through the VR R&D Programme, companies will be able to refine existing content, with the opportunity to screen this content to new audiences via this network, as experiences pre-loaded onto the distributed headsets. Companies will have the opportunity to conduct R&D around immersive and educational content development, as well as understanding audience responses to VR.

About StoryFutures

StoryFutures exists to fuel innovation in storytelling through virtual and immersive technologies, new production methods, and innovative formats and business models. We bring together leading innovators with academic experts to develop cutting-edge ideas that capitalise on the massive opportunity for innovation and growth created by new content creation tools. To date we have funded over 125 industry-academic collaborations, building a vital source of innovation for our digital media industries.

What is on offer

Winning creative companies will receive the following:

- £7,000 R&D budget to refinish or re-purpose existing content with an educational focus or specific learning outcome, for delivery as a VR experience of no longer than 10 minutes, for Meta Quest 2
- Opportunity to showcase your content on over 250 VR headsets, via a network of libraries and cultural venues across the UK as part of partnerships currently in development at StoryFutures
- Chance to participate in masterclass sessions with the programme team, and to network with other companies on the programme
- Access to cutting-edge audience research, and one-to-one mentoring with an audience insight researcher

In order to participate companies will need to:

- Provide an in-kind contribution of at least 30% of the R&D funding (this may include staff time, facilities, value of equipment used for the project)
- Commit 6 days of time to the programme, including programme meetings with the team and the programme launch half-day lab at Royal Holloway University, Egham on **Thursday 19 January 2023**

The VR prototypes developed through this programme must be educational, or have a specific learning outcome. Stories might be connected to learning around a particular subject, or sharing underrepresented or untold stories.

We envisage that companies might repurpose existing VR content, for example: using assets you already have (animation, audio, film) and creating a short VR piece, taking an existing VR experience and highlighting the educational element, or other more technical R&D work such as enhanced world building. In each case, there must be a clear benefit to this content being delivered in VR, rather than in other formats.

Outputs

1. A virtual reality 7-10 minute R&D prototype for Meta Quest 2 (see specifications below)
2. A comms toolkit including follow up materials and links to your company's work and website, to be distributed to libraries and venues along with the virtual reality prototype
3. An end of project report submitted to StoryFutures

Technical and audience specification

The R&D prototype must be:

- Deliverable as a .apk file that is playable on Meta Quest 2
- No longer than 10 minutes to experience
- Playable offline (without access to the internet)
- Suitable for ages 13 - 80, in terms of PG-rated content that is accessible to novice audiences
- Mindful of accessibility - the experience must be seated, with controls and navigation that are easy to use

Eligibility

This opportunity is for creative and/or digital companies defined as SMEs (Small to Medium Enterprises) based in the [Gateway Cluster and Greater London](#), with under 250 employees and less than EUR 50m in turnover.

We are looking for SMEs with existing content and the capability to adapt this into a VR experience with an educational focus or learning outcome of no longer than 10 minutes, to be played on Meta Quest 2.

As our remit is to support growth in the Gateway Cluster and Greater London region, companies applying from Greater London will be asked to demonstrate a willingness to collaborate and invest in the Cluster region. Examples of such commitments include hiring cluster-based subcontractors/freelancers, delivering workshops for cluster-based organisations, or offering support in other ways.

Timeline and how to apply

Information and Q&A session

We will be hosting an online information and Q&A session for companies on **Monday 19 December 2022, 16:00-17:00**. Please sign up to attend [here](#).

Stage 1 - Initial application

- Please check you meet the eligibility criteria
- Complete the application form available [here](#)
- Deadline for applications: **midnight Thursday 5th January 2023**

Applications will be judged on the following criteria:

- Company track record in developing immersive experiences
- Strength of existing content to be reworked, and plans for reworking it to the technical and audience specification within the programme timeframe
- Clear articulation of the educational or learning related aspects of the experience
- Ability of the company to benefit from the opportunity to distribute VR content to a diverse audience
- Preference will be given to companies not previously funded by StoryFutures

Successful companies will be notified by **13 January 2023**

Stage 2 - R&D programme

- Successful companies will be required to attend our in-person programme launch half-day lab at StoryFutures HQ, Royal Holloway University, which will include an opening masterclass session on creating VR content for diverse audiences on **Thursday 19th January 2023**
- The programme will run from **19th January up to the end of March 2023, with the VR prototype to be delivered by 31st March 2023**
- Companies will be requested to submit material for mid-point review in February