

Press release: British success stories Wallace & Gromit and Peaky Blinders to feature in next generation entertainment experiences

- Government backing for new projects by Oscar and BAFTA winning companies putting users in the thick of the action
- investment will put UK creative industries “at the cutting edge” of latest virtual and augmented reality technologies
- modern Industrial Strategy in action to ensure home-grown talent remains world-leading for the next generation

The brains behind British success stories Wallace & Gromit, and Peaky Blinders, are joining ambitious new projects led by industry leaders in the games and immersive entertainment sectors to blaze a trail into the world of virtual and augmented reality entertainment – backed by millions of pounds of government investment.

Award winning Aardman, the brains behind Wallace & Gromit, are part of a consortia with developers Tiny Rebel Games, digital specialists Potato, creative agency Sugar Creative and the University of South Wales. Together, they will build on successes of Academy Award-winning films including The Wrong Trousers and A Close Shave by taking the characters into the future of storytelling.

The consortia will be benefiting from £4 million investment to develop new immersive storytelling experience based on their famous creations which will put fans right at the heart of the action, enabling people to join adventures with Wallace & Gromit, looking in any direction, and see and feel part of the action.

A further project is a new virtual reality drama game based on BAFTA-award winning Peaky Blinders using Artificial Intelligence technology: launching in 2020, it will mean that for the first time, characters will respond according to the players’ gestures, movement, voice, sound and body language. The project is being led by London-based immersive VR studio, Maze Theory.

Thanks to creations like Peaky Blinders and Wallace & Gromit, the UK’s creative industries reached a combined value of over £100 billion in 2017.

Through its modern Industrial Strategy, the government is investing £33 million to ensure the UK’s immersive technology industry cements its place as a world-leader in film, TV and game productions for the future, remaining at the cutting edge of the latest technologies and creating thousands of highly-skilled jobs.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Success stories like award-winning Wallace & Gromit and BAFTA-winning Peaky Blinders are part of the reason why our creative industries are truly world-leading – attracting audiences both here in the UK and internationally and helping create a sector already worth some £100 billion to our economy.

It's why through our modern Industrial Strategy we're investing to build on this huge global demand for UK creative content and ensure we lead the world in the next generation of entertainment.

This backing will also give our home-grown talent the opportunity to lead the way in creating and using virtual and augmented reality technologies, remain at the cutting edge and create thousands of highly-skilled jobs.

Aardman and the consortium are behind one of the 21 projects benefiting from government investment in the creative industries – receiving a share of £12 million of the £33 million Ministers have made available.

Other projects that the government is investing in include:

- Improving theatre experiences for a more diverse audience, including personalised sign-language displays for British Sign Language (BSL) users, translation captions for non-English speakers and audio descriptions for visually impaired people. The project led by the National Theatre will research the technical and production means to deliver these initiatives to improve accessibility.
- Making it possible for people to meet their heroes, with personalised storytelling and conversation through virtual reality. Forever Holdings will bring together a research group to transform these immersive encounters, by improving filming techniques and boosting voice interaction.
- Offering businesses immersive learning solutions for employees where they can use virtual and mixed reality headsets to learn at their own pace and repeat tasks as often as required. Holohub would make this platform available to businesses for them to distribute it to staff and track performance.

Creative Industries Minister Margot James said:

The £150 million Creative Industries Sector Deal is helping to drive forward our modern Industrial Strategy and maintain the UK as a world leading destination for creative talent.

Immersive technology is changing the way in which we consume entertainment, and the Audience of the Future programme will demonstrate how we can take people closer to the action than ever before.

UKRI Challenge Director for Audience of the Future, Prof Andrew Chitty said:

It's fantastic that we complete our line-up of audience facing demonstrators with this hugely ambitious collaboration between Tiny Rebel Games, Potato, Sugar and the creators of Wallace and Gromit.

Their aim to revolutionise Augmented Reality gaming along with the advances in AI, haptics, audience interaction and film production technologies from our other competition winners means the public will be able to try out some truly ground breaking experiences over the next 18 months.

The announcement comes on World Intellectual Property Day which celebrates IP rich industries in economies around the world.

The Creative Industries Council (CIC) which negotiated the Creative Industries Sector Deal on behalf of the sector is also welcoming 8 new members as part of a review to ensure the Council is fully representative of the UK's world leading Creative Industries. New members include Alex Mahon of Channel 4, Kanya King from MOBO and Debbie Bestwick from Team 17.

- For more information and updates on the programme please see www.ukri.org/audience-future
- The programme aims to pioneer immersive experiences across the creative industries and was announced in March 2018 in the Creative Industries Sector Deal. It is anticipated that the Audience of the Future Challenge could lead to a significant boost of immersive content in the UK, cementing the UK's position as a dominant market leader in the creative immersive sector.

Industrial Strategy

[The Industrial Strategy](#) sets out a long term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. It sets out how we are building a Britain fit for the future – how we will help businesses create better, higher-paying jobs in every part of the UK with investment in skills, industries and infrastructure.

Creative Industries Sector Deal

Since launching the [Creative Industries Sector Deal](#) in March 2018, key commitments have been delivered:

- The Creative Industries Council (CIC) which negotiated the Creative Industries Sector Deal on behalf of the sector is welcoming 8 new members as part of a review to ensure the Council is fully representative of the UK's world leading Creative Industries. New members include Alex Mahon (Channel 4), Kanya King (MOBO), Debbie Bestwick (Team 17), Annette King (Publicis UK), Stephen Page (Faber and Faber), Lee Brooks (Production Park), Michael Dugher (UK Music), and Andrew Thompson (AHRC).
- All individual demonstrator projects from the Audience of the Future challenge have now been announced, enabling creative businesses to

harness the power of immersive technologies to create content, products and services, with companies creating the next generation of entertainment for people around the country.

- The £39 million Creative Industries Clusters Programme has been launched, and nine new R&D partnerships around the UK have been established: Dundee, Edinburgh, Belfast, Yorkshire, Leeds, Cardiff, Bath/Bristol and two in London.
- The £20 million Cultural Development Fund is supporting creative clusters in Wakefield, Grimsby, Plymouth, Worcester and the Thames Estuary area. The clusters will invest in creative, cultural and heritage initiatives that will lead to economic growth and productivity.
- The Creative Local Industry Partnership scheme has been established, which meets regularly and convenes leading industry bodies such as the Creative Industries Federation, Creative Industries Council, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Combined Authorities and partners in the Devolved Nations.
- A Creative Industries Trade and Investment Board has been established, targeting a 50% increase in creative industries exports by 2023.
- The Creative Careers Programme has been launched, which aims to ensure there is a larger and more diverse intake of talent and a broader range of routes into the creative industries.
- Investment of £2 million has been committed over three years in the Get it Right campaign that educates consumers on the dangers of copyright infringement and direct them towards legitimate sources of creative content online.
- A £4 million Creative Scale Up investment readiness programme has been launched, aimed at increasing the profitability, scalability and productivity of creative industries businesses by supporting scale-up firms so they are better placed to access finance.
- The Creative Industries Council has recently recast its membership to better support delivery of the commitments in the Sector Deal.

UK Research and Innovation

UKRI is a new body which works in partnership with universities, research organisations, businesses, charities, and government to create the best possible environment for research and innovation to flourish. We aim to maximise the contribution of each of our component parts, working individually and collectively. We work with our many partners to benefit everyone through knowledge, talent and ideas. Operating across the whole of the UK with a combined budget of more than £7 billion, UK Research and Innovation brings together the Arts and Humanities Research Council; Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council; Economic and Social Research Council; Innovate UK; Medical Research Council; Natural Environment Research Council; Research England; and Science and Technology Facilities Council.