The VR Production Process

South Ural State University

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The VR Production Process

Story concept → Fit for VR → Script → Storyboard → Crew → Equipment → Production planning → Filming → Post production
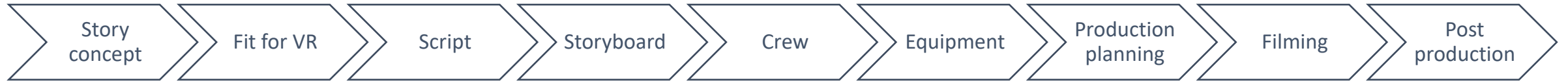
Step 0: Story Concept

Step 0: Your story concept

- Fiction or non-fiction?

- Formulate your story concept in 1, max 3 sentences

- Now write a 0.5-1 page story concept

- Who is / are the main character(s)?

- Test the story concept with some friends: Are they intrigued?

Step 1: Is your concept a good fit for Virtual Reality?
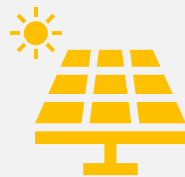
How / when can immersive tech add value to journalism?

Answer n° 1:

Location, location, location

"When location is the star of the story"

(Joe Inwood - BBC)

Be there: Take the viewer to somewhere they could not otherwise go

How / when can immersive tech add value to journalism?

Answer n° 2:

Empathy

VR as "the ultimate empathy machine"
(Chris Milk - immersive artist and director)

Be them: Step in the shoes of ...

Step 1: Is your concept a good fit for Virtual Reality?

- What's the added value of VR?

- **Being there**?
    - Location is the "main character"
    - You will probably use panorama shots (Test them first!)

- **Being them**?
    - Immersion in a person
    - You will probably work with close proximity shots

- Combination of both?

- …

Step 1: Is your concept a good fit for Virtual Reality?

Note:

- At this stage of the VR industry, there are probably no "bad fit" ideas

- Even if your idea is a "bad fit", we will have learned something

- Except of course: if you plan a large production. Then: test first if you are not sure

Step 2: Script

Step 2: Script – Preparatory steps (1)

- **Character(s)**: Write a short description of your character(s)

- **Location**: Describe the location (add drawings, pictures)

- **Story**: Write a somewhat longer outline of your story (2 page max). Indicate whether there will be dramatic unity of time, space.

- **Scenes**: Make an annotated *timeline of the different scenes*. If your VR production is going to be highly interactive, there might not be a linear timeline. Then: make a "story tree"

Step 2: Script – Preparatory steps (2)

- **Interactivity**: Describe in general the kind of interactivity and interactive elements you want to add (can simply be: viewer can look around at all times). If necessary, plot the interactive elements on the timeline

- **Sound**: If sound is going to play an important part in your story, write a short description of sound elements

- **Additional elements**: Are you going to use voice over, graphics, …?

Step 2: Script – Preparatory steps (3)

- Decide upon presence of your main character or presenter:
  - Physically and speaking directly to the camera
  - Physically but without addressing the camera (does not provide information)
  - As a narrator (with voiceover)
  - Both voice over and on camera

Step 2: Script

- Use a script software, Word or your own template

- Each scene should be in the script!

- Transitions: Hard cuts can throw the viewer out of the immersion

- Ask friends or colleagues to read your script, to make sure it is clear

Step 3: Storyboard

Wide shot of both Sarah and Callum illustrating where they are and what the film is about
Props: Megaphone, Clapper board

2. Close-up of Sarah speaking directly to camera

Script: Sarah
'One thing you must remember...'

3. Low pointing u
Props: m
Script: C
'Oops! Sa
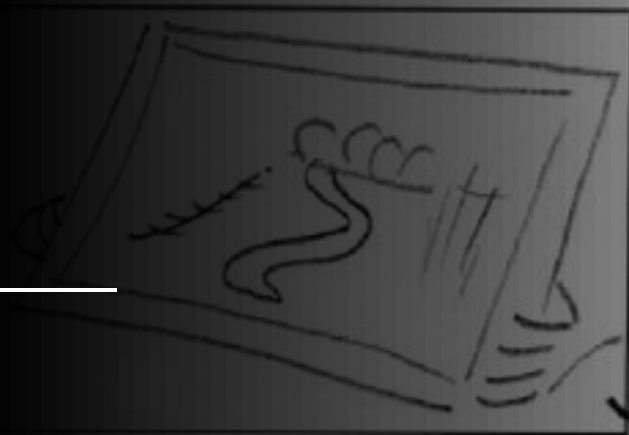
Close up of Sarah holding photograph
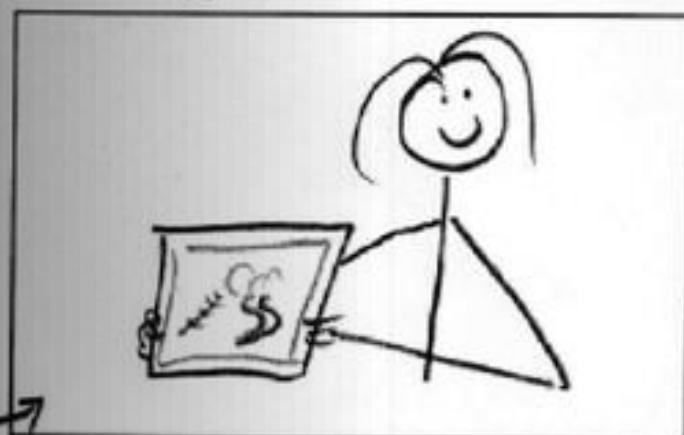
5. Camera zooms out to a wide shot showing Sarah speaking about using photographs to plan your storyboard.
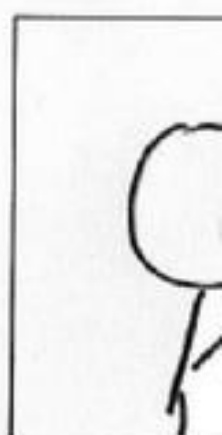
6. Over Callum of diffe you cou

Step 3: Storyboard

Use quadrants template or a mix of "classic" drawings and quadrants

Step 3: Storyboard – Quadrants template
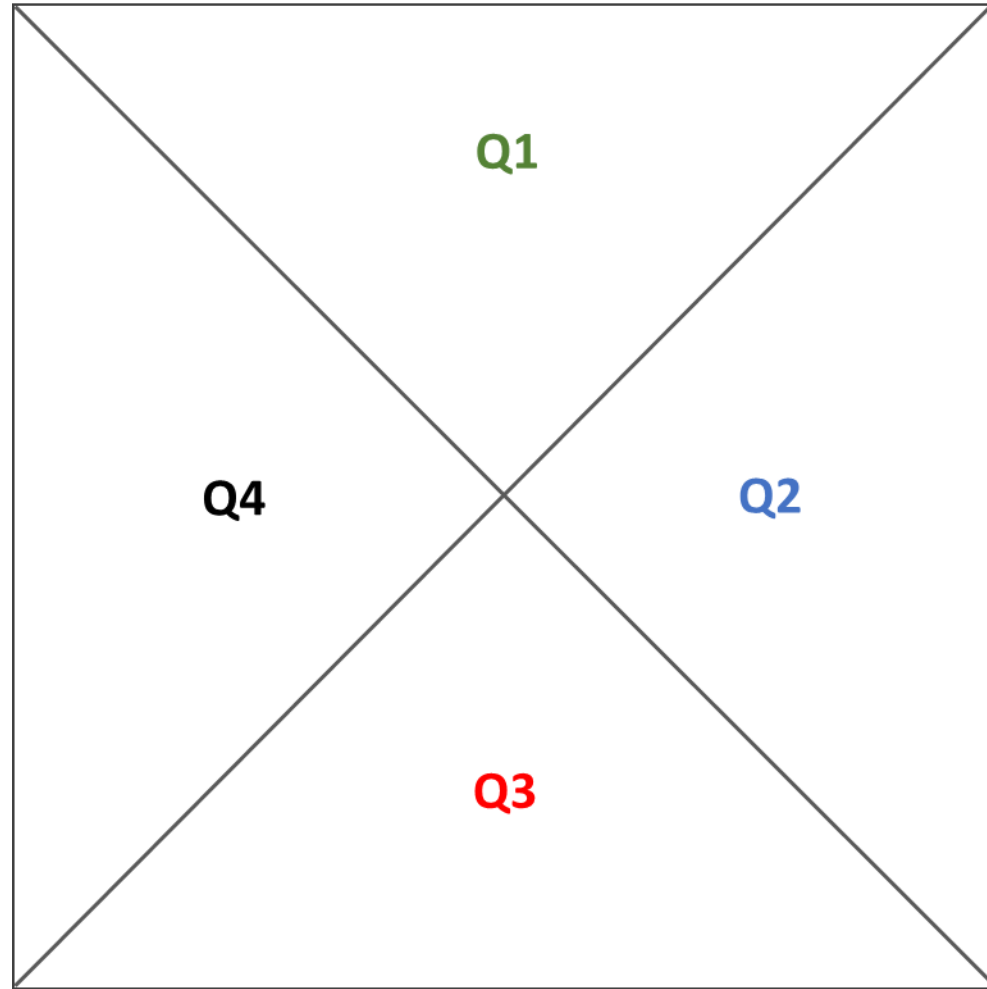
Color coding is a good idea

Step 3: Storyboard – Quadrants template
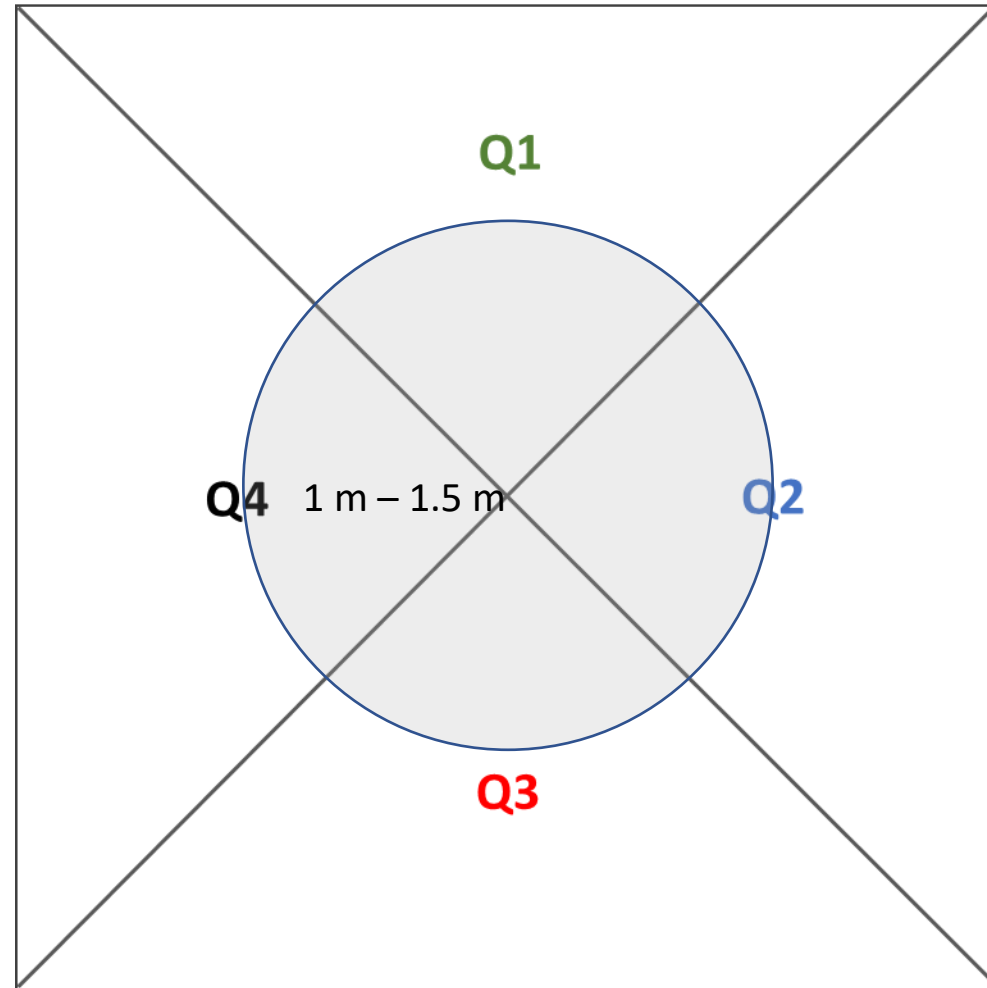
Close proximity

Close proximity

Q1

Q4

1 m – 1.5 m

"Near field is the most important part of a VRshot for presence. Composing depth is more important than 360." (Felix & Paul)

Q2

Q3
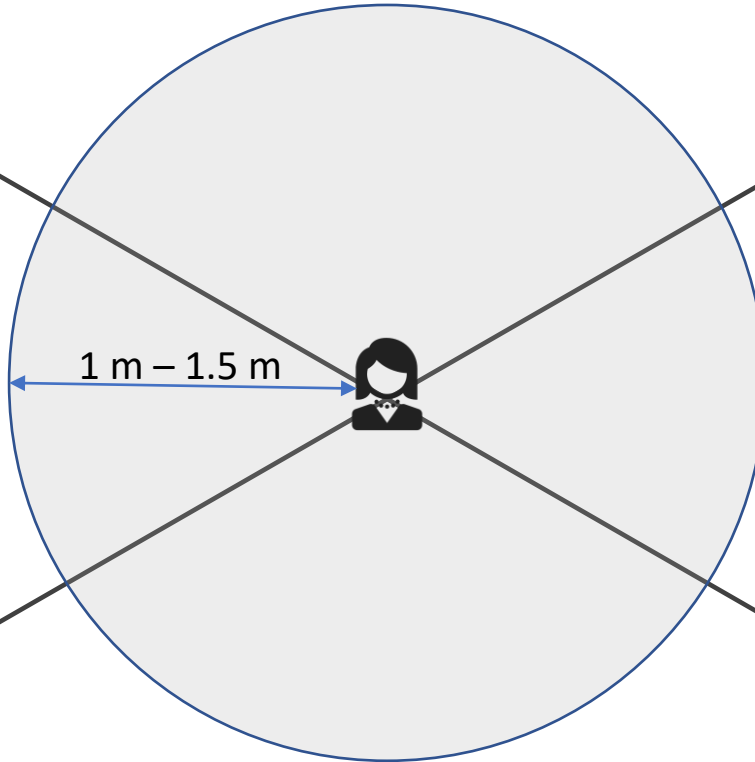
"Get the near field right, and the rest follows." (Louis Jebb, immersive.ly)

Step 3: Storyboard

- **Q1** is where you normally expect your user to be focused on. But you are not sure

- If you want your user to **focus attention** on another quadrant: how will you do that (sound, interactive element, ...) Indicate that clearly in your storyboard and, if necessary, adapt your script

- If from your storyboard, it turns out that nothing much is happening in **Q2-Q4**: maybe VR/360° wasn't such a good idea after all?

- For the storyboard, you might want to have done some preliminary location hunting, so that you can use pictures of locations in your storyboard

Step 3: Storyboard with quadrants
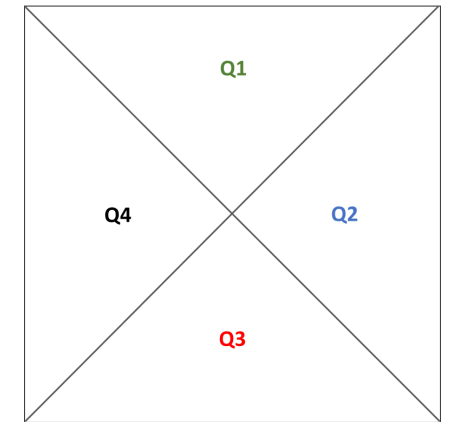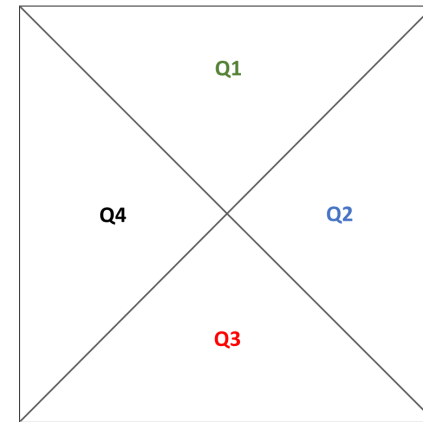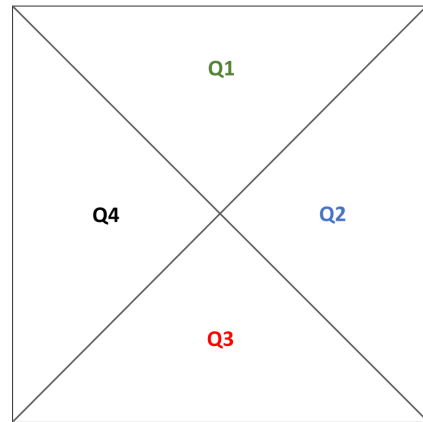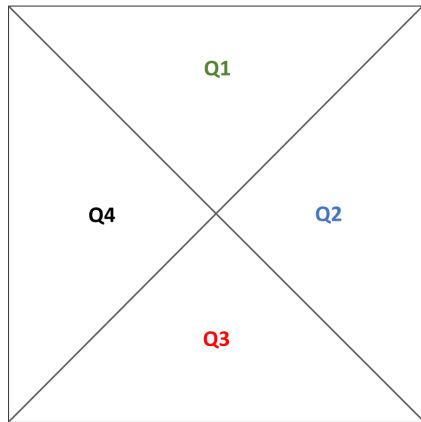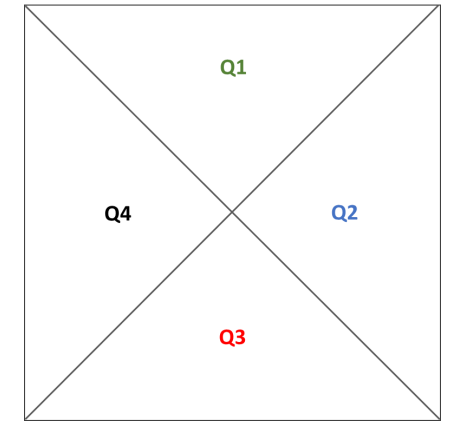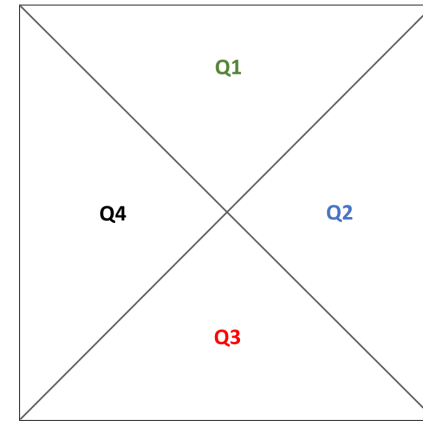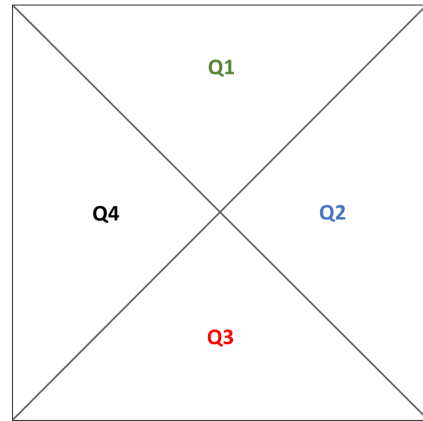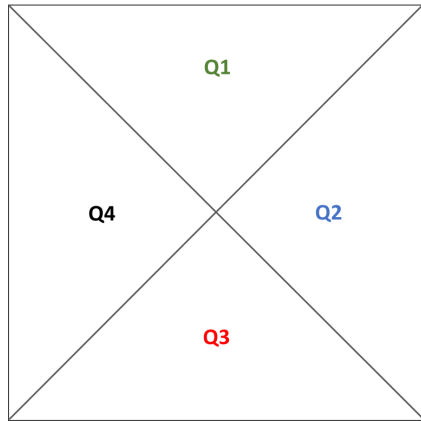
Step 4: Crew

Step 4: Crew

Although you will probably work with 1 or 2 person crews, try to briefly describe the traditional crew roles

See VRLesson7 (2019-2020), or use your own terminology)

Step 5:
Equipment

Step 5: Equipment

- Briefly describe the equipment you are going to work with (hard- and software)

- Briefly describe the **possibilities** and the **limitations** of the equipment

Step 6: Production planning

	Mon 12/3	Mon 19/3	Mon 26/3	Mon 2/4	Mon 9/4	Mon 16/4	Mon 23/4	Mon 30/4	Mon 7/5	Mon 14/5	Mon 21/5	Mon 28/5	Mon 4/6	Mon 11/6	Mon 18/6
Production:															
1 Production budget and hire research	1	1	1												
2 Produce draft and Final script			2	2											
3 Location Reccy reports				3	3	3									
4 Storyboards							4	4							
5 Production Schedules									5	5					
6 Production Call Sheets										6	6	6			
...ection:															
1 Recording Dialogue in Various Acoustic Locations										1	1				
2 Discuss Acoustic Locations										2	2				
...roduction:															
1 Upload And correctly Lable Footage to Editing Computers															1
2 Introduction to Reaper															
3 Effects Manipulation															
3 Discussion of Effects Maniplution															

Step 6: Production planning

Make a detailed project plan including:

- Location hunting
- Actors casting
- Other necessary logistics (set props, light, …)
- Filming
- Post-production
- For each stage of the production, also indicate who is going to do what

Step 7: Filming

Step 7: Filming – Preparatory steps

Before you start filming:

- Make a few test shots, to see if equipment is OK, if you are comfortable with the situation, and whether a crucial setting is OK

- Make sure to test your sound! In majority of first time 360/VR productions, sound is a problem

- Batteries, camera fully loaded, …

- Do realize that you (the filmer, director) have to disappear before real filming starts

- Assign someone to make "making of" pictures

Start your engines …

Timing proposal

Class topic	Assignment for next class	Proposed date
Reiteration of VR production process	Is your concept a good fit for Virtual Reality?	22-Mar
Feedback on concepts & VR-fit	Adapt concept notes	29-Mar
Feedback on adapted concept notes and VR-Fit	Write detailed scenarios	05-Apr
Feedback on detailed scenarios	Adapt scenarios	12-Apr
Storyboard guidelines & examples	Make storyboard	19-Apr
Feedback on storyboards; Guidelines for crew, equipment & production planning	Determine crew, equipment & production planning	26-Apr
	Filming & post production	03-May
		10-May
		17-May
Feedback & jury for final product		31-May
		07-Jun

Assignment for next week: VR Fit

- Being there or being them? Or both?

- Panorama or close proximity? Or both?

- Is location the central character? Or a real person?

- If location is important, make a few quadrant sketches to investigate and show that 360° is relevant. Maybe add a picture.

- What is going to happen in Q2-Q4?

Finally …

- Are the assignments clear to you?

- Is it doable?

- Deadlines?

- Ideally, we would like to see intermittent material while you are working, so we can give feedback