

South African company creates full immersion VR videos

Cape Town-based Hero Film (part of independent marketing and communications agency group, Hero) is one of the first companies in South Africa to have created and showcased three ground-breaking 'full immersion' VR videos using live action footage at the recent Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon Expo, via Oculus Rift headsets.

California-based Oculus VR produces Oculus Rift headsets. Oculus subsequently sold out to Facebook for \$2bn and is to date only available as a second-generation developer kit that encourages virtual reality specialists, who register with the company, to test the technology and create fully immersive content ahead of a consumer market launch. So far, the technology has been mostly used for video gaming, which typically features computer-generated contexts as opposed to the real-world videos created by Hero Film.



Lost in the experience

With Microsoft's announcement of HoloLens, Google's heavy investment in Magic Leap and, now Facebook's recent acquisition of Oculus VR, all signs are pointing to Virtual Reality as the next great wave of technology that will revolutionise the ways we create, consume and share content.

Hero Film's Creative Director, Brendan Stein filmed the initial video footage, using a specially imported rig, incorporating six GoPro cameras in an array designed to capture an almost complete sphere of footage at the same time.

The company then used special software to stitch the six streams of footage seamlessly so that, when viewed via Oculus Rift headsets, the viewer experienced a fully immersive virtual reality. These headsets track the wearer's head movements and display a perfect stereoscopic, life-like view of wherever the viewer chooses to 'look'. The result is that viewers see things through their own eyes, as if they are physically present.

In this case, viewers found themselves accompanying Bruce Fordyce on a jog along one of three different segments of the Old Mutual Two Oceans Marathon. With the addition of earphones, viewers could listen to Fordyce 'personally' addressing them on how best to tackle Chapman's Peak, Southern Cross Drive and Wynberg Hill, all while viewing their surroundings in every direction. Besides being able to look at Fordyce and take in the amazing Cape Town vistas, viewers could also do things like watch cars, cyclists and other runners approach and then turn 180 degrees to watch them as they passed by. Unsurprisingly, viewers are often advised to hold onto something while experiencing this incredible technology.

The magnitude of this technology is indescribable and the actual experience of immersive video with the Oculus headsets can only be visually comprehended, [click here](#), and most people exclaimed in surprise and wonderment as they 'lost' themselves in the experience.

For more information, go to www.herofilm.co.za or www.vimeo.com/herofilmsa.