

---

# Mixed Reality: AR you ready?

OPINION

02 NOV 2017

Earlier this year, MediaCom APAC brought together advertisers, media owners and tech players for a day of debate and inspiration, unravelling the technology trends that are knocking on the marketer's door. One hot trend that on everyone's lips is Mixed Reality.

A lot has happened in the world of Mixed Reality in 2017. Oculus turned five. Facebook previewed its new Spaces app. Pokémon Go came – and went. Snapchat IPO'd (and Evan Spiegel got married), while Instagram cloned Snap's filters for its hugely popular Stories release.

Oh – and Apple and Google both launched their own AR developer apps for iPhones and

Androids, throwing the door open to the masses.

With the battle for Mixed Reality at a peak, the question now isn't *if* VR or AR will match the hype, but rather, *when*. Adoption is rising, but not quite at the pace predicted, mostly due to accessibility issues and content.

Fortunately, the issue of accessibility is becoming less of a hurdle. With companies like Google, Facebook, Samsung, HTC, Sony and Apple ploughing billions into VR and AR, all jostling for a leadership position, we're starting to see better and cheaper hardware options. You can now buy a decent VR headset for under \$50 and prices on the premium end are [starting to fall](#) as well.

Content, on the other hand, is lagging behind. It's the typical chicken-and-egg dilemma. Brands and publishers barely invest in high-quality content because there's no adequate device coverage yet. And consumers will not buy devices for lack of attractive content that really grabs them.

Signs suggest, however, that the humble smartphone is going to change all that – with mobile AR steering the shift towards mass adoption. In fact, according to [Digi-Capital](#), mobile AR will become the primary driver of a \$108 billion VR/AR market by 2021.

We're on the cusp of a fundamental shift in how we interact with the reality around us – and we're going to see it begin this side of the year, thanks to the recent launch of Apple's iPhone8 and X with iOS11.

The advent of mobile AR heralds a great opportunity for brands to take the content lead. At its September 2017 keynote, Apple [unveiled a clutch](#) of forthcoming branded AR apps to appear in the App Store.

Two, in particular, showed off the potential overlay power of mobile AR. First was the [Major League Baseball AT Bat app](#), which will allow fans to hold their iPhone over the field to display player stats during a game. The second was [The Sky Guide app](#) from Fifth Star labs, which superimposes constellation maps over the sky above you.

[Earlier in August](#), to kick off excitement for its ARKit platform, Apple showed how apps, as we know them, will be completely transformed. From Ikea's Place app that will mean you'll never pick the wrong piece of furniture again, to the future of reading with your child, mobile AR will change the game for brands and consumers.

Before rushing to jump on the bandwagon, however, brands first need to ask themselves how Mixed Reality can fit into their marketing strategies. While opportunities to test and trial are ripe for the taking, brands can create greater value and Return On Time Invested (the [new currency of experience](#)) if they take a considered approach and put their consumers first.

For example, the [National Museum of Singapore](#) sought to heighten the entire museum experience for its patrons. It is one of the first museums in the world to integrate Google's Tango technology into its tours, allowing visitors to bring the history of the museum, its architecture, and even the classic Indian Fin Whale installation to life.

[The Gap](#) created a solution for their customers that they didn't even know they needed, allowing people to try on clothes from home by matching their measurements and style to a virtual mannequin of themselves. Through a deliberate consumer-centric strategy, they were able to connect AR straight through to the point of sale.

Sometimes, brands may require a more immersive experience to create an emotional – or even psychological – connection. By putting people first, MediaCom client, Deutsche Telekom, created an [immersive mobile VR experience](#) that helps scientists to better identify the progress of dementia.

Mixed Reality is fast becoming a viable way to connect with people at scale, with fewer barriers than ever before. By taking advantage of this emerging mass media technology, marketers can create unique and surprising content to shape their brand in a way that has not been possible before.

---

Get insights in your inbox

Interested in the future of media and marketing?

Get actionable advice, insights and opinion from MediaCom experts every month

[Sign me up](#)

---

OPINION