



Integration of Virtual Reality into vocational training and career guidance: practical details

Lecture

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Acknowledgement

Virtual Reality for Vocational Education and Training - VR4VET project has received funding from the European Union's Erasmus Plus programme, grant agreement [2021-1-NO01-KA220-VET-000028033](https://ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus/en/grants-agreements/grant-agreement/2021-1-NO01-KA220-VET-000028033).

Disclaimer

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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Cite as

Heidi Fossen and Arild Hegge Kristensen: Integration of Virtual Reality into vocational training and career guidance: practical details (2024). VR4VET Consortium. <https://vr4vet.eu/>

Summary

A significant percentage (17%) of young people aged 20-29 in Trøndelag are neither in education nor employment.

In 2017, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration in Trøndelag - NAV Trøndelag and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology - NTNU began collaborating on the use of Virtual Reality (VR) technology, as part of career guidance for young people.

NAV wanted to explore the use of VR for young people who want to become better acquainted with different professions. This chapter focuses on the implementation of VR in a large public organization and the training of counsellors.

The hope so far is “A world where individuals can practice job interviews, explore new career paths, improve conflict resolution skills—all without leaving the room, or use VR as a tool for practical learning, development, and enhanced career guidance”.

In this chapter, we will go through the steps for implementing VR in NAV.

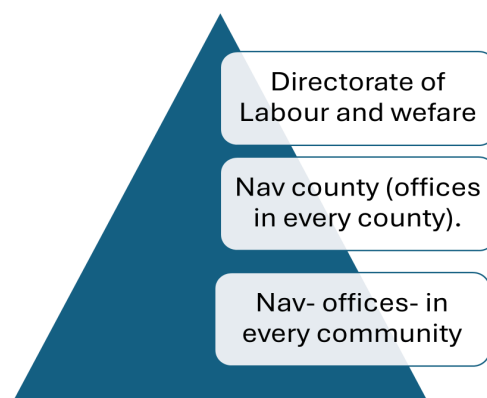
Learning objectives

- Understand the steps for implementing VR in NAV
- Gain knowledge of the processes for training counsellors
- Learn how to guide job seekers in using VR technology

The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration - A Brief Overview of the Organization and its Employees

The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) operates through three interconnected levels:

1. The Directorate of Labour and Welfare is responsible for overall management, including development work, monitoring statistics, conducting research, and ensuring professional standards. It also ensures that NAV operates in line with political guidelines.
2. The County Offices provide support and guidance to the local NAV office, acting as a bridge between the Directorate and local offices. NAV Trøndelag, for instance, oversees 28 local offices and two specialised units.
3. The Local NAV Offices are at the operational level, working directly with individuals and employers to provide follow-up services and support. In Trøndelag County, we have 28 local offices and two special units



A simplified model of NAV

The Employees in NAV offices in Trøndelag

- Counselors are between 25 to 67 years old
- They typically have a bachelor in various fields of study, but few have technological education
- Our experience is that few have tried VR

One of the main tasks of NAV is to help people who are out of employment or education into job training, aid Work or education. Most counsellors at NAV work with individuals who are either starting their careers or transitioning to new ones for various reasons

Every NAV office has counsellors who work specifically on supporting and following up with youth.

Implementation

The Importance of Management Support

Strong management support is the key to successful implementation of change. At NAV, managers ensure smooth processes by encouraging new ideas and teamwork. They support initiatives. This support builds trust among employees and partners and ensures clear goals and a common direction, which is particularly important in the development work.

Management anchoring

When implementing new systems and tools, it is important to have support and acceptance from management at all affected levels of the organisation. In order to get the managers involved in new work, one must be well prepared.

Make it well-known what you intend to use the VR glasses for, and what you want to achieve. You also need to know what equipment is needed, the price, cost and time for necessary training, and how the implementation should take place. Our experience is that it is also useful to talk about other relevant areas where VR can be used in the future. Talk about the possibilities, but start with one area.

If possible, integrate the use of VR into a plan, preferably combined with other tools.

Partnering with the Directorate of Labour and Welfare

Try to reach all levels of an organisation. For NAV Trøndelag, close cooperation with the Directorate of Labour and Welfare has been important. This collaboration also promotes a two-way exchange of feedback, so that the agency can stay informed about developments by using new technology in the agency, while at the same time requesting results and experiences.

Marketing

Share information with all relevant persons in the organisation, maybe during a departmental meeting. This way, everyone receives the same background information and can be involved in discussions on different areas where VR can be used.

Let people test the glasses as often as possible. Offer to come and discuss VR and its potential uses. Hang the VR glasses in the lunch room, or a social zone, so it is easy to test them.

Bring the VR glasses where applicable, professional gatherings, stands, partners and so on.

Training of supervisors

Even with user-friendly tools, counselors need time to become proficient. Training sessions tailored to their pace and learning style are vital.

The first step in the training is that the person who is going to train others knows both the VR glasses and the apps well. Furthermore, we have experienced that it is good to follow some points.

1. Feel confident: Make sure the person feels comfortable and ready to try VR.
2. Boundaries: Explain any limits on movement or activities in the VR environment. Practice setting boundaries, this is often the first obstacle that many people find difficult
3. Enough space and undisturbed room: Choose a space with no obstacles and minimal distractions.
4. Explain what happens when they use the VR glasses: Tell them how the VR- glasses work and what they will experience.
5. Explain what a Virtual room is.
6. Explain that they won't see the real world around them
7. Ensure the person doesn't harm themselves by walking into walls, tables, chairs, etc.: Make sure the area is safe, and they don't bump into objects.
8. Guiding them back to the correct part of the room: Help them return to their position if they move out of the safe area.
9. Cast to PC or mobile: Show their VR experience on a PC or mobile screen for others to follow.
10. Link/cable to a PC: Connect the VR glasses to a PC if needed for better performance.
11. Let them know they can remove the glasses at any time.
12. Boundaries: Explain any limits on movement or activities in the VR environment.
13. Talk about privacy in VR – GDPR: Discuss data privacy and how their information is protected.
14. Make a new appointment: Set up a follow-up session if needed.
15. Create a recipe that helps the counselors to guide others through the apps.
16. We recommend that the supervisors take the VR- glasses home to practice both alone and by testing out training with friends and family.

Office Follow-Up

Regular follow-up is essential to ensure that the headset is being used. It also promotes accountability and maintains motivation in the Training of supervisors.

The Power of Digital Meetings Across NAV Offices

For the exchange of experience between NAV offices, we have had many digital meetings. These meetings break down geographical barriers, allowing for the seamless exchange of ideas, challenges, and successes. By leveraging digital tools, employees from different regions can share best practices, align with strategies, and build a cohesive network of support.

A Vision for the Future

Young people who have tried the VR apps with a taste in work have generally given very good feedback, although some are sceptical. The young people express that they are engaged and that they become curious. This is the start of a good conversation and good career guidance. We also believe that NAV has many other areas where VR can be used, examples of which can be staff follow-up, training, Language training and security training. For many, the appeal of VR hinges on whether it feels as natural to use as picking up a notepad.