



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

NEWSDAY VR

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The NewsdayVR team!



NewsdayVR

A VR-based journalism training experience designed to prepare students for the emotional and ethical realities of real-world breaking news and trauma reporting.



THE CHALLENGE

The gap between classroom and newsroom

Traditional training

Lacks emotional realism. They cannot replicate pressure, misinformation, or the genuine distress of a developing story.

Industry reality

Journalists regularly face trauma, ethical dilemmas, and emotional strain — often from their very first assignment.



The core problem: Journalism students are rarely prepared for the emotional weight of the stories they will cover.



Workshop structure

NewsDay Workshop Activity and Test Overview

Running Order	Activity What will I be doing?	Task to Submit
1	 Screen. Discussion.	
2	 VR. Discussion.	
3	 VR. Discussion.	
4	 VR. Discussion.	
5	 Screen. Questionnaire	

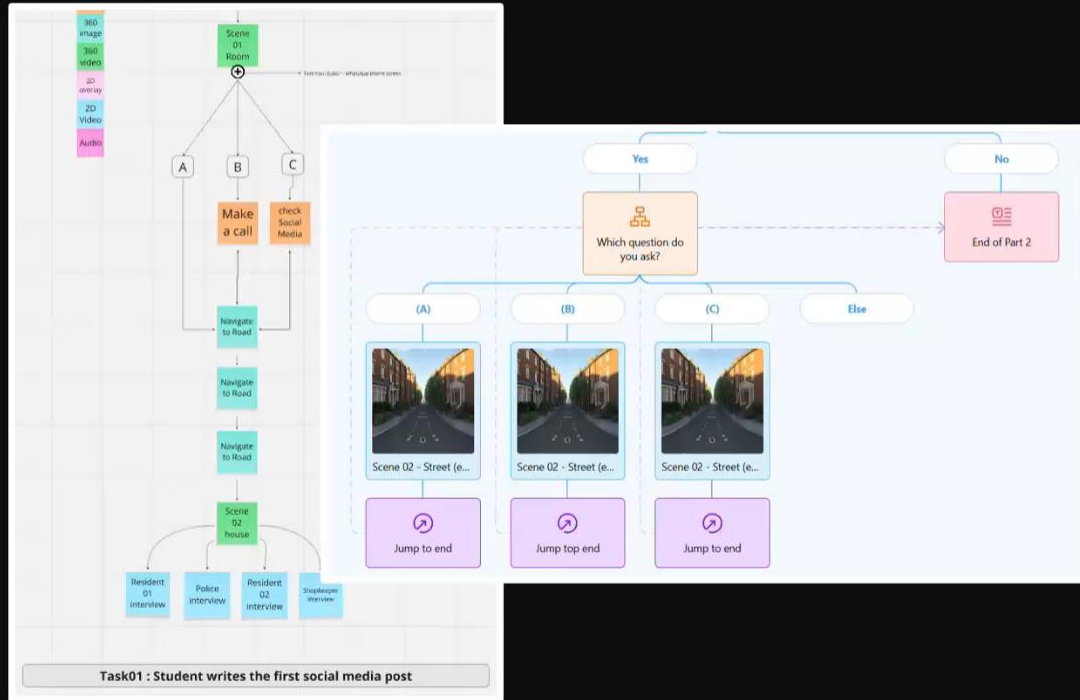
Affordances of VR



Danielle Millea



Dan McKinnie



Agency

- Choice
- Not all same outcome

Presence

- Immersive
- Realistic

You arrive at the crime scene. Police have set up a temporary cordon. There are three people standing nearby.

There's also a police officer protecting the scene.

Who will you approach first?





LEARNING IMPACT

Skills that go beyond the headlines



Core journalism skills

Fact gathering, verification, and critical questioning under pressure.



Ethical judgement

Navigating incomplete and conflicting information with integrity.



Emotional literacy

Building resilience and self-awareness when covering distressing events.

NewsdayVR teaches not just *what* journalists do — but **how it feels** to do it.



RESULTS & EVIDENCE

The numbers speak for themselves

69%

Confidence grows!

Confident about talking with colleagues
about emotional wellbeing of stories

65%

Confidence grows!

Recognising their own emotions

77%

Confidence grows!

Interviewing witnesses who are upset.

Measurable increases were recorded in **confidence**, **ethical awareness**, and **reporting skills** — with the project presented at international conferences.

RESULTS & EVIDENCE

96.7%

Want More VR Learning

Students actively requested expanded VR-based training.

100%

Rated 4 or 5 Stars

Every participant gave top-tier satisfaction ratings.

2026

Innovation Award Winner

Recognised internationally for excellence in education technology.

Measurable increases were recorded in **confidence**, **ethical awareness**, and **reporting skills** — with the project presented at international conferences.

Three reasons NewsdayVR stands out

Wellbeing-first design

Trauma and mental health are central to the curriculum — not ignored.

Authentic realism

Professional actors and 360° video create genuine emotional experiences.

Low-cost, high-impact

Built initially on approximately £10 — proof that innovation doesn't require big budgets.



INCLUSIVE & SCALABLE

Designed for everyone, built to grow

Inclusive by design

A fully accessible alternative via ThingLink provides captions, transcripts, and browser-based access — ensuring no student is excluded.

Already scaling beyond journalism

Any discipline involving **high-pressure decision-making** can adopt this transferable model.

Cross-disciplinary

Journalism + XR + Pedagogy + Wellbeing — a model that transcends any single field.

Thank You!

Carl Hartley

Dan McKinnie

Danielle Millea



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Preparing professionals for the real world

"NewsdayVR doesn't just train better journalists — it prepares more resilient, ethical professionals for the realities of the world they will report on."

01

Experience the scenario

02

Reflect and discuss

03

Build resilience and ethical judgement

WHAT IS NEWSDAYVR?

Immersive training that mirrors real newsrooms



NewsdayVR is a **blended learning experience** combining immersive 360° VR scenarios with classroom-based newsroom tasks and structured reflection.

Students simulate a developing major incident — gathering information, interviewing witnesses, and making editorial decisions under pressure.

Immersive VR scenarios

Real newsroom workflows

Guided reflection