

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

The New York Times seeing “encouraging metrics” from excursion into VR: NYT exec

November 4, 2016



Promotional image for Tag Heuer content on NYT VR

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NEW YORK - A panel of women working in virtual reality at ad:tech New York 2016 held an intense conversation about the future of the platform, including insight from an executive with The New York Times on its VR users, who clock in more than six minutes on the application more than even the newspaper's core apps.

During Madwoman VR's "The New Reality of Virtual Reality" panel Nov. 2, Jessica Northrup, who has been virtual reality program manager at [The Times](#) since the newspaper launched VR in November of last year, described its dedication towards including VR reporting as a central facet of its newsroom. She also commented on The Times's relationships with brands in working to advance its VR presence.

"The Times is investing heavily in VR, not just from a financial standpoint, but across the newsroom and in digital," Ms. Northrup said. "It's been a companywide initiative, and it has been for a while now.

"The Daily 360 is an example of that, and I think brands play an important role; they always have for The New York Times content," she said. "And we're continuing to partner with brands in new platforms and new technology that we invested or use in addition to the content.

"What's great to see is that the brands we have partnered to date with, their content is of amazing quality and it really is a true partnership. We feel the quality and the standards that we apply to our bureau is being reflected in the brands that we work with, and we'd love to see those partnerships continue."

Madwoman VR panel

The panel also spoke on the evolution of VR content and the progression of both consumers' patience with VR content and the corresponding increase in length of said content over time. Jen Dennis, executive producer of branded content and VR at RSA, mentioned that there is a burgeoning push for episodic content.

The panel discussed the future of VR

Emily Becher, vice president and global head at [Samsung Accelerator](#), seemed to disagree, claiming that Samsung

sees trends showing shorter, and also slower, and progressing towards incorporating social components.

And Boo Wong, executive producer at The Mill, spoke on how successful brands currently maneuver on the emergent platform.

"Brands, they're looking for a way to tell short stories and giving users a way to stay in that space; to give them a 360-degree space and let them wonder, Why did this brand put me here?" she said. "It gives users a deeper way to experience the brand."

Samsung Accelerator is promoting VR use in a variety of arenas

Virtual reportage

Ms. Northrop also spoke on the preliminary results from The Times's limited experiment with VR, which speaks to both the newspaper's prescience in adopting the platform so early and is good news for both industries at large.

"We're actually seeing very encouraging metrics," Ms. Northrop said. "Two-thirds of our audience is repeat users versus new users, and they're spending over six minutes in our app per session, which is more than our core apps.

"Granted, VR is a more immersive experience and we realize that that's a factor. We're really trying to study how people are consuming VR on a regular basis."

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