

# Immersive Storytelling

Engaging through 360° experience — Complete guide

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## From fixed frame to 360° space: a paradigm shift

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Since the invention of cinema, telling a story has meant controlling a frame. The director chooses what you see, when you see it, and in what order. The viewer sits in front of a screen — passive, guided, channeled.

With **spatial storytelling**, this paradigm shatters. The viewer is no longer *in front of* the story: they are **inside it**. Their gaze freely explores a 360° environment, and it is this exploration that drives the narrative. The director no longer controls the frame — they design a **narrative space** where every direction, every interaction, every sound contributes to the story.

**Spatial storytelling**: a content creation approach that leverages 360° space and virtual reality to tell immersive, interactive stories. This concept inspired the name of our platform: **easystory360** — **Easy** for simplicity, **Story** for narrative, **360** for space.

This shift is as radical as the transition from theater to cinema. In theater, the audience sees the entire stage at once. Cinema introduced editing and framing to direct the gaze. Spatial storytelling returns the freedom to look wherever you want — but in an environment **designed to guide without constraining**.

At explorations360, we have been exploring this way of storytelling from the very beginning. Philippe discovered virtual worlds in 1997 with Canal+'s *Le Deuxième Monde*, Europe's first metaverse. Roland has been designing immersive applications since 2000 — simulators, serious games, interactive training. Together, they bring over **50 years of expertise** in creating experiences where space tells as much as text.

## Theoretical roots: from humanities to video games

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Spatial storytelling didn't emerge from a marketing pitch. It is rooted in decades of thinking about the relationship between space and narrative.

### Space as narrative material

**Gaston Bachelard** (*The Poetics of Space*) showed that places shape our imagination. **Mikhail Bakhtin**, with his concept of the **chronotope**, theorized the inseparable link between place and narrative. **Édouard Glissant** and **Edward Soja** expanded this to the spatial dimension of culture in the *spatial turn*.

### From text to screen: pioneers of interactive narrative

In 1997, **Janet Murray** published *Hamlet on the Holodeck*, a foundational work on storytelling in immersive digital environments. **Celia Pearce** explored spatial narrative design in games. In 2007, **Henry Jenkins** developed **environmental storytelling**: the idea that space itself tells the story. **Marie-Laure Ryan** deepened this with work on **cognitive maps** and narrative space construction.

## Spatial storytelling: a named concept

More recently, practitioner-researcher **Nathalie Paquet** proposed naming "**narration spatialisée**" (spatial storytelling) as a narrative approach where space is an intrinsic component — a pillar that structures and orients the story. This is precisely what we practice daily at explorations360.

**From theory to practice:** these academic works describe what we have been building since 2007 — experiences where space guides, reveals, and narrates. The difference: we do it with VR headsets, 360° cameras, and a no-code platform.

## The three pillars of spatial storytelling

Creating an immersive experience goes beyond filming in 360°. Without spatial storytelling, 360° content remains a mere technical demonstration. Three pillars structure this discipline.



### Spatial scripting

The writer thinks in spaces, not sequences. Hotspots become narrative milestones. The story is topographic: the viewer's curiosity traces the path.



### Immersive sensory design

Spatial audio guides the gaze without constraining it. Visual transitions, multimedia hotspots, automated avatars. Every sensory layer anchors the message.



### Adaptive narrative

The viewer becomes co-author. Conditional logic (IF / OR / AND), embedded quizzes, VR escape games, gamified paths. Every exploration is unique.

**In practice:** on easystory360, these three pillars are accessible no-code: spatial audio tracks, multimedia hotspots, conditional logic, scene transitions — all driven from a visual back office.

## Spatial storytelling vs traditional narrative

| Criterion                   | Traditional narrative          | Spatial storytelling                   |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>Viewer position</b>      | In front of the screen         | At the center of the scene             |
| <b>Gaze control</b>         | Director frames                | Viewer explores                        |
| <b>Narrative guidance</b>   | Editing, camera moves          | Spatial audio, hotspots, visual cues   |
| <b>Interaction</b>          | Passive (watching)             | Active (exploring, clicking, choosing) |
| <b>Memorization</b>         | Visual and auditory            | Spatial + visual + auditory            |
| <b>Emotional engagement</b> | Empathy through identification | Presence — "I am there"                |

**Key takeaway:** traditional narrative creates empathy (you *identify* with the character). Spatial storytelling creates **presence** (you feel like you're *actually there*). This sensation activates the brain's **spatial memory** — the same mechanism that lets you find your way through a building after just one visit.



360° immersive experience — spatial storytelling in real conditions (Cooperl - "La Bulle")

## Real-world applications by sector

**4x**

more focused in VR

**75-86%**

retention in VR training

**+35%**

retention vs +2.6% traditional

**-40%**

training cost & time

### Training and immersive learning

In training, spatial storytelling guides the learner through a pedagogical scenario where information is **anchored in the environment**. Instead of reading instructions on a flat screen, the learner discovers them in context — where they'll be useful in reality.

#### Field case — CFMA Cooperl: VR at the heart of industrial onboarding

The CFMA (Center for Food Industry Training), part of the Cooperl group, welcomes hundreds of temporary workers each year. The challenge: training them quickly on safety procedures, with a frequently non-French-speaking workforce.

The solution: an **immersive VR 360° pathway** created on easystory360, available in **9 languages**, guiding each new arrival from the parking lot to the workstation. Result: training reduced to **1 hour**.

This model extends to agricultural education with **Formagro** and industry with **UIMM** (immersive safety pathways for metalworking workshops).

## Communication and immersive marketing

Brand storytelling is central to corporate communication. Spatial storytelling goes further: it doesn't just tell the company's story — it **immerses the viewer in it**.

*"You made my dream come true: you managed to translate exactly what we had in mind. I've never seen anything like it!"*

— Franck Porcher, Environment Director, Cooperl

This capability extends to projects for **SUEZ** (educational pathways on the water cycle) and **Phyteis** (agricultural awareness). **ARTE** pushes this further with *The Amusement*, a narrative VR adventure that challenges media conventions.

*"Everything agreed upon was delivered on time. Our client was amazed. explorations360 in three words: innovative, responsive, effective."*

— Jérôme de Domsure, Director of Development & Projects, SUEZ

## Tourism and cultural heritage

Spatial storytelling transforms a virtual tour into a true scripted journey. Instead of navigating between silent 360° photos, the visitor is guided by a story.



First museum VR room — Monaco Aquarium, 35 VR headsets in immersion



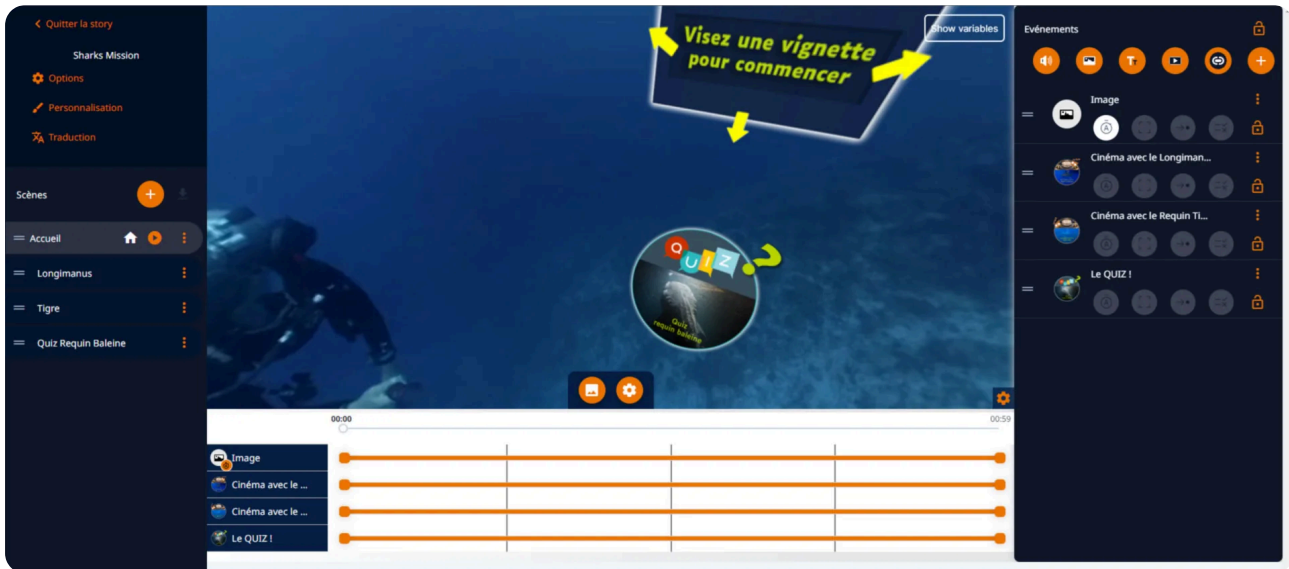
### Monaco Aquarium

One of the world's first museums to install a permanent VR room (35 headsets) in 2016. Visitors dive into the heart of the oceans through spatial storytelling.



### Radôme de Pleumeur-Bodou

360° flyover of the Telecommunications City. The viewer relives the space telecommunications saga from atop the historic antenna.



Creating a 360° narrative experience — filming and immersive scripting

*"I can no longer do without this tool. Virtual reality allows us to take audiences into inaccessible ecosystems, without exclusion."*

— Vincent Oliva, Curator, Saint-Martin Nature Reserve

From Quebec (Spéléo Québec cave immersions) to Brittany (Rennes' Marché des Lices discovery), spatial storytelling makes heritage accessible to all.

## Healthcare and awareness

The Saint-Héliier Foundation uses immersive habituation pathways to prepare patients (especially children) for anxiety-inducing medical procedures: MRIs, blood draws, dental care. Progressive VR exposure reduces anxiety before the day arrives.

The anti-school bullying VR project, co-created with students, uses spatial storytelling to place viewers in the victim's position. The immersion creates an emotional impact that traditional media cannot match.

## Creating a spatial storytelling experience in 5 steps

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Whether you're a trainer, communicator, tourism manager, or innovation lead, here is the method we apply to transform your story into an immersive experience.

### 1 Listen to the story

What story do you want to tell? To whom? What message should stay? Together, we identify the key moments that deserve to be *experienced* rather than simply told. This is a **co-creation** approach.

### 2 Script in space

We design the spatial scenario: which environments, which pathways, which interaction points. The narrative is distributed in space, with guidance through sound, hotspots, and visual cues.

### 3 Capture or create

On-site 360° filming, 3D modeling, or direct creation on easystory360. We often combine approaches — real footage enriched with interactive and narrative layers.

### 4 Integrate sensory design

Adding spatial audio, transitions, interactive hotspots, and conditional logic. Every sensory detail reinforces the narrative and guides the viewer.

### 5 Distribute everywhere

The experience is accessible on all platforms: web, VR headsets (Meta Quest, Pico), easybox360 suitcases, easykiosk360 kiosks. One content, every screen. And with easypop360, spatial storytelling is anchored in the real world via augmented reality.



VR experience at Monaco Aquarium — immersive distribution with easypop360



### Self-service (no-code)

The easystory360 platform lets you create your own spatial storytelling experiences without technical skills. Ideal for training, communication, or tourism teams.

→ [easystory360.tools](https://easystory360.tools)



### Guided (custom)

Our Creative Studio designs and produces end-to-end scripted experiences: 360° filming, 3D modeling, sensory design, immersive application development.

→ [explorations360.com/contact](https://explorations360.com/contact)

## Spatial storytelling: tomorrow's key skill

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Virtual reality and 360° content are now accessible to everyone. But technology alone is not enough. The **differentiator** between a quickly forgotten tech demo and a memorable experience is spatial storytelling.

It's the skill that transforms 360° content into an engaging narrative, a training pathway into a pedagogical adventure, a virtual tour into an emotional journey.

### Have a story to tell?

Let's explore together how spatial storytelling can transform it into an immersive experience.

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