

Edited by Jordan Frith, Michael Saker

The changing face of VR

Pushing the boundaries of experience across multiple industries

SERIES IN SOCIOLOGY

About the editor

Dr. Jordan Frith is the Pearce Professor of Professional Communication at Clemson University. His primary research focuses on mobile media and infrastructure. He is the author of 3 books and more than 30 peer-reviewed journal articles in a variety of disciplines. His third book – ‘A Billion Little Pieces: RFID and Infrastructures of Identification’ – was published by MIT Press.

Dr. Michael Saker is a Senior Lecturer at City, University of London in the Department of Sociology. His research focuses on the digitalisation of everyday life, digital data, and the social consequences of emerging technologies. He is the co-author of ‘Intergenerational Play’ (Emerald, 2021) and ‘Location-Based Social Media’ (Palgrave, 2017).

Summary

VR occupies an interesting place in the media ecosystem. On the one hand, it is an emerging, ‘cutting-edge’ technology backed by billions of USD by major corporations. On the other hand, VR is older than the World Wide Web and older than social networking sites. After many years of hype and unfulfilled potential, VR is now finally on the precipice of widespread adoption and has begun to be used in novel ways throughout various industries. This edited collection brings together a diverse group of authors to analyse the current state of VR, while recognizing that these many different use-cases will likely become even more important with the increased investment in the technology.

To examine the current state of VR across multiple sites and industries, we compiled a group of practitioners and academics to both examine VR practices and theorize new uses of VR. The book also focuses on an inclusive analysis and includes authors from South America, North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia, and the topics range from analyses of VR use in live events to the ethics of nature-based VR apps to the social practices involved in using public VR at museum exhibits. As we argue in the introduction, this book is one of the first to bring together authors from different backgrounds and disciplines to chart just how widely VR has already spread. And maybe most importantly, the topics covered in this book will only become more relevant as VR continues to grow, especially in the wake of the growth of the supposed Metaverse.



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