# Poster : Film language analysis in society news-A case study of The New York Times

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## Abstract

As the virtual reality is famous with its immersion, it makes journalism a promising application of 360 videos. However, the key factors of VR videos, such as interaction, framing, stitching, etc., differ greatly from that of what they used to be, it appears that storytelling is getting much more difficult than before. To deal with the problem, we analyze the New York Times 360 videos, a pioneer in immersive journalism, and want to find the film language in the 360 video. We analyze the 5 key factors: space shape, camera position, angle, subtitle and direction of the 360 video. In addition, we did the user study to confirm the result of ours.

## Author Keywords

film language; virtual reality; immersive journalism; society news analysis

## ACM Classification Keywords

H.5.1. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI) : Multimedia Information Systems : Artificial, augmented, and virtual realities

## Introduction

According to Bleumers, L. et al.(2014)[1], omni-directional videos make facts from portrayal to veracity. The immersion given by 360 video allows us to judge what is true through our own eyes. Given that the key factors of VR videos differ greatly from that of they used to be, it appears that storytelling is getting much more difficult than before. Film language, in addition, is regarded as one of the most important factors in traditional filming. As a pioneer in immersive journalism, The New York Times has tried out various approaches

**Figure 1:** main direction of the frame



**Figure 2:** no difference in directions of the frame



**Figure 3:** arrows serve as guidance to tell users to see the certain direction

of filming and ensured its work to attain a certain high level. Due to the authority and experiences, we see The New York Times as a benchmark in VR journalism and conduct a further analysis about its VR film language, expecting a suitable film language for 360 news videos to promote future filming.

## Method

Because shot size can't be objectively judged in omni-directional videos, we have to adapt to new changes of spatial factors with space shape and camera position, instead. Space shape influences the distance of different directions in the space while camera position demonstrates a certain direction that the photographer intends to focus on. Also, previous work shows the importance of guidance in virtual reality. We therefore select six videos produced by The New York Times since 2015 to analyze their shot movement, angle, space shape, camera position and guidance. In these videos with different length, stories of people in developing countries are told and show The New York Times' trials to film VR news. Each shot in each video was evaluated by the researchers on the basis of the five elements mentioned above; then, how these elements function in storytelling were concluded.

## Preliminary Results

We thought that the shape of space would affect a sense of immersion but it comes out that is not the shape but the distance between objects in virtual reality and the audience matters. As for camera position, users prefer seeing specific objects in certain direction (Figure 1) to seeing different objects in all around 360 degrees (Figure 2). But when asked whether VR news is a must while traditional news

already focuses on certain objects for the audience, they emphasized the strong sense of immersion in VR news, which helps evoke more emotion.

360 videos also means that cameras can receive space information without any blind spot, which enables the audience to control the direction and choose the angle they prefer. They like the feelings of escaping from the control of reporters and getting the truth by themselves.

Although the audience likes freely browse the scenes in The New York Times videos, it is, in fact, sometimes too hard for them to decide what is important. Mostly, the society news of The New York Times show no guidance except for "We who remain", whose scenes contain arrows to serve as a cue (Figure 3). Subtitles, on the other hand, can also be a kind of guidance because they usually appear in an important position. Survey has shown that three subtitles are adequate for the audience to read and browse the surroundings at the same time.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the preliminary results, we have found the primary results of film language of VR news. The following analysis will focus on the implementation of the filming factors that we found is good for evoking more sense of immersion and convenience for the audience.

## Reference

1. Bleumers, L., Den Broeck, W., Lievens, B., & Pierson, J. (2014). Extending the field of view: A human-centred design perspective on 360° TV. Behaviour and Information Technology, 33(8), 800-814. doi:10.1080/0144929X.2013.810780