

Virtual Reality can drive an increase in the value of donations

Nina Sooter - University of Geneva | Giuseppe Ugazio - University of Geneva

This paper investigates whether virtual reality is more effective than traditional forms of media at increasing the value of donations. Virtual reality gives participants the feeling of being immersed in a virtual world. The authors compared the donor behavior of people viewing a setting via Virtual Reality or on a computer screen (i.e. traditional forms of fundraising).

The authors focus on the following question: Does using virtual reality as a fundraising medium increase the likelihood and value of donations?

Using virtual reality as a medium for fundraising can increase the value of donations and the intent to make regular donations amongst younger generations versus more traditional forms of fundraising.

[#VirtualReality](#) [#Innovation](#) [#NextGen](#) [#Technology](#) [#Fundraising](#)

Background

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Context



- **Charities/non-profits need to find new ways to engage the next generation of givers**, who tend to like supporting ‘causes’ vs named charities and are looking for an **experience and an emotional** or intellectual return from making a donation.
- Studies suggest that **millennials appreciate experiential learning and prefer to connect using technology**. Based on this, **VR could be an useful medium for attracting younger donors** as it has both technological appeal and allows users to experience the impact they can make with their donations.
- **Virtual reality (VR)** is a novel technology growing in popularity and allows viewers to interact with media in a way that is impossible with traditional media. It has **been shown to increase a viewer’s immersion and awareness, leading to changes in behaviour following the experience**.
- **VR has been shown to increase the intention to donate time and money to charities when compared with video**; however, there is a gap between the intention to donate and the actual action of donating, meaning that not all people who show an intent to donate go on to do so.
- There is limited research on the impact of being an ‘active’ vs ‘passive’ participant within a VR experience and whether increasing the interactivity could impact the intention to donate.

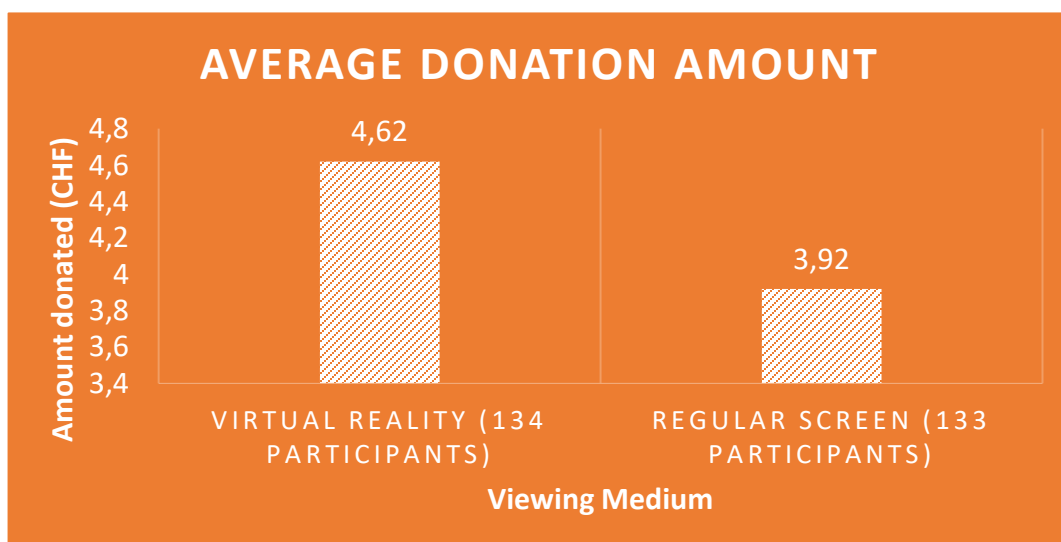
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Take aways & Learnings



- The experiment is based on a **VR training module featuring a war-time scenario** where the **viewer was responsible for rescuing an unconscious child**. It was provided and adapted by the International Committee of the Red Cross for the study.
- A total of 267 people (with a mean age of 23) were **randomly** assigned to one of the **eight scenarios with varying interactivity (active or passive), endings (happy or sad ending), and medium (VR vs on a screen)**. At the end of the viewing, participants were immediately invited to donate money earned in a previous qualifying task.
- **Participants viewing through VR gave 71 cents more than those experiencing the same scenario on a regular screen** (see the figure below). VR was also shown to positively impact a viewer's intention to make regular, repeat donations. Increases in sadness, finding experience enriching, interesting, and moving, were both increased by VR experiences, and increased donations in turn.
- Interactivity within the video and happy/sad endings were not shown to have an impact on the donation level, thus **only the viewing medium was deemed to influence the donation amount**.
- VR is a substantial investment for a charity, further evidence is required to determine the return on investment of using virtual reality in fundraising and its benefit as part of a strategy to solicit higher value, major gifts, and lower-level regular giving fundraising.



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