# Virtual Brand Experience

high level concept document

## CHRIS FARKOUH

### TECHNICAL EVENT PRODUCER

# Context

**Holoride: Virtual Reality meets real world**
*Credit: Audi*

The decline of the large scale business to consumer events is evident across the globe as multinationals choose more and more to market products and services via digital platforms and targeted live experiential activity.

This is as much a result of consumer trends as it is a brand's willingness to produce live events, as the way that people tend to engage with content is via digital platforms and technologies.

This is probably best surmised by the continued decline of the motorshow industry.

Simultaneously we live in a changing world with an increasing concern regarding the sustainable nature of live event production, and we begin now to assess the necessity of global travel to enable face to face communication.

In 2005, Unity Technologies launched a game engine aimed to 'democratise' video game development and over the 2010s game engines have transitioned into other industries by extending and marketing their real-time 3D capabilities to a wider audience: primarily automotive, film and specialised augmented/virtual reality applications.

This has resulted in the rapid upscaling of the industry to manifest high fidelity virtual narrative environments, experiences and interactions. These are now commonplace in everyday life.

It is on this basis that there is now a mandate for this technology to enter and radically affect the core creation of live brand experiences.

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# Inspiration

### VISITOR ATTRACTION



**Kraken Unleashed**
*Credit: Figment Productions*

### IMMERSIVE THEATRE



**Punchdrunk: The Drowned Man**
*Credit: Punchdrunk*
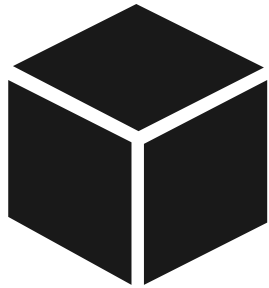
### REAL TIME STORYTELLING



**The Heretic**
*Credit: Unity Technologies*

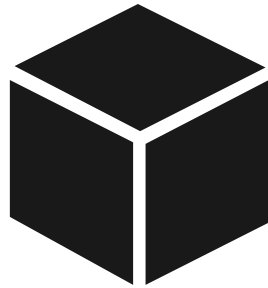### HIGH FIDELITY VIDEO GAME



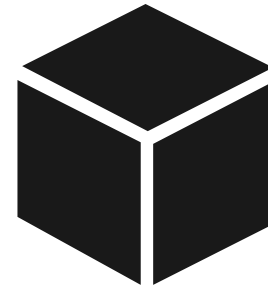**The Dark Pictures Anthology: Man of Medan**
*Credit: Supermassive Games*
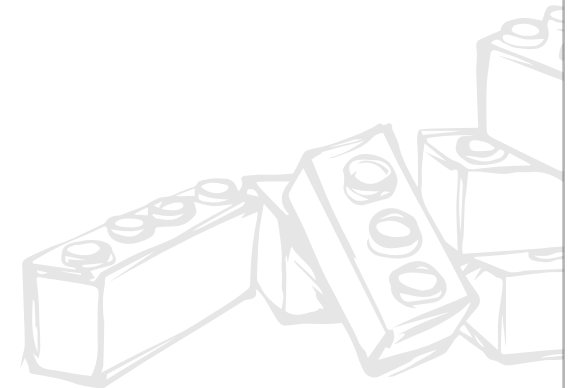
# Intention

AUTHENTICITY

THEATRICALITY

PLAYABILITY

# Components

**Environment Design**
- Level Design
- Technical Art
- Lighting
- VFX/SFX

**Narrative Comms**
- Product Intention
- Storyboard and Script
- Animation & Cinematics
- Pre/Post Event Comms

**Live Integration**
- Live Broadcast Event
- Satellite Events
- Webinars
- Social Integration

**UX Design**
- XR Product Showcase
- Advanced User Interface
- Game Mechanics
- User Journey [Player Controls]

**Platform**
- Multiplayer Functionality
- Data Analytics
- Engine Optimisation
- Real Time Curation
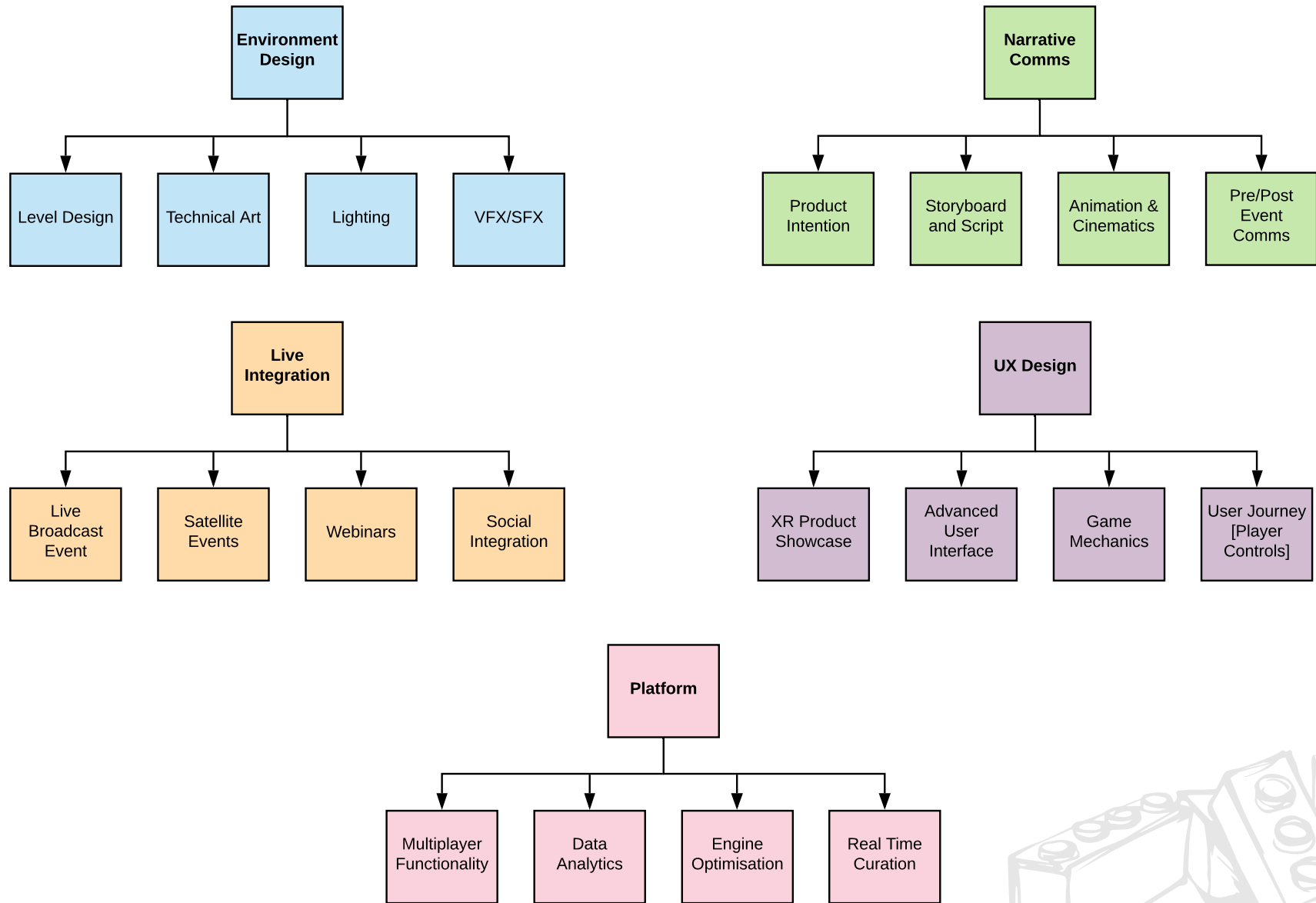
# High Level Concept

## 1. PREAMBLE

- The platform is a simultaneous multiplayer environment, that it to say you can engage hundreds or thousands of people who are simultaneously interacting in the same experience.
- There is a multiplayer option but it is limited to 2 people which is established during registration - this is primarily to bounce thoughts and humanise the experience (ie give people a buddy).
- The platform is curated in real time, that is to say the event (and platform) opens at XXX time and then closes at XXX time like a live experience.
- The length of the experience needs to be carefully considered with breaks. It would be very easy to overproduce this, make too much content in detriment to the overall experience.

## 2. PRE EVENT COMMS

- Event buzz.
- Event registration and ID setup.
- Single or multiplayer selection.
- Register for your live sessions.
- Download the program - Windows or iOS.

## 3. EVENT REGISTRATION AND FAMILIARISATION

- Open application and log in. The application is real time and it will hold you on a landing page until the alloted time.
- The log in process tailors the experience based on some predefined parameters (eg language, user category type).
- Experience commences with user familiarisation and check in process (this is an animated sequence which explains the concept, the controls, the environment and what the user will be doing, similar to arriving at a world class visitor attraction).
- The experience can be single or multiplayer - if you opt for multiplayer then there are picture in picture windows on your HUD from your partners webcamera and it supports bidirectional audio).
- The UI provides very directive information for the user to get to grips with the control interface and interaction mechanic of the program.

## 4. OPEN WORLD EXPERIENCE (LEVEL 1)

- This is essentially the virtual equivalent to walking onto a top end motorshow stand but without any real world constraints on the design intention.
- The user has first person controls and 360 viewing. There are a number of product demonstrations that the user can navigate toward either sequentially or not - that would be specific to the requirements of the story.
- There are background animations and visual effects within the experience.
- The space isn't huge, but this is a top end visual fidelity experience.
- There is a map in the HUD to inform users where they should go in order to enter the product experiences - this can be viewed in more detail on a pause/settings UI page.
- There is messaging displayed to the HUD from the organiser, which can be real time. They are also able to tannoy the experience.

# High Level Concept

## 5. PRODUCT DEMOS

- There are a number of demonstrations that the users can navigate towards and interactive with. Within the virtual environment these are just trigger points which go to separate standalone mini experiences. The nature of the experiences is totally dependent on the product being displayed but they can be single or multiplayer experiences and they would be a mix of interactions/games, video or real time animated content. So for example in the context of a car launch think:

        1. Brand identity.        2. Creative vision.        3. Integrated technology.
        4. Under the hood.        5. Customise your car.    6. In the driving seat.

- There is a player reward scheme for interacting with all the experiences, eg a giveaway is provided to those whom complete all the interactives.
- If you are operating in multiplayer then you are both automatically put into the same experience when one team member commences an interaction.

## 6. LIVE INTEGRATION

- The live integration really is live, so if you don't attend in time then you miss the beginning of the broadcast.
- The organisers tannoy the experience (either audibly or by the UI or both). Think 'Beginners and Fives' in theatre. You can either physically walk to the auditorium to trigger a cutscene or you can click through via the UI.
- The live broadcast is made externally in a studio and streamed into the engine in a 16:9 window.
- During the show, the presenter transitions to a pre recorded XR showcase and the curators manually trigger this event to all users within the 'auditorium'.
- The XR showcase ends and the 'TX' is transitioned back to the live stream.
- The live broadcast ends and users are triggered back into the level.

## 7. OPEN WORLD (LEVEL 2)

- The transition back to Level 2 is branching depending on what user category is defined at registration (eg CAT A - Influencer, CAT B - Internal, CAT C - Dealer).
- Options arising from the choices made in the pre comms manifest at this point, eg a timetable of break out sessions or webinars which are again supported and directed by the UI). They are able to return to the 'motorshow' interactives should they wish.

## 8. EXPERIENCE DEPARTURE AND POST EVENT

- The experience has a maximum time limit, although the user can leave at anytime that they wish. There is an orchestrated exit cut scene and product close.
-  Post event comms include in game rewards, user generated content, live recorded content, specific post event comms relating to the product.

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# Next Steps

This Technical Concept Would Require:

1. Indepth Feasibility Study

2. Ambitious Multidisciplinary Project Team

3. Video Game Development Partner

4. High Level Product Definition

5. Concept Art, Narrative and Storyboard

6. High Level Costing, Timelines and Dependencies

Supplementary Resource:

Visionaries 777 - XR and real-time 3D in automotive digital marketing strategies [hyperlink]

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# Biography

Chris is a technical producer within the live event industry.

He graduated from The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama with a Masters Degree in Theatre Practice in 2006, specialising in theatrical lighting design.

He then spent time working as a lighting designer at Essential Lighting Group. The highlight of his time there was designing and executing the lighting for The G20 Summit held in London in 2009, collaborating with designers Gary Collins and Neil Harvey to deliver this exceptional project.

Chris then worked for six years at production company HEART Productions, who specialise in turnkey design, production and management of product launches, public relation and experiential events. Here he developed his skills as a technical director, shaping a project's manifestation during the creative phase, and seeing it right the way through to a successful delivery onsite.

In 2014 whilst at HEART Productions, Chris executed the delivery of the 'Be Active Showcase Pavilion' for Coca Cola at the Sochi Winter Olympics, operating as the technical project lead for a world class experiential event production.

In 2016 Chris worked with Brilliant Stages as a project manager leading the manufacture of the Queen + Adam Lambert touring stage design for Stufish Entertainment Architects, and completed a role coordinating the engineering and manufacture of the extraordinary main stage for Tomorrowland 'The Elixir of Life'.

In 2018 Chris was appointed by Brilliant Stages as the project lead for the London Design Biennale at Somerset House. This required the development of a multi disciplinary technical production service to meet the broad requirements of the international teams of curators, designers and artists exhibiting at the event.

Now working at integrated agency level, Chris has recently become an Agile practitioner and a Unity Associate, offering cross platform production management services including project planning & control, scheduling, stakeholder coordination, budget & resource forecasting/accounting, technical direction, design development, digital media planning & integration, risk management, quality assurance oversight and product deployment.

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