

# [News story: UK takes centre stage in immersive entertainment revolution](#)

A total of £18 million government and industry funding has been awarded to projects developing the next generation of immersive experiences. Using virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality, the projects will create cutting-edge immersive experiences which will be tested at scale on real audiences.

The projects are part of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund's audience of the future programme, delivered through UK Research and Innovation. Through this programme, government is helping the most talented storytellers across the UK create engaging immersive experiences.

## **Immersive sports, performance and visitor experiences**

The demonstrator projects will develop immersive experiences in 3 areas; sports entertainment, performance, and visitor experience.

### **Performance**

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) will lead a consortium of 15 specialist organisations from the theatre, music, video production, gaming and research industries to create a live performance unbound by location. Audiences will use mobile phones, extended reality headsets and live streams to experience live performance like never before.

### **Visitor experience**

Factory 42's consortium will create 2 multi-sensory, interactive worlds in London's Natural History Museum and Science Museum. At the Science Museum, visitors will take part in a mixed-reality detective experience featuring high-resolution 3D scans of robots. The Natural History Museum will bring dinosaurs to life through the story of a palaeontologist's discoveries. Shorter versions of both experiences will tour shopping centres across the UK.

### **Sport entertainment**

Esports – video games played competitively in front of a live audience – has the fastest growing audience for live sports globally. This project will create new esports platform called WEAVR that uses gameplay data to transform how remote audiences experience first esports, and further down the line physical sports.

WEAVR will be developed by a consortium that includes ESL, the largest esports content producer in the world, as well as academics and innovators

across immersive technologies, data-driven content production and broadcast.

## **Leading digital and creative talent**

Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries Margot James said:

The UK is home to some of the world's leading digital and creative talent. Through our modern Industrial Strategy and multi-million-pound creative industries sector deal, we are bringing them together to give audiences a truly unique experience.

The growth of immersive technology has the power to transform the way in which we watch theatre, play games or go to the cinema, and these new projects will demonstrate how we can take people closer than ever before to the live action.

## **A new era of entertainment**

Science and Innovation Minister Chris Skidmore said:

We are now in a new era of how we consume entertainment, and these projects announced today could see us walking with dinosaurs and experiencing being in the stands of major football matches from our own living rooms.

We have an impressive reputation of producing outstanding sport, cultural institutions and visual entertainment. That is why, through our modern industrial Strategy, we are building on these strengths to make the areas even more accessible and enjoyable to people, whilst supporting high-skilled jobs across the UK.

## **Changing cultural experiences**

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive, Professor Sir Mark Walport, said:

New technologies being pioneered in the UK, such as virtual and augmented reality, are fundamentally changing the way we participate in cultural experiences, from watching dramatic performances and visiting museums to playing video games.

Through investments such as the projects announced today, the government and UK Research and Innovation will support the creative industries to innovate in exciting ways that will deliver new experiences for audiences of the future with accompanying economic benefits.

# **Global opportunity for the UK**

Professor Andrew Chitty, UKRI's Challenge Director for Audience of the Future said:

The market for immersive content is a global opportunity. The presence of international partners in these ground-breaking projects is a massive vote of confidence not only in UK research and innovation but in our creative companies who will ensure that the UK becomes a world-leading destination for immersive content production bringing the new jobs and investment that is central to the Industrial Strategy and the Creative Industries Sector Deal.