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PRESENCE IN THOSE WITH AND WITHOUT SIGHT: AUDIO DESCRIPTION AND ITS POTENTIAL FOR VIRTUAL REALITY APPLICATIONS

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Presence is affected by deficits in cognition and perception. It is thought to be associated with a preference for the visual domain, but has been not been extensively studied in those without sight. Audio Description (AD) is a verbal commentary conveying visual information, enabling blind and partially sighted people to access visual media. AD is currently only provided for low-immersion media, e.g., films. This project compared levels of presence for the same film clip watched with no AD, "standard" AD (describing characters, locations and actions) and a "cinematic" AD, which also includes details of camera shots. Surprisingly, those with impaired sight reported higher presence levels when watching the stimuli with AD, than sighted people watching the stimulus with no AD. Engagement scores reported by blind and partially sighted people for cinematic AD were highest overall. This suggests the need to revisit AD guidelines, which currently advise AD providers not to include filmic terms. It also suggests AD has potential for people who are blind or partially sighted to engage in more immersive Virtual Reality (VR) environments.

Keywords: **Presence, Blindness, Vision, Audio Description, Film**

Introduction

Presence is a multi-construct concept extending the idea of "telepresence", developed for human interaction with remote-access technology (Minksy, 1980), to embrace the psychological sense of immersion in any mediated environment. Biocca (1997, p.18) sums it up as "the illusion of being there." Sacau et al. (2008) suggest levels of presence are governed as much by individual factors as the qualities of the media that trigger it. Of the many factors, including personality, cognitive style and ability, age, gender, imagination (Heeter, 1992; Jurnet, Beciu & Maldonado, 2005), the ability to suspend disbelief (Lombard & Ditton, 1997), attention (Carroll, 1993) and deficits in cognition and perception (Stanney, Mourant & Kennedy, 1998), presence is widely believed to be positively associated with a preference for the visual domain (e.g., Chen, 2000). This study compares levels of presence reported by sighted people and those with impaired vision using the low-immersion medium of film: the final sequence of David Lean's "Brief Encounter" (1945) screened with and without audio description (AD).

Audio Description and Presence

AD is a verbal commentary, woven around the existing soundtrack, which makes visual media accessible to blind and partially sighted audiences. The practice originated in the U.S. in the 1970s and is currently used in cinema, TV and the visual arts (Hyks, 2005; Diaz-Cintas et al., 2007). AD concentrates on identifying characters, and describes locations and actions to help users follow the plot. Early studies (Pettitt et al., 1996; Schmeidler & Kirchner, 2001) demonstrated cognitive and social benefits. However, the effect on immersion of AD users has not been explored. Indeed, Gerber (2007) suggests that conventional AD practices have arisen with little research to inform them.

To the authors' knowledge to date there has not been any application of AD to Virtual Reality environments (VEs). This may be related to VEs being a relatively new phenomenon, largely visually driven, and so, not yet explored with people who are blind or partially sighted. Yet, interactive AD at some level does exist in other contexts. Descriptive audio guides used at museums and galleries include audio instruction (e.g. VocalEyes, 2011) such as orientation information, providing directions to, and around, the venue, or guiding a blind person's fingers around a raised, tactile image (Canning & Fryer, 2010). In live AD contexts, such as theater, "touch tours" allow AD users to visit the stage before a performance, where they are invited to touch props and costumes as these items are described (Szalwinska, 2009). There is also some description of potential affordances enabling a blind person to operate, for example, a bell that will be used in the play (Pesky People, n.d.) or being told not only how to manipulate a lever, but also its effect in making a puppet horse's ears twitch (Fryer, 2010a). This suggests there may be potential for a more interactive AD style to increase the accessibility of VEs to blind and partially sighted people in the future.

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This study concentrates on 2-D film, as the use of AD with more immersive AV forms, e.g., 3-D video, has also not been explored extensively. One piece of research in this area (RNIB, 2011) suggested there would be little interest to AD users of explicit descriptions of 3-D effects. However, the study should be interpreted in context – it was a very small, non-experimental study of limited scope.

"Standard" Versus "Cinematic" Audio Description

Another small-scale study in the early days of TV AD (ITC, 2000) drew a similar conclusion about more basic visual effects. This resulted in guidelines advising that filmic terms, such as camera angles, should generally not be used because "to many, expressions like: 'in close-up,' 'pan across,' 'mid-shot,' 'crane-shot,' etc. may not mean anything…" (ITC, 2000, p.8). Film theory, however, suggests the way a movie is shot influences the audience's emotional engagement (Monaco, 2009). In a study by Kraft (1986), participants reported fast-cut film sequences to be more exciting than an uncut version of the same sequence. Eye-tracking research suggests directorial decisions, at the very least, induce commonality of gaze (Marchant et al., 2009). In a pilot study, the first author trialed a description style incorporating abstract "cinematic" elements into the AD: how a shot was framed and whether an image cut sharply to the next or softly dissolved. Perhaps surprisingly, blind and partially sighted people responded positively to this "cinematic" AD (Fryer, 2010b).

AD and Presence

Anecdotal evidence suggests AD is most effective when users are not consciously aware of it. One blind theater viewer commented:

"I find it very difficult to comment analytically on the quality of the live description, since I hardly noticed it. And there is no greater compliment that I can pay to the audio describers than this … For me, audio description works best when … the describers are invisible, when I'm not consciously aware of the vital contribution they're making to my theatrical experience." (Thomas, 2009, personal communication)

This "perceptual illusion of non-mediation" (Lombard & Ditton, 1997 p.7) is a classic definition of presence. Rather than relying on qualitative user comments, it suggests presence may provide a useful measure of the effectiveness of AD.

Wan et al. (2010) cite observable differences in neural processing between those with early onset compared to late onset blindness, with the mid-teenage years proving to be an important cut-off. Hollins (1985) also showed that scores on a test of pictorial imagery were lower for people who had been blind for a greater proportion of their lives. Those experiencing sight loss later in life might be expected, therefore, to report higher presence levels for the more visual, cinematic AD compared to those with long-standing sight problems. However, given that Slater et al. (1994) found lower presence levels in those for whom the auditory mode was dominant, fully sighted people might be expected to report higher presence levels overall. This study aimed to test these hypotheses. It received ethical approval from Goldsmiths College, University of London.

Method

Participants

Fifty-four volunteers (29 men and 25 women), aged 21-83 years (m = 54.50; S.D. = 16.18), were divided into three groups: those who described themselves as having no useable vision (N = 18, male = 12; mean age = 51.83; S.D. 13.96); some useable vision (N = 18, male = 9; mean age = 55.78; S.D. 14.35) and full vision (N = 18, male = 8; mean age = 56.5; S.D. 20.05). All those with sight loss were registered either blind or partially sighted (see Table 1).

Table 1
Sight Loss Characteristics of Blind and Partially Sighted Participants

Age; gender; useable vision	Age registered (years)	Cause of blindness
21 (M) none	Birth	anophthalmia
37 (M) none	Birth	retinopathy of prematurity
40 (F) none	21	glaucoma
41 (F) none	11	shrunken eye syndrome
42 (M) none	Birth	rubella
42 (M) none	5	glaucoma
44 (F) none	17	retinitis pigmentosa
46 (M) none	22	retinitis pigmentosa
49 (M) none	40	keratoconjunctivitis SICA
56 (M) none	45	diabetes
57 (M) none	Birth	retinal blastoma
57 (M) none	Birth	rubella
61 (F) none	Birth	infant glaucoma
62 (M) none	Birth	retrolental fibroplasia
62 (M) none	50	retinitis pigmentosa
70 (F) none	5	optic nerve damage
72 (M) none	15	retinitis pigmentosa
74 (F) none	16	retinitis pigmentosa
32 (F) some	27	not stated
38 (F) some	16	double hydrocephalic
38 (M) some	35	stroke
42 (F) some	23	nystagmus
42 (M) some	27	retinitis pigmentosa
45 (M) some	23	not stated
46 (M) some	33	glaucoma
47 (M) some	29	not stated
61 (F) some	48	retinitis pigmentosa
62 (F) some	27	retinitis pigmentosa
63 (M) some	45	stargardts disease
64 (M) some	50	stargardts macular dystrophy
64 (M) some	6	congenital cataracts
66 (F) some	65	retinal vein occlusion
70 (F) some	37	macular degeneration
74 (F) some	71	strokes
74 (M) some	71	giant cell
76 (F) some	69	glaucoma and haemorrhage

Participants were recruited through the Royal National Institute for Blind People, VocalEyes, East Suffolk Association for the Blind and personal contacts, resulting in a sample with a wide age-range and variety of sight characteristics. Fourteen percent of participants with sight loss were blind from birth, and thus over-represented, as only 5% of the UK blind population is congenitally blind (RNIB, 2010). Sixty-six percent of this population is aged 75 or over (NHS, 2008), making the study sample considerably younger. However, Ofcom (2009) reports that most AD users are of working age, so the sample may be more typical of the market audience for AD.

Measures

Demographic details, provided in advance, comprised age, gender, perceived useable vision (no, some, full) and, where applicable, medical name of sight condition and age registered blind or partially sighted. Participants also rated their love of film and familiarity with AD, using a 5-point Likert scale.

The ITC-Sense of Presence Inventory (ITC-SOPI, Lessiter et al., 2001) produces four separate presence subscales: Sense of Physical Space, Engagement, Ecological Validity (the naturalness of the scene) and Negative Effects. Part A comprises six statements regarding feelings after viewing the stimulus (e.g., "I felt sad that my experience is over"); Part B comprises 38 statements regarding feelings during the experience (e.g., "I had a sense of being in the scenes"). Statements are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Stimulus

Participants were shown the final seven-and-a-half minutes of David Lean's film "Brief Encounter" (1945). The clip contains action and changes of location that can only be accessed visually or via AD. The clip was presented with no AD, with "standard" AD and with "cinematic" AD (for an example of the comparative AD styles, see Appendix 1). The researcher wrote and voiced both the standard and cinematic AD in order to control for potential variability between the two AD styles.

Procedure

Participants watched the film clip in each of the three conditions – no AD, standard, and cinematic. The viewing order was counter-balanced across the sample. Participants completed an ITC-SOPI after each clip and, at the end of the session, stated their clip preference. Most sighted subjects completed their own self-report measures. Two older sighted participants, and all those with sight loss, had the measures read aloud and dictated their responses.

Sessions, lasting approximately an hour, were designed to simulate watching a film in a domestic setting, with a maximum of five participants. AD was mixed onto the soundtrack of the DVD, shown on a 40" (101cm) TV screen. Participants sat at a distance from the screen they would normally choose at home. Most watched from three meters, but those with partial sight sat much closer. At the start of each session, the researcher read a synopsis of the film plot, up to the point where the clip began.

Results

Sight and Preference for AD Style

Clip preference (no AD, standard AD or cinematic AD) is shown in Table 2. All participants with sight loss preferred AD, either standard or cinematic. This was significantly different from those with full sight (chi square = 22.46, df (4), $p < .001$), whose preferences were equally divided between AD and no AD. There was no association between clip preference and viewing order ($r = .106$, $p = .444$).

One-way ANOVAs showed no significant difference between the three groups in age, gender or love of film. The fully sighted group was significantly less familiar with listening to AD: $F (2, 51) = 13.43$, $p < .001$ (bonferroni post hoc test $p < .05$). AD style preference was significantly associated with familiarity ($F (2, 51) = 13.64$, $p < .001$). Of the 36 participants with sight loss, 25 were already familiar with AD. Of these, 11 preferred standard AD and 14 preferred cinematic AD. Of the 11 participants not previously familiar with AD, 10 preferred cinematic AD.

Age at Onset of Sight Loss and AD Style Preference

The age at onset of sight loss was significantly associated with AD style preference ($F (1, 34) = 11.20$, $p = .002$). The majority in Group 1 (age at onset: birth-5 years) preferred standard AD (8/12); the majority in Group 2 (age at onset: 16- 29 years) preferred cinematic AD (8/12); those in Group 3 (age at onset: 30 years and above) unanimously preferred cinematic AD (12/12).

The Effect of Sight and AD Style on Presence

Age, gender and age at onset showed no significant associations with any of the four presence subscales of the ITC-SOPI. Group means and SDs are shown in Table 3. Mixed measures ANOVAs showed a main effect of AD style on engagement, (F (2, 1.69)

Table 2
Clip Preference according to Sight Characteristics (All Participants)

	No AD	Standard AD	Cinematic AD	Participant Total
No vision	0 (0%)	7 (43.8%)	11 (38%)	18 (33.3%)
Some vision	0 (0%)	5 (31.32)	13 (45%)	18 (33.3%)
Full vision	9 (100%)	4 (25%)	5 (17%)	18 (33.3%)
Preference Total	9 (17%)	16 (30%)	29 (53%)	54 (100%)

= 3.43, p = .044) and significant interactions between sight and AD style for engagement (F (2, 3.38) = 3.65, p = .012), spatial presence (F (2, 3.23) = 4.82, p = .003) and ecological validity (F (2, 3.02) = 2.93, p = .038). There was no significant main effect or interaction for the subscale of negative effects.

For the stimulus with no AD, participants with no sight and full sight reported higher levels of spatial presence (Fig. 1) and ecological validity (Fig. 2) than those with some sight. Fully sighted participants reported their greatest engagement levels for no AD (Fig. 3) with levels on all three subscales dipping slightly for standard AD and considerably for cinematic AD. By contrast, all those with impaired sight reported higher presence levels for the two AD clips. Highest levels of spatial presence and ecological validity overall were reported for cinematic AD by those with no useable vision. The highest level of engagement overall was reported by those with some sight, also for cinematic AD.

Discussion

AD Style Preference

All blind and partially sighted participants preferred the film clips with AD. This might seem unsurprising but several participants commented on the fact that the main character, Laura, narrates much of the action, making AD less essential. Surprisingly, half the sighted sample stated a preference for one or the other of the AD clips. They might have been responding with blind companions in mind, or perhaps were simply interested to encounter AD for the first time.

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations for SOPI Subscales for Each AD Style

	No vision	Some vision	Full vision
Spatial Presence: No AD	2.47 (0.62)	2.27 (0.92)	2.44 (0.56)
Spatial Presence: Standard AD	2.68 (0.73)	2.45 (0.67)	2.24 (0.69)
Spatial Presence: Cinematic AD	2.80 (0.79)	2.52 (0.72)	2.21 (0.41)
Engagement: No AD	3.26 (0.83)	3.22 (1.04)	3.50 (0.52)
Engagement: Standard AD	3.59 (0.75)	3.65 (0.81)	3.32 (0.55)
Engagement: Cinematic AD	3.62 (0.76)	3.76 (0.71)	3.26 (0.69)
Ecological Validity: No AD	3.36 (0.86)	2.71 (1.17)	3.32 (0.73)
Ecological Validity: Standard AD	3.60 (0.98)	3.21 (1.09)	3.27 (0.63)
Ecological Validity: Cinematic AD	3.57 (0.87)	3.34 (1.05)	3.07 (0.74)
Negative Effects: No AD	1.43 (0.51)	1.69 (0.64)	1.48 (0.45)
Negative Effects: Standard AD	1.42 (0.47)	1.44 (0.49)	1.34 (0.41
Negative Effects: Cinematic AD	1.53 (0.64)	1.51 (0.47)	1.36 (0.38)

Of the sample, 66.7% of participants with sight loss expressed a preference for cinematic AD. A man with recent sight loss said, “If you're into film, the technical terms are what you need to know.” Another partially sighted woman said, “I was surprised by my interest in the camera views. In the end I preferred the clip with the more detailed AD (cinematic). It had a greater impact.”

Those who had lost their sight after the age of 30 were unanimous in preferring the cinematic AD. This may reflect greater familiarity with cinematic techniques or a stronger visual memory. One blind woman said “describing the camerawork was much more dramatic – especially when she (Laura) dashed out on the platform, it was terrific.” By contrast, most congenitally blind participants found the description of the cinematic elements unnecessary.

Over 90% of the blind and partially sighted participants previously unfamiliar with AD expressed a preference for cinematic AD. Those used to AD were less likely to prefer this new approach, suggesting expectation may play a role in presence, with the unfamiliar producing a distancing effect.

Sight and Presence

There was no support for the hypothesis that those with full sight would record higher presence ratings than those with impaired vision. Jurnet et al. (2005) similarly found no connection between presence and a preference for the visual mode when using a stimulus with important dialogue. Brief Encounter has a vivid soundscape, comprising dialogue, sound effects and Rachmaninov’s emotive music. For participants with sight loss, the AD presumably provided a further auditory element, presenting visual information verbally.

Across the whole sample, the highest engagement ratings (e.g., “I felt myself being drawn in”) were reported by those with some sight for cinematic AD. Perhaps the detailed nature of this AD style allowed more effective use of any residual vision. Highest levels of spatial presence (e.g., “I felt I was visiting the places shown on screen”) were also reported for cinematic AD, but by those with no useable sight. Levels of ecological validity (e.g., “The scenes seemed natural”) were highest for those with no sight, reporting little difference between the two AD styles. Citing Sas, O’Hare & Reilly (2004) who link higher presence to introversion, Jurnet et al. (2005) propose that introverts find it easier to suppress conflicting information. Various studies (Coren et al., 1995) have linked introversion with reduced visual acuity. Perhaps blind and partially sighted people in this sample were more introverted than their sighted counterparts. A more likely explanation is that limited visual perception reduces such conflict, both within the media form and from the surrounding environment.

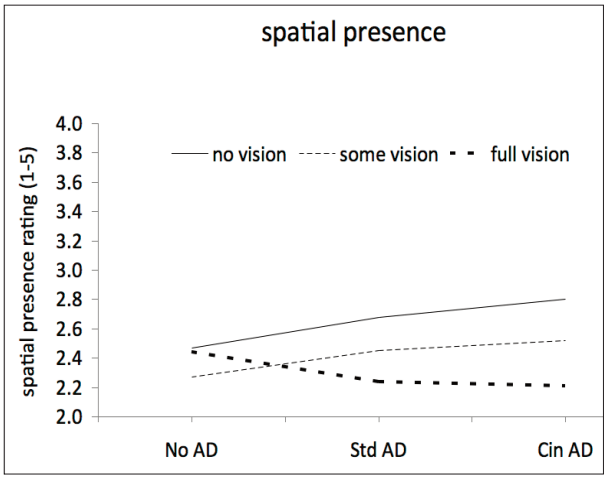

Figure 1. Levels of spatial presence by sight group for each AD style.

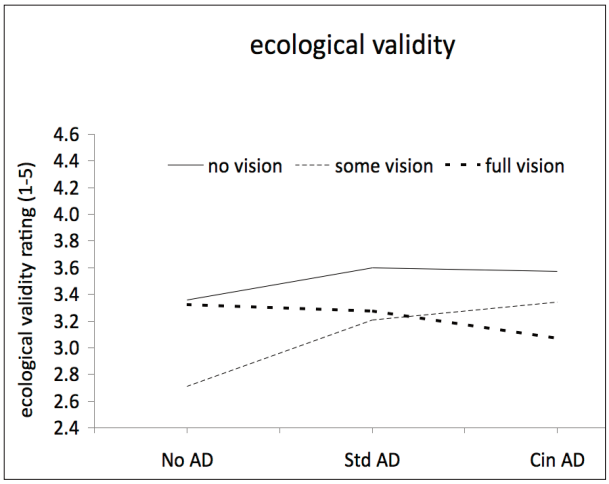

Figure 2. Levels of ecological validity by sight group for each AD style.

Imaginal Presence Versus Virtual Reality

Biocca (1997) states that, at any one time, individuals can feel present in one of three environments: the physical, non-mediated environment; the virtual environment (VE); or an imaginal environment dependent on the user's internally-generated imagery. While sighted participants reported levels of presence based on their immersion in the VE, blind participants were creating their own imaginal one, triggered by the soundscape of the film combined with the verbal description. Their stronger levels of presence emphasize the role played by the creative imagination in low-immersive media (see Barber & Wilson, 1979; Heeter, 1992). Sighted people reported the lowest levels of spatial presence, engagement and ecological validity for cinematic AD. This might reflect a conflict between immersion in the movie and being made conscious, through the AD, of the technical aspects of the film's construction. In the absence of conflicting, perceptual visual information, blind people were free to draw on their own mental representations.

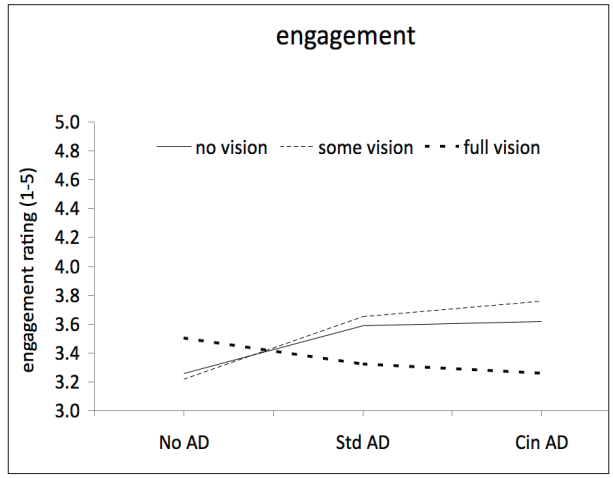

Figure 3. Levels of engagement by sight group for each AD style.

Processing Load

As well as a qualitative difference between the two AD styles, there was also a quantitative difference: the standard AD script comprised 330 words, compared to 430 for the cinematic AD. Kerr (1983) suggests congenitally blind people take longer to process imagery. The greater density of the cinematic AD may have increased processing demands on these participants, encouraging a preference for the more minimal, standard style. Alternatively, those without visual experience might be better at interpreting sounds, requiring less explanation than those who were formerly sighted. Interestingly, not all participants perceived the difference in quantity. A man with some useable sight said "the standard AD seemed much more wordy," although it was, in fact, more succinct.

Implications for Virtual Reality (VR)

This study suggests that presence levels are lower when people are presented with confusing, competing or conflicting information. For the clip with no AD, blind and partially sighted participants reported mentally "switching off" when they could not follow what was happening. Those with no visual experience were similarly disengaged by cinematic terms they found meaningless. Sighted people were less immersed when visual information was replicated verbally, challenging them to compare what they saw with what they were being told by the describer. These multiple sources of information may have added to their processing load, with a negative effect on presence. This negative effect was stronger for the cinematic, rather than the standard, AD. This may also be a product of familiarity as standard AD in some ways resembles the kind of running commentary used by, for example, sports commentators to draw attention to subtle details within a busy visual environment.

The AD commentary requires the volume of the soundtrack to be lowered. This loss of auditory detail may also explain lower presence levels for sighted participants, as congruent audio in-

formation from sound effects was suppressed. In addition, a verbal commentary is not a normal part of "reality" for sighted people, whereas blind and partially sighted people are familiar with the visual world being mediated through words. Those with sight may also have been distracted by visual information from the surrounding environment. This was not a possibility for blind participants, and those with some sight chose to sit close to the screen, allowing the film image to occupy most, if not all, of their useable visual field.

Although VR developers are engaged on a quest for increasingly sophisticated visual realism, this study is a reminder that visual dominance can blind us to the influence of other senses on presence. Where the visual replication of reality is hard to achieve, immersion can be induced through the user's imagination. It is a technique long-employed by playwrights and filmmakers, with sex or violence happening off-camera or offstage, heard but not seen. Simple practices, such as minimizing extraneous information, coordinating visual and auditory detail and avoiding processing overload, may also be effective in raising presence levels.

For those with sight, soundscape design makes an important contribution to presence. However, it has been shown that people are poor at recognizing places through the soundscape alone (Serafin, 2004). While people with impaired sight, especially those who experienced early blindness, have been shown to have enhanced auditory perception (Wan et al., 2010), more research needs to be done on creative use of sound in AD, in particular, as a way of replicating 3-D visual effects in an aural form.

Limitations

The study is based on a clip of a black and white movie, transferred to DVD, and the poor quality of the visual stimulus may have influenced the presence levels of sighted participants. Although there was no evident correlation between viewing order and any of the measures, it was not possible to control for the effect of repeated exposure to the same basic stimulus. The duration of the clip had advantages and disadvantages. For some participants the initial surprise of the unfamiliar, cinematic AD wore off after a few minutes. One blind woman in her 70s commented, "At the beginning I found the cinematic AD distracting but then it melted into the film." However, another said, "I thought the cinematic AD was great but I don't know if I could stand to watch the whole film like that." In order to avoid fatigue, no attempt was made to explore the emotional effect of the film, and the content may have appealed more to some participants than others.

Future Research

Given these limitations, it would be useful to replicate this experiment across complete films, exploring the effect of content and genre. It is also important to test the AD of increasingly immersive media forms. Starting with a purely auditory stimulus, such as audio drama, and exposing participants with and without sight to increasingly visually-immersive media, it would be possible to compare the relative importance of sight and sound. In addition to the four subscales measured by the ITC-SOPI, other dimensions of presence, such as affect and emotional realism, could also be evaluated.

While it is encouraging that those with sight loss appeared to feel fully present in low-immersive, audiovisual media, the AD requirements of computer games and VEs have yet to be addressed. There is a need for more research as to how variation in AD style affects presence for those with impaired sight, and how it might need to be adapted for VR, perhaps not only through linguistic adaptation but also through a more creative use of sound.

The role played by the voice in fostering presence also requires greater understanding. In particular, as AD proliferates in multimedia environments, there will be a commercial need to reduce production costs. The increasing sophistication of text-to-speech (TTS) applications (Cryer & Home, 2008) may make such technical solutions available to AD users without a detrimental effect on presence. One study in Poland (Szarkowska, 2011) comparing responses to human vocal delivery with AD reproduced by TTS showed that, although the 24 respondents preferred the human voice, most found synthetic speech acceptable.

Conclusion

This study shows an unexpected interaction between sight, AD style and presence. Lower levels of presence were reported by sighted people viewing an audiovisual stimulus than by participants with impaired sight for whom the missing visual element was replaced by a verbal commentary (AD). The strength of presence experienced by those with no sight casts doubt on the importance of the visual domain – indeed, vision can prove to be a distraction – and highlights the role played by auditory perception combined with the imagination in creating presence for low-immersive media forms.

The cinematic AD style prompted a stronger sense of engagement in those with some sight, and higher levels of spatial presence and ecological validity for those with no sight, than standard or no AD. Cinematic AD was preferred by those who had lost their sight later in life. In contrast, while fully sighted people found both AD styles distancing, this was more pronounced for the cinematic AD. This might help explain why AD guidelines, developed by people who are sighted, do not encourage the use of cinematic terms. It also suggests a need for such guidelines to be reviewed in the context of experimental research rather than as a result of focus group interviews. Although this is a single study with a heterogeneous sample, based on one short clip with all the limitations that that implies, it holds out the possibility that, for movies, AD – and in particular cinematic AD – can actually increase a sense of presence for blind and partially sighted people beyond that experienced by their sighted counterparts. Whether AD can be developed to enable those without sight to access more immersive forms of VR remains to be seen – or heard.

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Appendix 1
Brief Encounter AD scripts for final sequence

Description Number: Time in: Time out:	259 11:15:15:06 11:15:16:20
Dialogue Cue	*shown in italics*
Standard AD	**script shown in bold**
Cinematic AD	script shown in courier new font

276 11:19:54:01 11:20:00:11
…milk or plain

Laura's gaze intensifies; the room seems to tip…

As Dolly moves out of shot, the camera closes in on Laura. Her gaze intensifies as the room seems to tip…

277 11:20:06:24 11:20:22:13

…her breathing quickens, she tenses then darts to the door. Flinging it open she runs onto the platform as the Express thunders past…Laura pulls up short. The lights of the carriages flicker over her face, her eyes wide and staring, the rush of air blowing her hair awry.

…her breathing quickens, she almost slides from the table. Cut to mid shot as she darts to the door. Cut to the platform - to Laura - to the wheels of the Express on the rails. Extreme close shot as Laura sways on the platform edge, lights flickering across her face, eyes wide and staring, hair blowing awry.