

VR for cultural use cases: The Mönchengladbach Escape Room project

Die Weltenweberei is a studio for 3D visualization and virtual reality which was founded by four game design students in the nearby town of Krefeld. Die Weltenweberei creates VR with added value, especially in the cultural field, the medium offers itself to introduce young people, who would otherwise be hard to get excited about visiting a museum, back to cultural content, be it via ready-made VR applications or via workshops in which the participants themselves create a small VR application.

They came into partnership with the Kulturbüro Mönchengladbach to facilitate a VR workshop and provide their own value added professional guidance.

How do you get people hooked on visiting art galleries and museums at an early age? The Bureau of Culture for the German city of Mönchengladbach (Kulturbüro Mönchengladbach) has this problem to address within its remit to develop educational programs for young folk in the area. The city might be best known outside Germany for its successful top tier football club Borussia Mönchengladbach, but it also has an exciting and thriving avant-garde contemporary art scene centered around its postmodern design Abteiberg Museum.

So what idea did they come up with to get young people as enthusiastic for visiting the Abteiberg as they are for Borussia-Park stadium, and how did it involve VR agency “Die Weltenweberei”, drones, and a virtual escape room?

Escape from the museum

The Bureau of Culture devised a number of multi-disciplinary workshops aimed at the young people of Mönchengladbach aged 15-21. The main workshop was to build a live escape room in the backrooms of Abteiberg Museum. If you are not familiar with the concept, this is where you are locked in to a series of rooms, and to get out you need to first solve a number of puzzles. Whilst this was being fiendishly built, over at the local VHS

(adult education centre) other workshops were creating a VR puzzle for the escape room, and a drone was being used to take aerial photos and video of the Mönchengladbach cityscape. The final component was a workshop at the central library composing music using a mobile-phone app that would become a thrilling soundtrack to the great escape.

It was then planned to bring all the components together into a VR game and virtual museum walkthrough that could be launched at the project's closing party.

Can this puzzle be cracked?

It was an exciting project involving diverse technology guaranteed to stimulate the imaginations of the participants, but the puzzle was how to actually realize it.

The Kulturbüro needed software to produce the VR app that didn't involve coding and could be operated by the young participants. The alternative would be to bring in someone to program the VR app for them, but that would be too costly and the process too elaborate to realize. Plus the whole point is for everyone to be involved in the creative process; bringing in an expert would have excluded the youngsters from their endgame.

They clearly needed a simple software solution.





The puzzle solved!

The VRdirect platform is a complete solution that allows you to create a VR experience with no computer skills required, publish it to a cloud-based CMS (content management system), and distribute it worldwide with just one click to multiple devices such as Android iOS, Oculus and website-embedded players.

With VRdirect, omnia360 can transform 360° images and videos to VR workshops or training courses, by adding interactivity offering the viewer control and experiential feedback. If an experience needs to be updated, the VRdirect platform allows for real time content updates, which always ensures up-to-date training lessons.

The outcome

The VR experience was released as an immersive 360o game called “ESC@P3 – Spiel das Museum” (“Play the Museum”) and was a huge attention-drawing success. In fact it proved so popular that Mönchengladbach’s Bureau of Culture organized four additional events at which to showcase the VR experience / game.

„With the help of VRdirect, each of the participating young people was able to quickly and easily create their own application, which they could try out on their own smartphone. The result was well received at various events and the participants were able to explain themselves how they "programmed" the 360° experience. Users could experience the Escape Room long after it was dismantled in the museum.“

Lukas Kuhlendal

Co-founder of Die Weltenweberei

Read the Success Story on our Website:

<https://www.vrdirect.com/success-stories/vr-for-cultural-use-cases-the-monchengladbach-escape-room-project/>

About VRdirect

With its "VRdirect Studio" platform, the Munich-based software company VRdirect enables companies to design and publish their own virtual reality content completely without programming effort. Typical use cases of these VR apps range from corporate training and development processes, to recruiting and onboarding of personnel, to deployment scenarios in sales, customer support, or in the context of trade fairs. Once created, the content can be accessed on all common end devices. Users are thus brought particularly close to the action and have the feeling of really engaging with the simulated environment.

Further information at www.vrdirect.com