




Infogr8

A white paper from infogr8

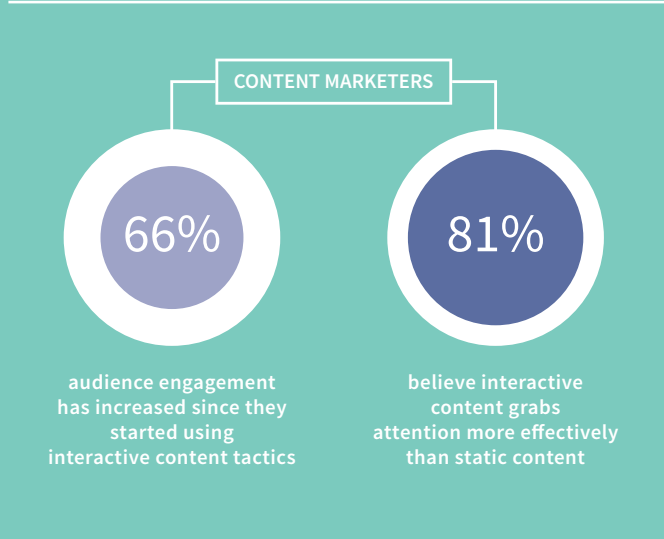
May 2017



# The benefits of interactive content for brands

# Executive Summary

We live in an interactive world. Social media is replacing newspapers, TV-on-demand is replacing traditional programming and in place of libraries, we have MOOCs and Wikipedia. To thrive in a dynamic and demanding market, you need to create content that stands out from the crowd.



Your organisation can benefit right now by creating beautiful, engaging interactive pieces. According to a recent Content Marketing Institute (CMI) survey, two thirds of content marketers (66%) report that their audience engagement has increased since they started using interactive content tactics. And fully 81% of content marketers believe interactive content grabs attention more effectively than static content.

Interactive content can also lead to sales. A 2014 study by Canadian research corporation Demand Metric showed that 70% of company representatives believe interactive content converts buyers moderately or very well – compared to 36% for passive content.

In 2017, interactive and data-driven content is changing fast. Content that is triggered by scrolling, not clicks, is on the up as an increasing number of users access the web on small screens. Thanks also to the growth of mobile, 'destination' interactive data visualisation websites are less popular now than a few years ago, though they remain a powerful way engaging audiences with complex datasets. Personalisation is a key trend and an increasing amount of content is personalised using data from social media, or data submitted by users. Emerging formats such as interactive video create new opportunities for understanding customers by measuring clicks and other interactions.

Over the next few years, the rise of chatbot-based messaging apps and other conversational user interfaces (CUIs), facial recognition and virtual reality (VR) experiences will create new and exciting forms of interactive content.



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PART 1

# What is interactive content?

What do we mean by the term 'interactive'?  
We outline the basic ways users can interact with content.

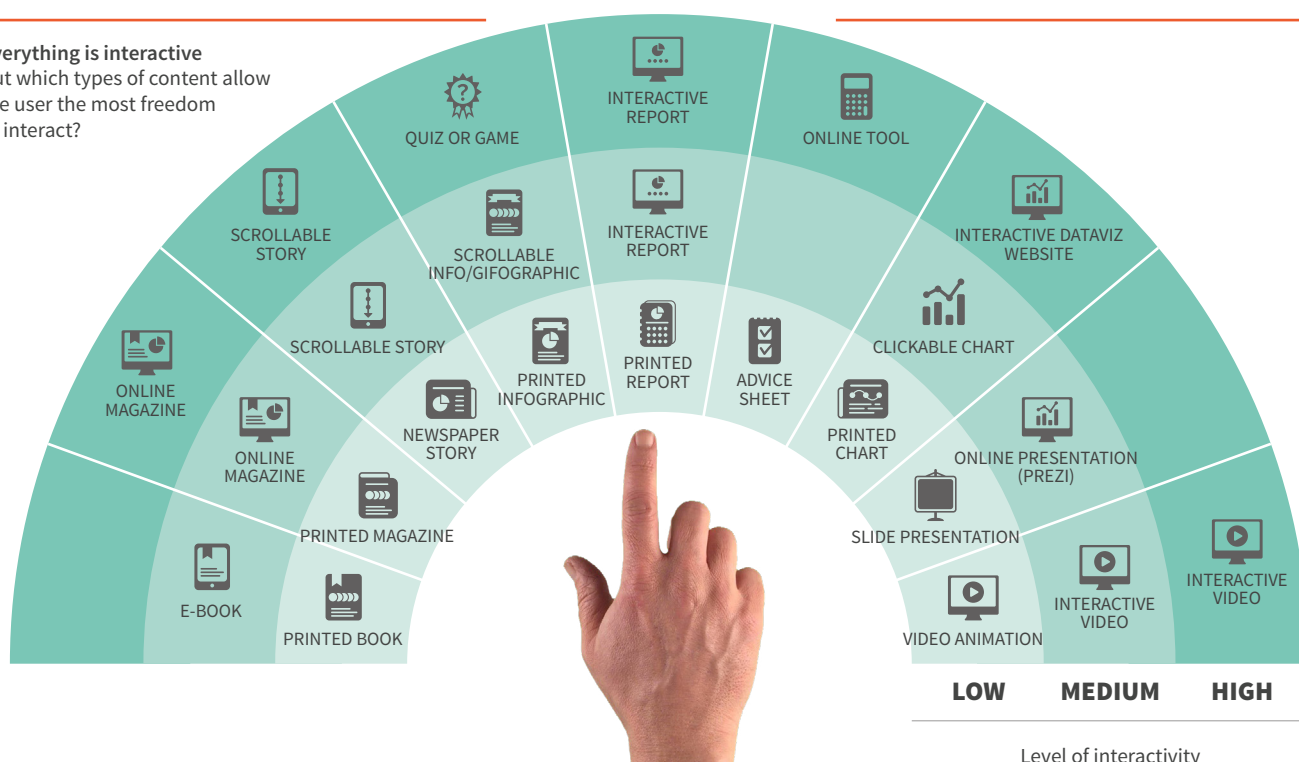
Some days it feels like we're drowning in data. The more information we produce, the less time it seems we have to understand it. Today, the challenge for brands is no longer to create content, it's to get anyone to pay attention. In this white paper, we'll show that making your content interactive is a powerful (and increasingly necessary) way of marshalling that most precious resource – your audience's attention.

Let's take a step back first. The reality is that we live in a world where everything is interactive. Even reading a printed book is an interactive process between the reader and the text. But when we talk about interactive content here, we mean something more. We mean content

that goes beyond this minimal layer of interactivity to open up a truly two-way relationship between user and brand – a relationship where the user has an active and participatory role in creating the content and can modify it in real time.

Some examples: an e-book is interactive in the way a printed book isn't, because an e-book reader can click through links, highlight passages of text or share content with others. An online game is more interactive still – its content is ultra-responsive to the user's actions. A website containing charts you can click on or hover over to get more information is more interactive than a printed infographic in a magazine. And so on.

Everything is interactive  
But which types of content allow  
the user the most freedom  
to interact?



Today, your customers are increasingly familiar with interactive content and expect it as of right. The ease of an app, the instant feedback of an online tool or quiz, even a simple click on a web page – it's all interactive content. After all, interactivity is built into the very fabric of the internet.

So what kind of tools are at your disposal when making content interactive? Some are familiar and widely used – clicking to open a new window, hovering to reveal additional data, or scrolling to reveal the rest of the page. Some are familiar but undergoing a renaissance at the moment. The rise of personalised content, for example, means that many web pages now allow users to tailor the experience they receive by typing in some information about themselves to start, such as their name or date





of birth. Others are less familiar but on the up, such as fingerprint verification – increasingly embraced by tech giants like Apple. Others still – types of interaction involving eye tracking and physical gestures – are mainly confined to the gaming world at the moment, but are likely to hit the mainstream in years to come.

Users may have one or more many different goals in mind when interacting with your content, from the basic (select, sort), to the open-ended (learn or explore). They may want to purchase, or to share. Needless to say, the way you, as a brand, direct the user through their journey is of paramount importance when it comes to getting them to the kind of content they want and need. In short, if you want the right kind of user outcomes then you need the right kind of interactive content.





## Swipe right

Here are just some of the ways customers may interact with your content

### COMMON

				
Hover				
Click				
Scroll or swipe				
Type in text				
SELECT	●	●		●
FILTER	●	●	●	●
SORT		●	●	
LEARN AND EXPLORE	●	●	●	●

### LESS COMMON

				
Scan QR code				
Enter fingerprint				
Move eye				
Move body				
PURCHASE	●			
SHARE	●			
PERSONALISE			●	
VERIFY IDENTITY		●		●

## Case Study

### Home maintenance interactive for LV= insurance

Insurance company LV= conducted a survey into the maintenance issues that affect homeowners the most. They wanted to create an interactive tool that would make the results of this survey accessible to a broad audience in an entertaining, accessible way. At infogr8, we created an interactive home maintenance guide that leads the user on a journey through an imaginary house. Clicking on items in the different rooms reveals the most common maintenance issues for each part of the home – everything from draughts to condensation to leaky roofs. The user then receives advice on how best to tackle them.





## PART 2

# Why go interactive?

We explore why your brand should create interactive content to enhance engagement and boost sales.

Marketing used to be about creating a brand, then narrating it over and over again. Not any more. Now, it's about creating a conversation between you and your customers. Interactive content gives you a way of opening up the communication channels, getting the message right – and finding out what they think too.

Needless to say, interactive content that is inspiring, inventive and strikes the right note will be easy to remember – and create delight. Content like Airbnb's [interactive map](#) that shows all their guests and check-ins globally in real time, created for their #OneLessStranger campaign, can keep customers

engaged with your brand in a way nothing else will.

All this means that interactive content might just help you capture more of that precious but oh-so-scarce commodity, your audience's attention. According to a Content Marketing Institute (CMI) survey in 2016, two thirds of content marketers (66%) report that their audience engagement has increased since they started using interactive content tactics. And fully 81% of content marketers believe interactive content grabs attention more effectively than static content, with a majority believing it helps audiences remember brand messages and encourages repeat visitors.

## Interactive content can enhance your brand

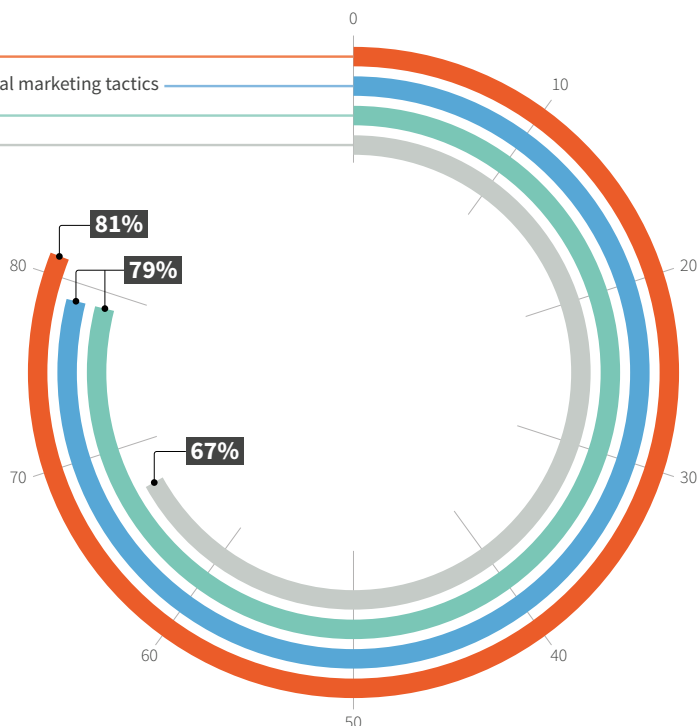
Content marketers believe that interactive content...

Grabs attention more effectively than static content

Enhances retention of brand messaging when combined with traditional marketing tactics

Can have reusable value, visitors and multiple exposures

Is a valuable way to repurpose passive content



Source: Content Marketing Institute. Based on Content Marketing Institute survey of 182 for-profit content marketers who used interactive content in 2016.



While interactive content, according to the CMI survey, is most effective at the early (awareness) and middle (consideration) stages of the marketing process, it can also lead directly to sales. A 2014 study by [Canadian research corporation Demand Metric](#) showed that 70% of company representatives believe interactive content converts buyers

moderately or very well – compared to 36% for passive content. Comparing interactive to passive content, the study also found interactive content is better at educating the buyer well (93% for interactive versus 70% for static content), and is more often shared (38% versus 17%).

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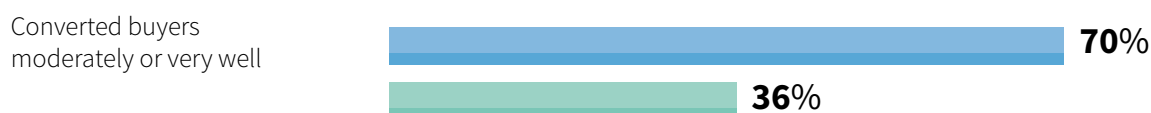
#### Interactive content can lead to sales

\*Based on [Demand Metric survey](#) of 185 company representatives in May-June 2014

■ Interactive content   ■ Passive content

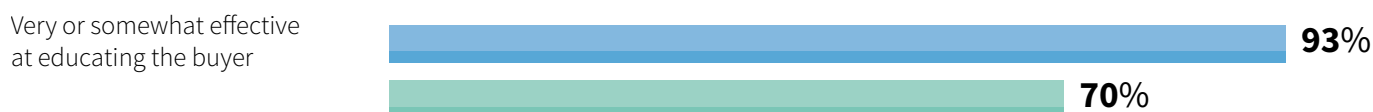
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#### CONVERTS BUYERS



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#### EDUCATES BUYERS



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#### IS MORE FREQUENTLY SHARED



Source: Demand Metric Ion Interactive

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Another major advantage of interactive content is that it allows you to understand what people think. Quizzes, polls and surveys, for example, can be a great way to understand your market better. They're also mighty viral: the average quiz is shared 1,900 times. Data from online calculators not only makes your customers' lives a little easier, but you can use it to find out who they are.

One of the biggest trends of the last few years has been towards more and more personalised content. 'Mass

personalisation is finally becoming a reality', [according to Deloitte](#). 'Businesses have not only developed the capabilities to measure specifically what each individual consumer wants, they are now also in a position to link their processes and resources to provide it.' From the simplest yes/no survey to [Lexus's Beyond Utility campaign](#), which showed people one of 1000 different versions of their car ad depending on their Facebook preferences, content that uses personal data to tailor itself to an individual's specific needs or situation is very much on the rise.





## PART 3

# Interactive content today

We look at some of the key trends in interactive content in 2017: the growth in long, scrolling stories, the continuing importance of interactive data visualisation and the emergence of interactive video.

Interactive content is not all new. Traditional forms like quizzes and surveys, games, tools and calculators (think mortgage calculators) have been around since before the birth of the web, and remain very effective as marketing tools. But in recent years, there has been a proliferation of new content types. What are some of the key trends in interactive content today, in 2017?

### Less click, more scroll

Long, scrolling websites and single-page sites are becoming ever more common as an increasing number of users access the web on small screens. [Apple's MacBook UK](#) site is a prime example – although maybe that's because it's aimed at people with broken laptops desperately trying to buy a new one on their phones.

What's certain is that scrolling sites are perfect for storytelling. High-end news sites like [Vox](#), [Quartz](#) and the [New York Times](#) (who pioneered 'scrollytelling', which combines long-form copy with animation, video and other elements) have embraced long-form articles for in-depth stories – and other brands are getting on board too. Techniques like scroll-activated animations (as showcased in last year's annual reports from [MailChimp](#) and [Proto.io](#)) or parallax scrolling (where the background moves more slowly than the foreground to create a 3D effect) add extra visual pizza.

### Kids like to swipe

It's not uncommon to see kids swiping on phone and tablets these days. At times, they handle these devices with more fluency than adults. A study in from the Cork University Hospital in Ireland found that the average age most kids could swipe, search, or unlock devices such as iPhones and iPads was 2-years-old.

Of course, there are also negative aspects of too much screen time. Like with anything, balance is key in making sure that tools help us achieve tasks rather than create stress and anxiety. There are plenty of educational games for kids that require them to explore new information by swiping through engaging, interactive visuals.

### Interactive video

A fast-emerging format, interactive video combines traditional video with selectable plotlines, choose-your-own-adventure type stories, and opportunities to dig deeper into the content with extra elements such as slideshows. In doing so, it puts the action in the hands of the viewer – but also allows you to measure clicks and other interactions in a way that standard video just doesn't.

To see some of the best examples in action, check out [Coldplay's interactive video for the song Ink](#), or take a peek at [Set Wars](#) – an exploration of what happens to Star Wars sets when the filming is over. Both won Webby awards in 2015 and 2016.





### Interactive dataviz is still around

Keeping users engaged for hours rather than minutes, interactive data visualisation is a dynamic, immersive form of content. While destination interactives are perhaps less popular than they used to be a few years ago (thanks to the growth of mobile, see above), they're still immensely satisfying when done well. Data visualisation projects such as [Rhythm of Food](#), a collaboration between Google News Lab and Truth & Beauty, allow users to explore complex, multifaceted datasets in intricate and visually stunning detail.

Again, personalisation is a key trend: an increasing number of interactive visualisations prompt the user to enter some data about themselves – everything from their date of birth to access to their social media profiles – in order to generate a personalised output. One example is [Global Health Check](#), produced for Mosaic Science by Beyond Words Studio and the Gates Foundation, which takes your date of birth to answer the question 'How has the world's health changed in your lifetime?' from every imaginable angle.

## Readers just want to scroll



Source: Archie Tse · Deputy Graphics Director · The New York Times · [@archietse](#)

### Case Study

#### Interactive timeline for Internet Watch Foundation

IWF are an organisation dedicated to fighting child sexual abuse content online. For their 20th anniversary, they commissioned infogr8 to produce an interactive timeline celebrating their history and achievements. Users can hover over each year to see activities, milestones and key data points from each year – such as the growth in the number of IWF member organisations – and navigate between tabs to reveal more detail.





## PART 4

# Choose your own adventure

We look at where interactive content is headed in the coming years: conversational user interfaces (CUIs), facial recognition, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR).

Where is interactivity heading over the next few years and how will it affect content? The keyword here – yet again – is personalisation, with user interfaces getting ever more conversational, digital personal assistants stepping in and facial recognition on the ascendency.

### Conversational user interfaces (CUIs)

Siri, Cortana, Google Voice Search, Viv, Amazon Alexa, and now Google Home – digital personal assistants mean that today we're talking to our devices in a way unthinkable even a few years ago. Last year, [Google revealed](#) 20% of mobile search engine queries were voice activated and 42% of people [surveyed by MindMeld](#) in December 2015 said they'd started using voice search within the last six months.

We'll also see more text-based CUIs in messaging apps, AKA chatbots, over the next few years. There are early examples: Unilever [launched a chatbot](#) late last year to encourage kids to brush their teeth, [KLM's Messenger Bot](#) gives you all the information about your flight via a Facebook Messenger, while [Quartz](#), [CNN](#) and the [Wall Street Journal](#) all launched news bots last year that chat to you like a (very well-informed) friend.

[Chatbots have lots of advantages](#): messaging content is easy to read, easy to write and doesn't require high-speed internet. They also offer new opportunities for personalisation and machine learning. Not interested in the news story you're reading? Just select the 'not interested' option and the bot will move on – registering your preferences in the process.

Both types of CUI allow users to communicate with a bot about anything and everything. And as you speak to it, it learns from you – your habits, your preferences, your desires. And the robots are getting better at reading our

emotions, too: Emotibot, a Chinese startup, claims a [95.6% accuracy rate](#) when detecting emotions via visual cues.

### Facial recognition

Your age, your gender, your facial expression, your individual identity: facial recognition technology can pick up on all of these things. It's the ultimate personalised experience. Content marketing using facial recognition technology still has Orwellian overtones for many, especially if you've seen [Minority Report](#). So far, the most high profile uses of the technology have been in human rights campaigns, where the intrusion of privacy is perhaps easiest to justify.

Back in 2012, children's charity Plan UK used [facial recognition technology](#) in their 'Because I am a Girl' bus stop ad campaign. The tech scanned each viewer's face and played them one of two different versions of the ad depending on their gender. A 2014 Women's Aid billboard campaign featured an image of a battered, bruised woman and used facial recognition to determine when people were looking at it. The more people looked at the ad, the more the bruises healed – domestic violence can only be tackled if we learn to pay attention. More recently, Usher's video '[Don't Look Away](#)' was released to remember the victims of police violence. It uses your computer's camera to scan your face and, true to its title, the song stops playing if the user looks away.

There are signs that facial recognition technology is about to hit the mainstream. In [Nike's campaign Nike Free Face](#), consumers could squish the flexible sole of the Nike Free shoe into contorted shapes using just their facial expressions. [MasterCard launched 'selfie authentication'](#) last year, allowing customers to



authenticate online purchases using selfies or fingerprints instead of passwords. In the next few years, we could see facial recognition increasingly used to personalise content as part of customer loyalty schemes, or using information about a viewer's gender, age, or even mood.

And then there's Facebook. The company has been developing its facial recognition capabilities for years, thanks to millions of people all tagging their friends in photos. Its AI can now identify individual faces correctly 98% of the time – better than the FBI.

With the global facial recognition market predicted to double between 2016 and 2021, from \$3.4 billion to \$6.8 billion, it's only a matter of time before we see content personalised using facial recognition really catch on.

### Virtual reality

The ultimate interactive experience, virtual reality (VR) is no longer confined to gaming. Now, it has the potential to transform almost every industry: from product design to travel to car manufacturing. VR could be used to allow consumers to 'try out' products before they buy, to act as virtual travel agent or allow safe test drives of cars.

In VR marketing, a few key players are leading the way. Apple Music launched a VR music video for U2 that transports fans onto the stage with the band. Samsung's #BeFearless campaign is using Oculus Rift headsets to help people overcome their fear of heights and public speaking. And shoe manufacturer Merrell's VR ad Trailscape allows the user to experience hiking in a vertigo-inducing mountain landscape. Within journalism, too, big players like the New York Times and the Economist have created virtual reality experiences. The Economist's first VR story allowed

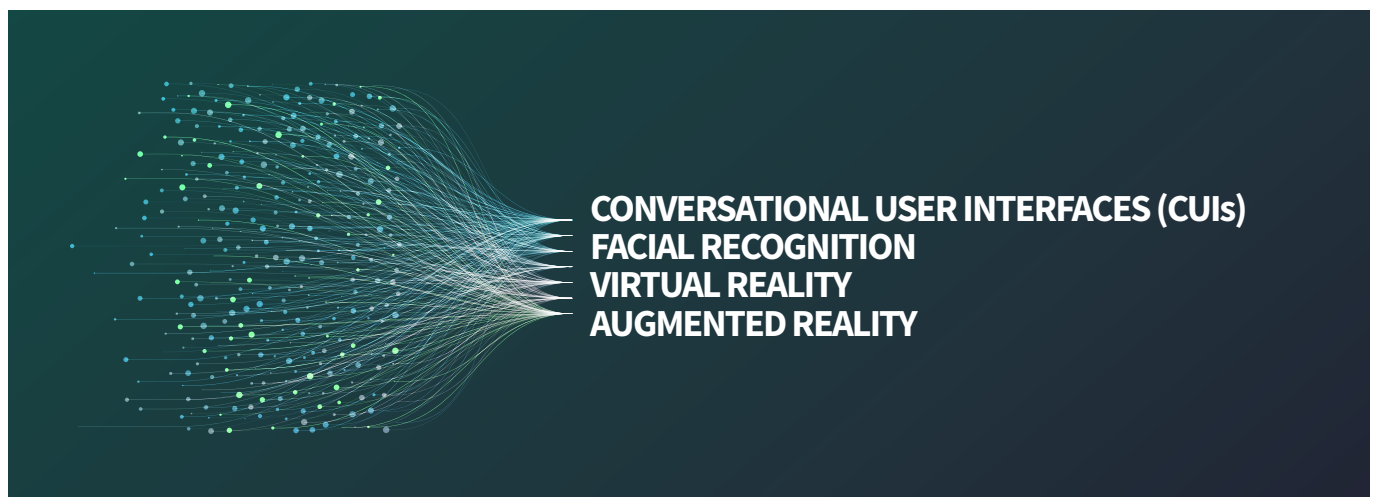
viewers to stroll around an Iraqi museum, looking at treasures since destroyed by ISIS. The New York Times' VR app has been downloaded around two million times, with users spending an average of over six minutes in the app.

At the moment, the number of people with access to full-scale VR equipment such as Oculus Rift is small and VR advertising is not a cheap option, but the kind of deep immersion it offers is very attractive to marketers and will become even more so as the technology comes fully online.

### Augmented Reality

The next big wave of features coming to a device near you is from virtual reality's cousin, augmented reality. On first sight a lot of the features may look like fun gimmicks, for example Snapchat's new world lenses. When using the app, the user can bring up the 3D lens that allows them to choose an object, like a rainbow, and superimpose it into their surroundings. The rainbow looks like it exists in the real world — it looks bigger as you walk closer to it. Facebook have also announced similar features for their in-app cameras, although it's a beta platform for developers, it sets the wheels in motion for some interesting exploration.

This is just the beginning, you can imagine that we'll soon be able to point our camera at a pair of shoes and get information like name, size, price, and a buy button. The early stages of this exists in the form of Amazon's app where you can scan an item using a bar code or photo recognition. There's also Pinterest's Lens that does a visual search based on your photo and offers you suggested pins. Smart stuff although with augmented reality these features can be taken to a whole new level of interactivity.





# Conclusion

Interactive and data-driven content is evolving rapidly, becoming more and more personalised and engaging. The next few years will see new and exciting types of interactivity emerge, bringing with them new opportunities for data capture, new channels for reaching users and new ways of consuming content.

At first they may seem unfamiliar. It takes a little while for us to really feel comfortable with new technologies – do you remember how you felt when you first logged into Facebook? And while some of the new technologies involved – such as VR and Conversational User Interfaces (CUIs) – have not reached maturity yet, they are becoming easier to use, as well as rapidly more powerful.

No traditional marketing tool will ever disappear completely and static content will remain useful, but the future is arriving fast – and it's not just interactive, it's immersive.

## Are you ready?

[infogr8.com](http://infogr8.com)

**Telephone**

+44(0) 207 193 9594

**Address**

27-31 Clerkenwell Close  
London  
EC1R 0AT

**infogr8**

