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# Immersing into Today's Media Experience

**W**e've all seen it, and we've all pretty much done it ourselves. What is it, you ask? Focused attention—immersion—into our media devices. In the olden days, that media device was the television set in your home, usually in the living room. Watching television was very much a social experience, where families often converged on the living room sofa to view the latest in news, sports, or entertainment. In my house, we watched whatever my father wanted to see on a black-and-white set, which was usually sports and news. He brought home our first color set expressly so that we could watch the 1976 Montreal Olympics in full color. And it was amazing to me.

We got the opportunity to watch movies or cartoons, for the most part, only when the babysitter came over, because our TV time was very much managed. I missed much of the social highlights that revolved around television viewing, though I did experience Dallas' "who shot JR" in the early 1980s.

Some of my friends had televisions in their rooms, and I could argue that this was the beginning

of a more personalized experience as we spent time with the content we truly wanted to see, without distractions from parents or siblings. I didn't have my very own television until I graduated from college and moved out of my parent's home. Finally, I had the freedom to watch whatever I wanted!

The last real television I bought was in 2005. It was a Sony that was maybe 25 in. and weighed about 200 lbs! I watched that television for only about five years before I transitioned to my current HD model, which is thin and sleek and about 10 lbs. With our sound bar in place, the experience is very much immersive and quite enjoyable.

Of course, along the way, we've all begun using other media devices, such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets. Adding superior headphone technology now allows us to immerse into our entertainment, whether we're watching TV, playing video games, or enjoying good music.

Virtual reality (VR) and cinema also provide immersion. VR transports you from the real world to one of imagination. The technology has evolved to the point that people, including me, can get sick from the reality of the movements. Cinema theaters now routinely

promote exciting high dynamic range and engaging audio to immerse the audience in the beautiful story unfolding on the screen. Even a black-and-white picture, like *ROMA*, can have a tremendous impact because of the high dynamic range used.

I haven't even mentioned the world of gaming as an immersive experience, or how theme parks are entertaining guests through ever more immersive experiences.

SMPTE is actively involved with all things immersive. The rise of immersive media in entertainment affects the entire workflow of content creation, distribution, and consumption. 4K/ultrahigh definition, along with immersive audio technologies, is rapidly becoming the baseline for new productions, whether for the small or big screen. As these technologies develop, SMPTE is there to enable the framework where the technology can be discussed and debated leading to industry standards and specifications, as well as a breadth of educational opportunities.

In this issue of the *Journal*, you'll learn more about the state of the art in immersive technologies for media. The technology has come a very long way from those early days of watching television in my childhood home.

