

**DirectAR: Marketing an Educative AR experience in 2019**

by

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## DirectAR: Marketing an Educative AR experience in 2019

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### **Abstract**

In this paper we will be analyzing how to advertise and market a tool that uses augmented reality to teach the basics of videography to students. Our product is aimed at people that don't have the accessibility or the financial resources to get a video camera but want to learn. Our market is 12-17 year-old users, we will be trying to market to schools directly for access to this demographic. We have chosen this demographic to correlate our product to a real problem. This problem is the exclusivity of Videography, the cost of a standard camera is proven to be too expensive for people that want to learn at a young age. Since there is a higher demand for videography skills in the workplace, we see this as an economic solution for those who want to learn the basics and see if they like it enough to invest in this artform.

How do we get this tool into as many classrooms as possible? Since there are no products like this in schools, we will base our assumptions on research into how new technologies are selected in schools or in households. We will explore three different approaches: advertise to the kids themselves, advertising to the parents but our analysis concludes that the most effective way to solve this problem is to advertise this product to school associations and school boards.

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## 1.1 Introduction

Creativity should not be measured by how much money a person has or the privilege that a person has been born with. To be creative should be a freeing experience that encapsulates all people from all different backgrounds. No matter the social status or money, we all know that some of the world's great artists weren't required to have money when beginning their artistic journey. This applies to arts such as painting or dancing. All these art forms can be performed and taught with little funds. Of course, there will always be the big educational institutions that will teach the so-called best of the best. But there is something about art that is inclusive - a person that dances on the street can be as good as a performer that dances on a big stage. We all have a different story to tell and art is a very creative way of communicating that.

Through equipment and cinematographic knowledge, the film industry has maintained an old-fashioned way of teaching narrative film in a new innovative world. In fact, the film industry has a long and harsh history of exclusivity throughout the years. This exclusivity has led to many great independent videographers, but even they struggled with the expenses that come with this art form. Learning how to use a camera is a hands-on experience, and in cinematography, knowing the terms that are used by other filmmakers is helpful to the overall learning experience. If someone is curious to learn about the basics of cinematography they will discover that this knowledge is important because the elements of this discipline can be applied to almost all visual media that we see today. What we are looking to provide is a useful tool that would enhance the learning experience by using augmented reality as a solution. DirectAR would be bridging the gap between a hands on experience and theoretical knowledge. The choice to use augmented reality stems from the fact that it requires a smartphone camera lens that we assume most 12-17

year olds already possess. Therefore making the learning experience efficient and cost-effective for schools or individuals.

## **1.2 Market Analysis:**

For the purpose of this thesis, we decided to explore 3 different marketing strategies for this product. All strategies are based and catered towards the demographic we have chosen for this product: youth from the ages of 12-17. We chose this demographic to focus on people who don't have the financial freedom to buy a camera. This makes DirectAR the perfect product to experiment before deciding to invest money into a DSLR. However, we must mention the debate between the rise of Smartphone cameras and the decline of DSLR cameras.

In Gracia Cercere's book on the effects of Smartphones in the industry, she argues that between the Camera industry and Smartphone, there isn't a clear dominant design that could outdo the other. "Results show that, despite some convergence in the introduction of vertical innovations, product differentiation still characterizes the competition among manufacturers and a dominant design has not yet emerged" (Cecere, 2015). In this statement we have to take cultural impact into consideration. Both products are being used to create visual content. However, the fact that Smartphones are also used for sharing put its design at a clear advantage because as a filmmaker, the process of exporting footage from a digital camera into your computer and sharing is longer than filming and sharing with your Smartphone. Most videos on the web now are designed to be watched through a cell phone screen. According to statistics in 2018, there were 871 movies released in Canada and the U.S (Statista, 2018). In comparison, there are 100 hours of video being uploaded to YouTube every minute and according to studies



by Algonquin college, 71% of Canadian internet users (17.6 million people) watch youtube videos every month. This makes it clear that there are more films being produced and designed for small screens than for big screens.

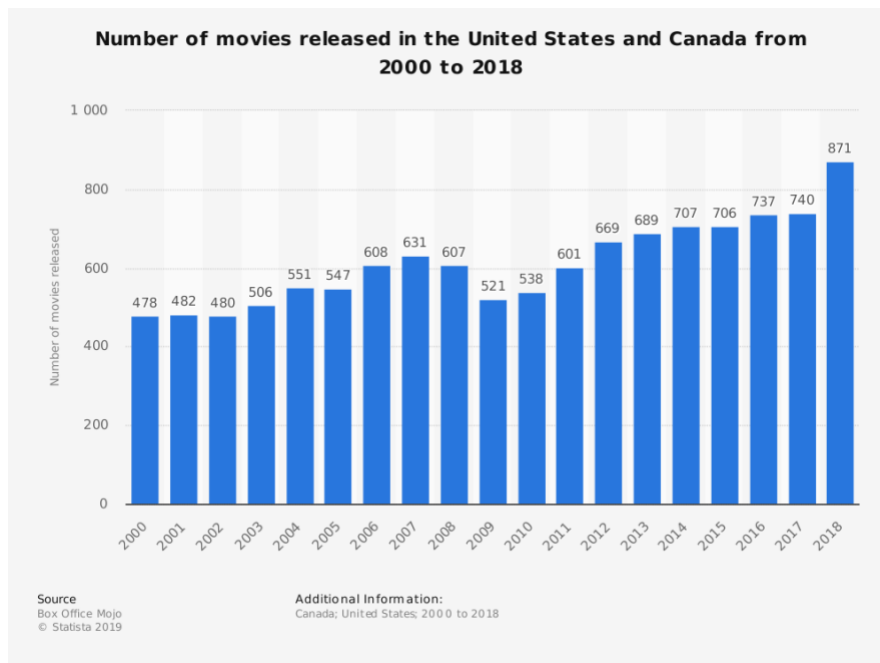


Figure 1.0 Statista’s chart of movies released in the U.S and Canada from 2001-2018.

Furthermore, a Japanese industry group named CIPA have recorded an 80 percent decrease in shipping sales from 2010-2017 for digital camera companies such as Olympus, Nikon and Canon. They explained that this fall in sales is largely due to the increase of casual photographers and their preference to Smartphone photography (Richter, 2018). This means that there is a shift in camera consumption and it largely has to do with the fact that young people prefer to film with their smartphones. We assume this to be true because statistics show that 88 percent of teenagers in America from the ages of 13-17 either own a Smartphone or have access to a Smartphone (Lenhart, 2015). The experience of learning cinematography is one that requires

practice and knowledge. This proves that young people prefer a faster, lighter experience when learning about cinematography and photography.

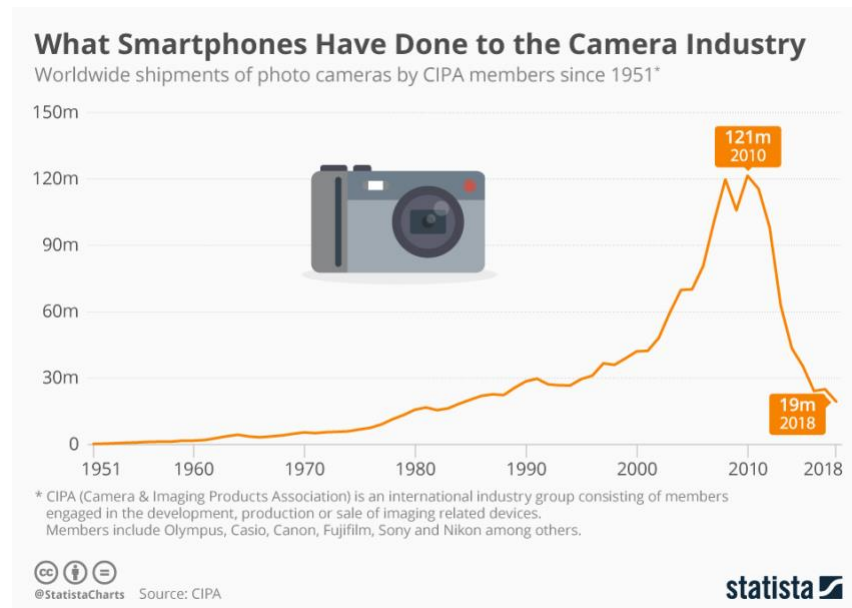


Figure 2.0 Statista’s chart of CIPA’s record of Worldwide camera shipments from 1951-2017.

## 2. Marketing to the demographic:

It’s no secret that millennials and new generations are fluent in the language of smartphones, they are pioneers and are a demographic that have seen a lot of different apps in a small amount of time. Augmented reality might be a new technology to educational institutions but certain AR apps have already been popular with these people when they have been presented as games. The perfect example of this is *Pokemon GO* (Forbes, 2016). With the help of nostalgic characters and the incorporation of gps and AR technology, we saw people from this age group going outside with their phones in hand, trying to find animated AR characters. This is a great example of how powerful augmented reality can be as a tool. However, the marketing of this tool had a lot to do

with its success. According to Forbes, *Pokemon GO* used 3 strategies within their app to appeal to its consumer, making it a hit with its demographic; Leveraging existing platforms and reducing adoption barriers. *Pokemon GO* is a game that is easily adopted because it has to be played on a smartphone via the *App Store* or *Google Play*, making AR the perfect tool to reach as many people as possible because of its accessibility as opposed to Virtual Reality that would require an external headset and controls. Also, *Pokemon Go* was revisiting childhood memories and fulfilling an irresistible human urge, offering new psychological rewards over existing competitors. In comparison to other viral Smartphone games such as *Angry Birds* or *Candy Crush Saga*, *Pokemon GO* was able to provide an interesting reward system due to its geological and AR elements. If you are “at the right place at the right time” you will win certain elements in the game, hence, making you feel as though you were lucky. At the same time, through the AR characters that you can acquire, *Pokemon GO* is making you part of this fictional journey, by doing this they were able to deliver the feeling of an enhanced reality (Forbes, 2016). Also, this app is capitalizing on perceived fringe benefits. The fact that this app forces you to go outside is key to its marketing as it uses the fact that real interactions and real life is part of the game as a marketing strategy. This is one of the main reasons why this app worked for both children and parents. Parents saw their children playing this game that both used a storyline that they were familiar with and the app made their kids play outside instead of being stationary gamers.

### **3. Marketing to the parents:**

To this day, smartphones are frowned upon in classrooms. In the next school year (2019-2020), Smartphones will be banned from classrooms by the school board of Ontario (Jones, 2019).

Being labeled a distraction, the use of smartphones in a class has been debated between teachers, students and parents. Perhaps the most important demographic for a digital product is the person who actually has to buy it, the parents. For the sake of our study we will discuss how to market an augmented reality experience such as DirectAR to a group of people (parents) that aren't familiar with this technology.

As generations change, so do the ways in which parents consume information before buying products. According to Forbes, 85 percent of household purchases are made by mothers and of that group 83 percent of these women are millennials (Forbes, 2017). In fact, studies show that this new group of mothers spend 8 hours online or on social media looking for product recommendations and reviews. With the rise of this new generation of parents, companies seek social media influencers to promote their products to parents. This article highlights a social influencer, mother, that has taken this type of marketing to the next step. Dayna Bolden has made business advertisements with her social media account to a variety of companies and industries, notably, Google. Her primary source of advertising is Instagram and this is her favorite platform because it allows her to have direct interactions with other mothers and brands that can help her growth (Forbes, 2017). With that being said, not every parent can afford to buy his child a thousand dollar camera when their child wants to start learning about cinematography, but most parents find the funds to buy their children a smartphone. Even if they can be a distraction in class, a smartphone is also a point of contact that they have with their children.

Parents are aware of social media and the effect it can have on their child, it is important to note that parents in 2019 have their own Instagram and Facebook accounts. Whether this is to keep track of their children or for them to keep in touch with friends is not important. What is important to note is the consumption of information. Since, social media is something that both the parents and students use, the information consumption is the same. Taking Instagram for example, it is a platform that uses mostly visual data to inform the user. Therefore, if a parent really wants to know what their child is interested in learning, social media is a valid source of information. Marketing to parents through social media would be the adequate avenue to take to advertise an AR product to parents in 2019.

#### **4. Marketing to the schools:**

This brings us to the marketing campaign we believe would be most useful to reach as many students as possible, school boards. Unlike students or parents, school boards are a harder market to reach, but once the product is accepted by a school board, the expansion of a product can be done very quickly and efficiently. On the same train of thought, we must include what others have seen as being the most effective way to pitch a product to a school board or a school district when it comes to educational technology. According to Ben Stern, an active member of Dropbox Educative and former teacher, there are certain guidelines one has to follow in order to properly pitch a technological product to a school board. In his article he speaks from the perspective of a teacher that was in charge of integrating new technology in his school. He mentions that the education technology industry is an industry that doesn't work like many others. The goal isn't to

make the investors as much money as possible. He explains that education is an intellectual space that transcends markets. Therefore, the focus during the pitch shouldn't be about how much profit a school or a board could make from a product. Stern believes that education is a noble profession, hence, the product has to speak to what he describes as "something higher". He explains that as a salesman, we need to indulge in the sentiment that is bringing an educative tool to students, show that we understand what education can bring to a young person's life and be passionate about it (edsurge, 2013). Marketing an educational experience that is to be used by as many students as possible using a technology that is inclusive and inexpensive would work from this perspective. Later on, Stern speaks about two other elements that need to be included for pitching a product to a school board: How does it work? How does it fit?

To explain how DirectAR would work in a classroom, we would have to demonstrate how exactly this app works and perhaps have the people in the room to give it a try. We have already exercised this method with our first prototype that measured the different shots that the user would be taking during the experimentation of the app. By doing small things like adding a couple of removable backgrounds in which the AR character could appear, we are nurturing the curiosity of the people who are seeing this product for the first time. Stern gives us his analysis what sales strategies to use during the pitch, he brings a valid point by explaining that most entrepreneurs suggest a lesson plan that uses their product, this isn't an effective way to pitch to a school board because even if the course plan is great, it's always better to give testimonials from early adopters of your product. He refers to these people as "beta testers". Stern suggests that using early adopter testimonials during the pitch is better because giving examples without real life experiences makes the board doubt your credibility and once they doubt your product it is hard to recover (edsurge, 2013). With this passage, Stern explains a good point. If we are to

present DirectAR to a school board, our intentions are already clear, we want this product to be used in classrooms, therefore, there is no point in explaining the effect this product could have in a classroom. On the other hand, if we have some early adopters of our product explain to us why DirectAR is great and what they have been able to achieve using this product, we can simply tell their stories and enhance our credibility at the same time. Stern also adds that explaining the functionality of the product is key but it is important to keep in mind that just because our product is intended for a specific group of people, it doesn't mean that it can't be used by people outside of our beachhead : "Let me figure out what aspect of education your product will affect. Instead of telling me what you're going to change, just explain exactly how the product works." Stern explains that no two schools operate exactly the same way, therefore, the demonstration and explanation of the product has to be simple and adaptable to any environment. Even if the product is being pitched to a specific group of people in a school, it can have potential to be used by multiple groups in a school, not only students. For this reason, it helps to leave the functionality of the product abstract. "I've had products pitched for admissions that fit better in counseling, platforms for students that served teachers more ideally, and software for special needs students that really helped everyone." (edSurge, 2013).

Furthermore, we would also need to explain where this product would fit in a school. Because this is a learning experience there has to be a stage where DirectAR will be taught. It is important to take notice who this product is being pitched to, a school board, most likely a group of teachers or ex-teachers. Trying to pitch a product that would take away a teachers job is counterproductive. Hence, this app has to be inclusive of all the parties in a classroom, how will the teacher use this to teach a class. Stern makes this point early on when explaining how to

make a product fit in a school board; “Instead of taking tools out of teachers’ hands, however, the best course of action is to introduce platforms that will integrate with them.” (edSurge,2013).

## **5. Ontario School Board Research**

As a part of this study, it was required for us to contact leads and companies that could give us some insight on how to present DirectAR to a school board. Most big companies like Pearson Canada were unable to answer questions about Augmented Reality as their focus was more sales based rather than technology based. We also tried to reach out to Professors at the University of Ryerson, we received great responses but the fact was that this technology is very new and there aren’t any set guidelines to help us market this product to a school board. Eventually, I was able to contact Christine Brisson, a member of the french public catholic school board of eastern Ontario. Her suggestion was to attend and try to present DirectAR to Canadian edTech Innovation summit. As she informed me that many members of the school board were looking to attend this event in order to learn about new educational technologies. This gives us a look into what could be an effective way to reach school boards, educational technology events. As our interest and passion grows with this product, we must remember to incorporate all the different factors we previously discussed to effectively pitch DirectAR in order to hopefully provide this educational experience to as many classrooms as possible.



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