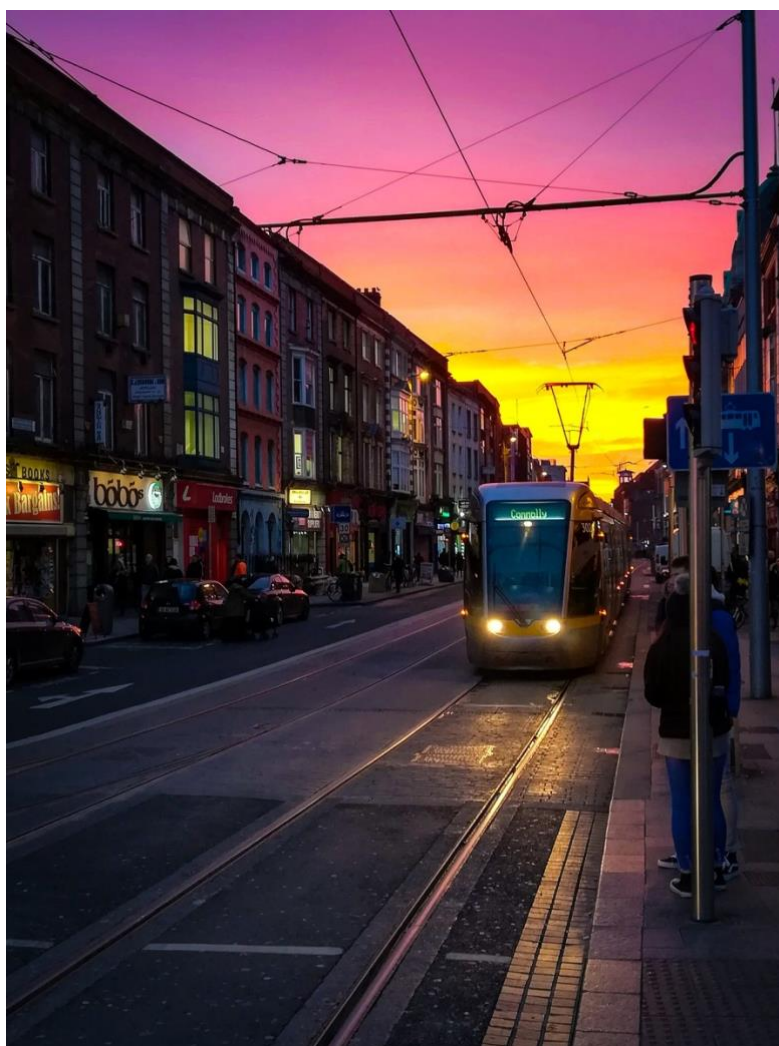


Benchmarking Trip – Dublin April 2023

GLOW2.O: WP2: Immersive Technology Virtual Planetarium
Development

Deliverable D2.1.1



Chantal Costello, WestBIC, 2023

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1. Introduction

Irish partners Údarás na Gaeltachta and WestBIC took part in a benchmarking trip to Dublin on 5th May 2023. The purpose of the benchmarking trip was to analyse world class VR/AR immersive experiences first hand to assess the current standard and resources which will be required for building out the technical specification for the virtual planetarium. Partners set out to learn from the best practices and opportunity areas by visiting the EPIC Irish Immigration Museum and the Van Gogh Dublin Exhibit: The Immersive Experience.

Chantal Costello (WestBIC), Meabh Seoige (Údaras), Aisling Ni Dochartaigh (Údaras), and Martina Uí Dholain attended the benchmarking trip.

2. EPIC Irish Immigration Museum

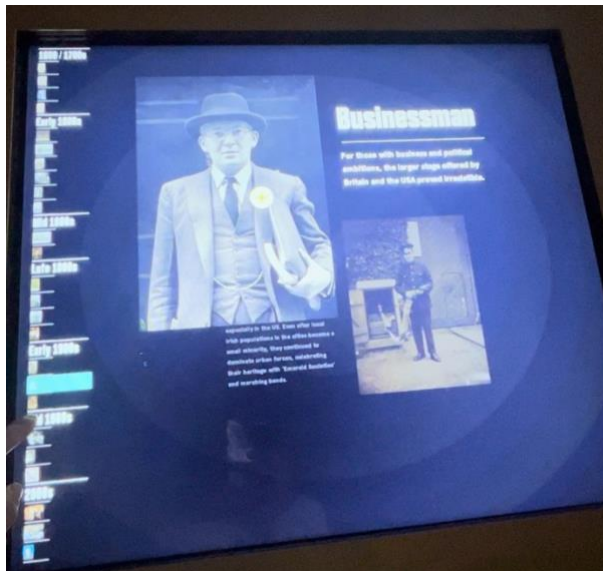
EPIC has been voted Europe's Leading Tourist Attraction 2019, 2020 & 2021. EPIC is a fully interactive experience. Visitors uncover the inspiring stories of the Irish people who travelled the world, reliving some of their greatest achievements in music, literature, sport, politics, fashion, science and more. Stories are available via video or reading, by clicking on various screens, the visitor could read on for more information.

2.1. Findings from EPIC Irish Immigration Museum

- The video stories engaged more visitors than the information areas which required reading. Stories must be told in a personable manner; the storyteller is critical to maximum engagement.
- The entire experience was well structured with appropriate settings, lighting, music etc which built an atmosphere.
- Visitors could spend as long as they wanted in the museum, it was a self-directed tour, and a plethora of information was available at the visitors' fingertips. However, there was almost information overload, and it was not possible to take in all of the information available, in one visit.
- The content itself was highly relevant and interesting, particularly for tourists.
- The crowd of visitors needed to be managed, it was too busy with too many people in the museum at one time.
- Story mapping worked well, visitors could delve further into the information that they were interested in, story layering would be an idea to implement into the technical specification for those who want to learn more eg. when stargazing,

some visitors might want to learn more about specific stars, while other visitors may not.

Examples of the information that was available on screens in the EPIC museum.



Overall, the visit to the EPIC Irish Immigration Museum gave the partners an insight into factors that worked well in like having video displays, storytelling in the native accents, and having the option to read further on particular elements via story mapping. Additionally, the atmosphere was set by music, lighting, props etc which really immersed the visitors into the overall experience. The visit also highlighted what elements of an immersive experience didn't work well, like having too many people in the room at one time and displaying too much information which can cause information overload.

3. Van Gogh Dublin Exhibit: The Immersive Experience

The Van Gogh Immersive Experience in Dublin is a 360° digital art exhibit that invites visitors to step into the universe of Vincent van Gogh. The museum consists of a +1000 m2 light d sound spectacular exhibit featuring two story projections of the artists most compelling works, and a VR experience allowed visitors to walk alongside Van Gogh during a visually enriching into the inspiration behind 8 of his iconic works, including Vincent's bedroom at Arles and Starry Night Over the Rone. There were also

Van Gogh paintings, short informational pieces, mock-ups of relevant rooms and sculptures. The museum itself reinvents the concept of museums, the layout enables visitors to get to know the artist and with the help of short and factual stories and cutting-edge technology.

3.1. Findings from Van Gogh Dublin Exhibit: The Immersive Experience

- Walking through the entire museum worked well, immersing the visitor in the works of Van Gogh, and building a story through the 360° digital art exhibit. Leaving the VR experience until the final step in the visit worked well & topped off the entire visitor experience.
- The room where the 360° digital art exhibit was, was slightly cold which affected the overall experience. Comfortable and accessible seating suitable for the audience is a critical success factor.
- Visitors did not know how long the 360° digital art exhibit would be, nor did they have any information on the session before or during the experience. It was felt that if visitors had more information on what to expect, the experience would've been enhanced.
- The 360° digital art exhibit did not include the ceiling, which took away from the overall experience.
- Music & sound was appropriate, the experience had an impact on visitors' feelings and mood, it was completely immersive.
- The VR experience was at an addition charge of €5, this was deemed as reasonable, but this should've been outlined more clearly when purchasing the ticket.
- The VR headset needed to be readjusted/held during the experience to ensure high resolution, this was a downfall to the overall experience but not critical.
- The VR technology guided users in the direction which they should look for maximum benefit, which was a helpful add-on.
- Being seated worked well, it would've been nice to also walk around as there was a walking/flying motion within the VR experience, however seated was also suitable. Visitors were seated on high stools, it would've been preferable to be seated in a comfortable chair – this could've been purposeful to the floating/flying sensation.
- No safety briefing by the staff member, there was an informational sheet on the wall, however it is important to reiterate to the visitor in case it wouldn't be suitable for them. The staff member also should've taken more care in ensuring the headset was on the user properly and checked in with visitors during the experience.



Image of a partner during the VR experience

Overall, the visit to the Van Gogh Dublin Exhibit: The Immersive Experience gave the partners an insight into factors that worked well in like building a story through the 360° digital art exhibit which created an overall experience. The music, sound and lighting set an atmosphere which completely immerses the visitor. It was found that more guidance and communication around the activities and experiences would've enhanced the overall experience. Seating is critical when it comes to using the VR technology and this will need to be well thought out for building the virtual planetarium. Finally, staff must be well trained to explain the safety precautions and placing the headset on visitors.



Image of the 360° digital art exhibit

Conclusion

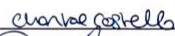



The key findings above gave the Irish Glow2.0 partners a greater in-depth knowledge on immersive experiences and engaging in VR realities. This was an important step in building the technical specification for D2.1.1, as well as providing informational insights to survey respondents for D1.1.1.

Annexes

1. Sign in sheet



2022 – 2025 NPA GLOW2.0
 Irish Partner Meeting & Benchmarking Trip Dublin
 Date: 5/05/23

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2. Irish Partners outside the EPIC museum



3. Irish Partners outside the Van Gogh Immersive Experience

