



A Year in Immersive Audio

GCRS technical lead Steve Lane reflects on the unprecedented changes the sound design landscape is going through

We are a business which has run for over two decades, and in many ways we have seen more change in the past one or two years than since the day we opened (not that I was here to see that, I joined sixteen years ago).

Surround sound has been here since the seventies – going to the cinema would not be the same without it. Film and tech lovers have long collected gadgets to give them a similar experience at home. But in more recent years, audio has needed to step up to the huge advancements in visual technology and immersive experiences.

Our Soho studios have always been set up with the latest equipment, and our team of engineers have always been progressive in their approach. So in 2018 it made sense for us to set up a division dedicated to advancements in sound, and experiential audio.

Since the year we started, one of the biggest changes is how we describe our work. We quickly realised that what we were doing was beyond VR, it was not restricted to headsets and video games – this whole world had grown and had found an entirely new set of uses for the quickly developing technology.

What was once perceived as an experience for the home, has seen us preparing audio for venues like the Natural History Museum, The Winter Olympics and Westfield

Immersive audio has moved on from being a headphone based insular experience, and is now something that reacts to the world around it. Experiences are bespoke to a location, and have to contend with all kinds of environments – our Jaguar project is a good example of this. Built for the Paris Motor Show there



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was the usual background noise you would expect from such an event, so the challenge was to create an engaging experience which rose above it all.

There is a better understanding of what is effective industry-wide. It is no longer technology for technology's sake, it is finding use in more interesting places – and it is making things for us really exciting.

In the past year we have helped to put people with no previous space training onto the moon with Samsung, been chased by aliens whilst driving around a test track for VW, and got up close with Niffler from Fantastic Beasts. Being in the position of facing such unique challenges, we feel more than well equipped for whatever 2019 and beyond will throw at us.