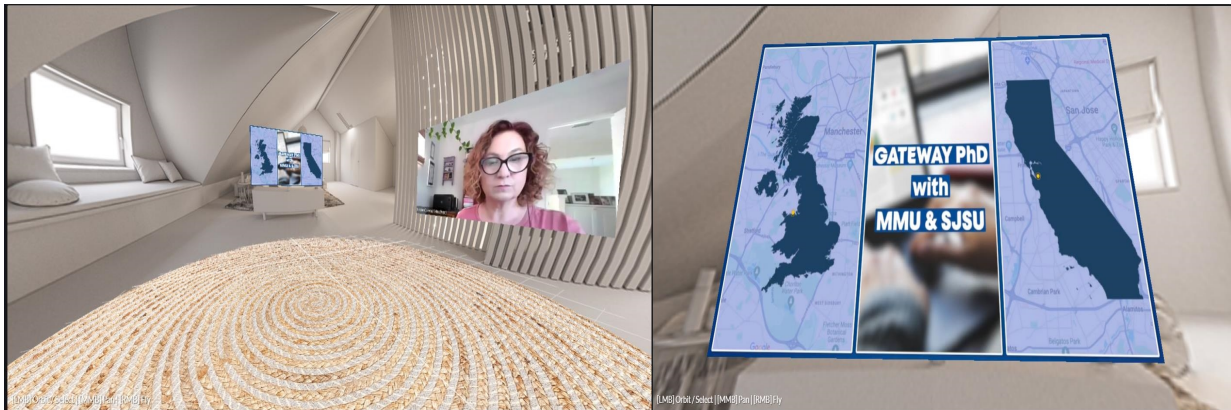


PhD Gateway Program VR Room

Written by:

Graduate Student Intern [Rae Eggleston](#)



Summary

This project is a virtual reality room in Mozilla Hubs that introduces those who might be interested in the PhD Gateway Program, an online and asynchronous PhD program that connects San Jose State University and Manchester Metropolitan University. The purpose of the VR space is to demonstrate enthusiasm and appreciation for the program as being a good value that benefited past and current students' learning and career goals. This is intended to draw more interested parties toward the PhD Gateway program. The secondary goal is to maintain interest by current students and alumni, and to draw up attention to the program and the VR space overall. There are multiple videos in one room, meant to garner interest in immersive movement around the room. These goals are met in the [metaverse](#) by creating an immersive environment that is much like one's home, as though you might be seeing an advertisement for this service on TV, as well as by showing real world examples.

Stakeholder Groups

The professors and administrators of the program, both at San Jose State University as well as Manchester Metropolitan University, are primary stakeholders. I have been speaking with both current students as well as alumni who are also involved heavily in the project. This relates to the project and the information needs of the users because these are people that the user will potentially be interacting with directly in the future.

<i>User Task Matrix</i>		
Information Priority	Prospective Students	Alumni & Current Students
1	Endorsements	Representation
2	Application Information	Information for Continuing Students
3	Faculty and Student General Information	General Information to Share

Project Goals

- 1) Spread awareness about the PhD Gateway Program.
- 2) Cultivate interest and excitement for the program.
- 3) Create an immersive VR room that can be continuously updated and re-imagined.
- 4) Learn the basics of how to create a browser-based VR room
- 5) Learn how to conduct user testing for immersive VR spaces

Personas

Persona One: A recent MLIS graduate between the ages of 25-40. Person has had success with the iSchool program in the past and is looking to continue their education.

Persona Two: A holder of a master's degree from an outside school, likely participating in the study of LIS, who has never enrolled in online schooling, but would like to round out their academic knowledge, and enhance their pre-existing career. May or may not already work in the library system.

Persona Three: A young student under 25 who is looking ahead to their future academic goals. May not fully understand what a PhD entails and is curious to hear about others' experiences as well as the expectations of the professors and advisors.

Proof of Concept

Preliminary VR Room: <https://hubs.mozilla.com/Gf6MtrV/luminous-loving-soiree>

Final VR PhD Gateway Room: <https://hubs.mozilla.com/FGQh8Z7/alive-treasured-picnic>

Miro Storyboard (Preliminary User Journey): <https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVNbs4Lvc=/>

Current Students and Alumni Interview Questionnaire:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WUZtBkJ59Y9HOZZO41Aj3845m1cswVqIBq89yJj1zc/edit?usp=sharing>

Assets Folder for Project: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Svqgjp24Up_-

[jjnbWKGKE9K8FSapYTlm?usp=drive link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Svqgjp24Up_-?usp=drive_link)

Status

Work began on this project in late September of 2023, during the Fall Semester. I made a user journey map, and implemented a rudimentary version into the VR space. I began interviews

as of October 27th, 2023. Pain points I have faced regard an overall lack of information on the website about the program, as well as delayed responses from faculty, students, and alumni.

My recommendation for the future of the project is to consistently update the interviews with fresh people and perspectives, and to possibly overhaul the VR space as more assets become available. For example, if work could be done by a future intern in Blender, particularly the Skybox aspect of the VR space, it would probably be helpful in adding to the immersive quality of the project.