

P / REFERENCES OF DESIGN

THE POWER OF IMMERSION: NAVIGATING INTERDISCIPLINARY REALITIES.

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In the past decade, a paradigm shift has emerged, with individuals actively curating their immersive experiences. These experiential landscapes play a pivotal role in shaping people's identities and their distinctiveness as individuals. Within this evolving landscape, a central inquiry emerges: How do extrinsic influences subtly impact our daily lives, encompassing domains such as urban planning and digital immersive design? Do these influences exert persuasive forces that guide our decision-making processes in the construction of immersive experiences? And what is the role of various User Experience (UX) solutions in facilitating this phenomenon?

In this track, we aimed to uncover the references of the designers of immersive environments, whether it's a theme park or VR environment.

Many of the submissions (from various regions) tackled the role of cultural heritage and how these artifacts can be integrated in order to create compelling immersive environments in museum settings. With the rise of attention to the visitors' experience, these approaches can indicate the aftermath of the 'experience economy'

– in terms of how every experience should be re-framed as a unique encounter. These approaches help us to compare them to the traditional formats of experiencing and knowledge sharing in exhibition settings and to establish new ways of experiencing from various corners of the world. The heritage of graphic design also offers interesting approaches in several papers on designing interactions, which can lead to novel interpretations of the media of prints. The role of creating meaningful and smooth interactions is also discussed in methodologically accurate papers that dive into UX experience design and its assessment.

The prevalence of VR and new technologies are an integral part of the field of immersion studies, therefore many of the papers also describe in detail their theoretical or human-computer interaction related assessments of VR applications. Virtual architecture and the theories arising from analog approaches also have a strong influence on the field of study of immersive environments and experience design. The various free time activities and how they are influenced by our everyday technological objects were discussed (in the paper assessing musical interfaces used for jogging) (Küçükkurt & Bahar, 2024). The question of embodiment and the presence of the viewer reminds us that the specificity of immersive phenomena relies on the viewer too – as the body of the viewer should be ‘integrated into the experience.’ This offers a sense of uncertainty to these experiences. This uncertainty could be calculated sometimes with engineering punctuality, but this gives the sense of losing agency, while the experiencers of these aim to have the illusion of agency. This inner tension is the specificity of immersive media experiences, that operate with interactive interfaces, and that always offer new pathways for researchers to reframe their power.

The papers in this section offer novel modalities to re-interpret immersive and interactive environments and present case studies and best practices that can be used by creators and theoreticians in their future work.

References

Küçükkurt, A., & Bahar, Ş. P. (2024). Exploring the intersection of running and music: Insights into user experience and interface design. <https://open.metu.edu.tr/handle/11511/109679>

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