Call for Papers

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Virtual, Augmented and Mixed Realities in Journalism: Theory, Practice, Critique

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The magnitude of the changes that occurred during the last 25 years of digital journalism has given way to a new communication scenario full of opportunities but also of professional and ethical challenges (Salaverría, 2019). Technology is behind many of the transformations that have taken place during this time and that have had an impact on the models of production, distribution and even consumption of information. The metamorphosis experienced, as referred to by certain authors (López-García, 2010; Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2020), has led to the current scenario: convergent, mobile and now also ubiquitous (Pavlik, 2001; Salaverría, 2015).

News media organizations are currently witnessing the introduction of a set of high-technologies in our daily lives: 5G, the Internet of Things (IoT), blockchain, virtual reality, augmented reality, mixed reality, intelligent virtual assistants, among others (López-García, 2019; Mosco, 2017). Its introduction in journalism practices has given way to what has been named as Hi-tech Journalism (Larrondo and López-García, 2020; Murcia and Ufarte, 2019; Pérez-Seijo *et al.*, 2020; Salaverría, 2015; Ufarte et al., 2020). This label encompasses different trends that shape the "journalism that will tell the future" (López-Hidalgo, 2016, p. 255): use of drones to cover news (Fischer, 2019); VR and 360-degree video Journalism (Mabrook and Singer, 2019), also referred to as Immersive Journalism (De la Peña *et al.*, 2010); augmented reality for news (Aitamurto et al., 2020); Automated, Robot or Algorithmic Journalism (Caswell and Dörr, 2018); and, among others, use of conversational bots –chatbots– in news websites (Ford and Hutchinson, 2019; Jones and Jones, 2019).

In this issue, we pay special attention to the fluid relationships between journalism, immersive media, and virtual worlds, particularly to the progressive hybridity of the

relationships between the physical and tangible worlds and the emerging forms of interaction and immersion through digital media. We are witnessing the emergence of augmented reality and mixed realities as narrative media for journalism (Pavlik and Bridges, 2013), making an opposition between analogue and digital mediation unsustainable within a hybrid media culture (Lindgren, 2014).

Immersive technologies such as VR, AR, MR or even 360-degree video opens the way to immersive storytelling (Doyle, Gelman and Gill, 2016; Gynnild et al., 2019, Hardee & McMahan, 2017), aimed at offering user a first-person experience of the stories and represented realities (De la Peña et al., 2010; Pavlik, 2018). Technological convergence has also enabled access to 360-degree videos and VR, AR or MR experiences from mobile devices and HMD or VR headsets (Aitamurto et al., 2020; Paíno-Ambrosio et al., 2019; Tejedor-Calvo et al., 2020). Applied to journalism, immersive technologies introduce an "experiential" dimension in news consumption (Pavlik, 2019).

To contribute to the knowledge on this issue, this dossier aims to answer questions such as the following:

- What perspectives are opened by journalistic adoption of mixed realities, holography, and progressively personalized personal assistants?
- What ethical issues emerge with the introduction of immersive technologies in newsrooms?
- How 360-degree video, VR, AR, or MR impact on newsrooms?
- To what extent does the use of immersive technologies such as 360-degree video, VR, AR, or MR reconfigure journalistic frameworks?
- What ethical challenges do these new technologies open for journalism?
- To what extent does the use of immersive technologies contribute to a better news experience?
- To what extent do these technological advances widen the gap between established brands and novel digital native media?
- How can and should journalism education appropriate this technological integration?

This dossier welcomes research papers from areas such as Journalism, Communication, Human-Computer Interaction, Human-Machine Communication that contribute to the study of the impact of immersive technologies (360-degree video, AR, AR, MR) on media and journalism. Both theoretical and empirical proposals addressing the following lines of research or other similar ones will be accepted:

- Production of non-fiction mixed realities narratives
- VR and 360-degree video Journalism
- User experience in 360-degree video news stories
- User experience in virtual news environments
- Challenges in Immersive Journalism
- Immersive Journalism and ethics
- Objectivity and accuracy in VR and 360-degree video news stories
- Augmented Reality Journalism
- Mobile Augmented Reality and news stories
- User experience with AR
- Challenges and ethics in AR Journalism
- Business models for Immersive Journalism
- Mixed Realities and Journalism

Articles must be 40,000 to 55,000 characters (including references and spaces) and submitted by **September 30, 2022**

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