Picking the Trends of 2019 - How will AR & VR contribute?

It's that time of the year again when the crystal balls are dusted off and the innovations and futures folk place their bets on what will be hot in the year to come. Last year's versions featured many predictions about AR and VR, some of which have been realised, some of which haven't. 2019's versions seem to have fewer direct references to AR and VR but many of the general trends referenced will certainly be influenced by both. So, what can we expect for XR in the year to come? Rather than add yet another set of prophecies, here's our pick of the best trend reports for the coming year with a point of view on how we can expect AR and VR to contribute to the trends being presented.

[10 Trends for 2019 - Carat](#)

One of the annual "what's next" reports we look forward to most is Dan Calladine's. The Carat Media Futures man can always be relied on to provide an interesting yet realistic and grounded read. If you haven't read it yet, you should.

Dan makes a range of ten predictions from "Life as a Service" to "Targeting Post GDPR".

Two of the ten themes have a direct impact on both VR and AR in the 12 months to come.

Experiential commerce
2019 will see a greater shift to experience within eCommerce. Online sellers will need to give potential customers a way of experiencing their products before they buy. As the time between brand engagement and product purchase shrinks, and consumer expectations of shoppable brand experiences grows, it will become increasingly important that brands offer a deeper richer way for their customers to experience products at the point of purchase.
The report lists a number of ways that AR is already contributing to this, for example commerce enabled AR filters from Snapchat that brands such as [Domino's](#) have already exploited.
But, the requirement for experience driven eCommerce is also a challenge that virtual reality will help to solve. We have already seen [Alibaba's](#) take on this back in 2017, but this year has seen companies such as [Amazon](#) and [Walmart](#) make moves into VR to address this very challenge. We expect to see these come to fruition in 2019, contributing to the move towards experiential commerce.

Expanding Connectivity
The report talks about how *5G connectivity will give people the ability to stream high quality video, virtual reality experiences and more without any latency or buffering.*
In addition, 5G will be a crucial factor in the escalation of head worn augmented reality. As 5G is rolled out, the need for the AR hardware itself to process huge amounts of data will reduce. The increase in connection speeds brought by 5G will allow this processing to happen in the cloud, ensuring that the form factor of devices can be reduced, which will be a key driver of consumer uptake.
This year saw the long-awaited release of the Magic Leap One, to mixed reviews. One of its criticisms was the bulky light pack that drives the experience. This is a key reason why [Magic Leap and AT&T have partnered](#). We can expect to see some interesting results of that partnership in the coming 12 months.

[Trends Report 2019 – Isobar](#)

Staying within the Dentsu Aegis network, Isobar's predictions for 2019 centre around the macro theme of augmented humanity – the concept of humans working in harmony with technology and machines to improve our lives. Two of the report's micro trends driving augmented humanity are particularly relevant to the world of extended reality.

The evolving interface
The report references voice and how this will alter the way that we interact with computers, the changing nature of how we will transact in retail, evidenced by the frictionless experience of Amazon Go, and the role of wearables.
Additionally, something that the report does not cover is the role that both AR and VR will have in revolutionising the way we interact with computers and reduce our reliance on screens.
Brands will need to adapt to this by at least starting to build experiences not reliant on the screen. As the report states, *true mainstream acceptance is still some way off,* but it's never too early to start learning for the future.
Air New Zealand is a great example of a brand doing exactly that with their [Fact or Fantasy Magic Leap experience](#).

The transformed experience
The report shows how augmented humanity will be delivered by the use of emerging technology to improve and change real world experiences. The examples of this in virtual reality specifically are plentiful and flourishing. 2018 has seen multiplayer gaming apps such as VR Poker, and VR social experiences such as Big Screen and V-Time start to thrive.

In addition, Melody VR in music, and Next VR in sport are creating new ways for their users to experience live events remotely and in 2019 we can expect to see far moire from these players as consumers start to get their heads around watching events remotely, socially and virtually!

The Future 100 2019 – J Walter Thompson (Innovation Group)

If you are looking for a long (very long!) read, then the 2019 edition of the J W Thompson Future is the trends report for you! It lists 100 key emerging consumer behaviours and why they matter for brands.
The trends span across 10 categories – from tech & innovation to food and drink. If you have the time, it's well worth a read.

Unexpected Formats is one of their tech and innovation trends and explores the way brands are looking for new and unusual ways of presenting their brand, both digitally and physically to generate additional buzz. Augmented Reality is listed as a key opportunity for brands to exploit, and the report references the work done between H&M and Magic Leap.
There are also an increasing number of options for brands to use both virtual and augmented reality at scale. At Adverty we have created a technology that allows brands to place themselves in a broad network of VR and AR apps - our own unexpected formats. In 2018, brands such as Coke, Angry Birds, Final Fantasy and Firefox have taken advantage of the offering.

Kantar – Media Predictions 2019

Kantar's predictions for 2019 focus on the changes we can expect to see in media in the coming year. Leonie Gates-Sumner of Kantar UK discusses the coming 12 months for augmented reality in _A New Reality for Marketers._ She correctly points that whilst to date there has been a focus on the ability for AR and VR to show off product benefits, there needs to be more work done to exploit their ability to build brands because of their ability to fully immerse consumers in a deep brand story.

Fjordnet, 2019 Trends

Last, but absolutely not least is the 2019 Trends report by Fjordnet.
Two of the trends discussed in the report have particular links to extended realities.

In _Ahead of the curb_, the report looks at the changing nature of cities and mobility. The report looks at the new players in the market such as Lime's electric street scooters, eVTOL's flying taxis and JD.com's delivery drones.

At Adverty, we believe that 2019 will see the beginnings of augmented reality's contribution to the changing nature of cities. We will start to see AR driven mapping systems and business reviews featuring AR. We are working on our own solution to deliver location relevant ads in AR and MR environments which we expect to roll out in 2019.

All of the reports we've referenced above are well worth the time investment to read, as are the similar versions from Mindshare, eMarketer, and Facebook with eMarketer

As always, predicting the future is tough. Fair play to the guys trying. Let's hope that we can look back in 12 month's time and see that we got at least some of it right.

Sincerely Yours,
The Adverty Team

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About Adverty
Founded in 2016, Adverty is an ad tech company that empowers mobile, augmented and immersive virtual experiences for brands to connect with consumers in the right place at the right time. Its platform lets creators of virtual and augmented reality content monetize with easy-to-integrate, non-intrusive native advertising. More information at www.adverty.com.