

# Cultural Dialogue between the Virtual and the Real: Activation and Reconstruction of the Cultural Value of Traditional Scenic Spots via AR-Based Murder Mystery Tourism Model

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**Abstract:** With the spread of digital technology and cultural tourism, many old scenic areas have struggled to spread their rich cultures effectively in the new era. Interactive technology that combines the virtual and real worlds has begun to be applied in various ways for the inheritance and dissemination of traditional scenic spot culture. This paper focuses on the integration model of augmented reality (AR) and murder mystery games, and investigates how well it can reconstruct the cultural value of traditional tourist attractions from the aspects of cultural narrative, tourist experience and meaning production. AR murder mystery games have opened up a new way for the culture of dialogue in the combined space of virtual and real worlds by means of role-playing and plots. It creates a story world for the physical Space of the tourist attraction, enabling tourists to be active participants instead of passive viewers, and thus achieves the spread of culture by means of emotion rather than just information. Based on the results of the qualitative research and practice, the four stages of activation that will be examined in this paper are: immersive experience design, cultural brand renovation, digital content spread and cultural and creative exchange. It has been structurally combined with technology, narrative and cultural logic in the scenic spot area to provide an effective path for the reconstruction of the cultural value of traditional scenic spots, achieve cultural dissemination and build a new model of tourism experience that combines entertainment and education.

**Keywords:** Augmented Reality Technology; Murder Mystery Script; Immersive Experience; Cultural Activation; Scenic Area Narrative

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## 1 Introduction: When Scenery is "Perceptible" and Culture is "Performable"

With the development of the digital economy and all-round development of the cultural tourism integration strategy, the structural problem of spreading cultural values at traditional scenic spots has become more and more prominent. Visits to the old scenic spots are usually just for sightseeing. The historical and cultural sites in the corner tower of the Forbidden City carry the weight of hundreds of years of architectural aesthetics and the accumulation of institutional civilisation, but they have generally been in a state of "seeing but not feeling" and "viewing but not knowing" under the backdrop of modern tourism consumption. The cognitive distance between tourists and the culture of the scenic area has not been reduced to a certain extent because of the proximity of physical space <sup>[1]</sup>. According to data released by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the annual return rate of domestic 5A-level scenic areas is less than 23%, and the per capita consumption of cultural and creative products in these areas constitutes only 8.7% of the total tourism expenditure. At the same time, the proportion of young tourists aged 18 to 35 in China has also exceeded 54%. This group of people is seeking a sense of immersion, interaction and storytelling in their tourism more than ever. Currently, the change in people's consumption patterns has shifted towards the experience economy model, which is one of the main changes in tourism.

Therefore, based on the above, it is proposed that to explore the cultural value of traditional scenic spots more thoroughly in the new form of interactive narrative, the technology of augmented reality (AR) could be combined to develop an interesting new style of script murder mysteries. Script Murder Mystery has been used for a long time to structure narratives and enable tourists to participate actively in the creation of meaning. Through some historical roles and clue-solving activities, tourists can gain an in-depth sense of the history and culture of the tourist destination by doing it in an interesting, story-based way. The organic combination of the two components has created a new type of cultural consumption that merges the co-existence of the virtual and real worlds and has strong narrative power, changing how scenic spot cultural values are inherited; it no longer needs to be spread through knowledge education but can be carried by emotional resonance.

The first problem this paper addresses is how the AR script murder tourism model can promote the cultural values of traditional scenic spots. Although some research has accumulated a certain amount of technical descriptions on the application of AR tourism, there is still a lack of theoretical explanations for the internal relationship between narrative structure design and the efficiency of cultural value transformation. There is no all-round assessment system that can measure both how much tourists take part in role-playing activities and how broad the range of historical plot reconstruction is <sup>[3]</sup>. Based on the above analysis, this paper will take the Design of an immersive experience combining virtual and real as its starting point; by integrating the two dimensions of digital content empowerment and cultural and creative product interaction, it aims to build a theoretical model for the activation and reconstruction of the cultural value of scenic spots driven by the AR script murder model, providing academic support and practical reference for traditional scenic spots in China in the process of digital cultural tourism transformation.

## 2 AR Murder Mystery Game: A Cultural Narrative Beneath the Technological Shell

### 2.1 The Interaction of Reality and Virtualisation: Cultural Potential of AR Technology

Technology has enabled the reconstruction of cultural value and improvement of the tourism experience in many ways. It has many particular applications in various areas and technologies and forms a rich collection of practical models. Based on the current three-dimensional model technology, in the cultural interpretation of scenic spots, the relevant scenes of historical events can be reconstructed in multiple dimensions to achieve a high degree of immersive integration of vision, context and narrative, which is very important for the cultural inheritance and development of scenic spots<sup>[4]</sup>. At the same time, motion capture technology and a new virtual narrative structure will be employed to build a panoramic immersive experience of the virtual script murder scene that can enhance the emotional impact on players and provide people with a new way to experience culture in the virtual world.

AR in cultural tourism is moving from being a "tool" to a "medium", and at first, only information prompts were provided in the AR tour; thus, the one-way communication between tourists and culture was not changed. Now, AR is beginning to have some important roles in the narrative, such as historical figures being able to "stand up" and talk to tourists, and lost rituals being "reenacted" at the original places. Now, AR is no longer about the accumulation of information but about meaning. It creates a space for people to read, write and do other things in the area of the attraction. Virtual stories happen all the time. This "space narrative" is no longer in the old style; now, one is on a journey to find culture. The cultural value of AR is not a matter of technical specifications; rather, it lies in its ability to move people's emotions and spark curiosity about life, for which stories are essential.

## 2.2 Cultural Interaction Functions of Murder Mystery Scripts

AR-based murder mystery games are a new type of cultural tourism that can offer tourists a good sense of immersion through the integration of virtual and real media. Through the combination of augmented reality technology and the logic of script narrative, a new form of life can be added to traditional scenic spots, and a way to cultivate cultural connotations can be formed. Determine the location of the scene in real time to obtain a node of narrative information, and this key node is usually in the form of a scene-triggered task that constitutes a personalised narrative path. For cultural exchange, a lot of local cultural resources are used in the design of murder mystery games, and highly realistic technology is applied to reconstruct historical events and folk scenes.

The charm of murder mystery games is not only that people like to solve puzzles out of curiosity, but also that they want to be involved in life stories. When someone is given a specific historical identity, they are no longer just tourists looking at the old streets of this place; they become active participants in that time period. They need to think, observe and choose according to the character's position. This role-playing can also carry on and spread culture. In the past, people learned about history from traditional teaching; now, in murder mystery games, they are living in the story themselves. The kind of knowledge has changed from receiving instruction to actively building knowledge, and cultural symbols have shifted from abstract signs to emotional experiences. The Design of cross-media narratives is to draw users into the cultural flow of virtuality and reality and arouse their interest in traditional Chinese culture.

AR-based murder mystery games often incorporate the theory of cultural memory construction in their plots and, to provide richer cultural experiences for players, are frequently set in different times and have many different plot branches.

## 3 Pathways to Activate the Value of Traditional Culture

### 3.1 Immersive Experience: From "Superficial Sightseeing" to "Immersive Experience"

Design and develop a mild type of cultural activities that integrate the attributes of the real and virtual worlds. Given that there needs to be a culture, new construction of virtual augmented reality technology will be used to reconstruct and present the cultural values of traditional scenic spots dynamically. As shown in the flowchart of the experience design integrating virtual and real elements, the first step is to set the goal of the experience and select traditional cultural elements that can reflect the core values of the scenic spot through cultural positioning for integration in the subsequent virtual and physical design stages<sup>[6]</sup>.

Traditional tourism is often called a "whirlwind tour" because there is little interaction with the people. The appearance of AR-based role-playing games (RPMS) has created a new type of tourism that is not merely "display" but rather "immersion", combining space, story and emotion in AR to allow users to experience this immersive world completely at certain "highlight moments" and have a very good and exciting time. The moment of solving a long-standing puzzle or learning that one was wrong due to a plot twist is when tourists feel the most emotions and are motivated to share this with others. AR RMS will systematically spread the highlight points in an organised way during the trip and keep the visitors interested for a long time; it is also an interesting opening. Combined Design of virtual and real technology can leverage the combined advantages of both the virtual world and the real world to promote changes in the functions of traditional cultural values in experiential tourism and provide a theoretical foundation and practical model for the innovative development of cultural scenic spots.

### 3.2 Brand Rebranding: Recoding Local Culture

To promote the value of traditional culture, regional cultural brands are one of the main goals of reshaping for AR-based murder mystery games. Augmented reality technology has been used to add a new type of game mode for murder mysteries that allows tourists to learn about the cultural stories in an interactive way, and thus both digital translation and many forms of interaction for cultural values have been achieved. According to the local cultural symbols and narrative logic of the scenic area, a digital scene model has been developed to increase people's memory and added value in cultural dissemination.

All the places have their own cultural characteristics, such as buildings, history, legends and other things. In the old way, these symbols are usually reduced to labels and have no natural narrative connection. AR script murder has the hope of "re-encoding", that is to say, the scattered symbols can be arranged into a single plot structure that is interconnected and can explain each other. To promote the new cultural brand of a region, we need to build a dynamic knowledge graph. Taking the historical celebrity events of a certain scenic spot as an example,

knowledge nodes are set up to mark various cultural elements with regional recognition, such as geographical background, historical process, cultural symbols, etc. [8] The West Lake Scenic Area in the "Mystery" APP is a typical case, and all parts of the scenic area have been organised into four areas. Taking the Lingyin Temple Scenic Area as an example, the APP has created three routes, which are in fact three game modes based on the history and culture of Lingyin Temple: Rescuing the Rescue Gong, Suppressing the Flying Peak, and The Legend of the Three Lives Stone. The three game scripts are all based on the background story of Lingyin Temple. To ensure the authenticity of public opinion, different sections of the game will be set according to the three stories. Originally separated tourist attractions have been connected to form an organized tour route, and the cultural heritage of these places is shown through various stories. Tourists no longer remember the names of various places, but a whole story. The new story of the brand has made tourists feel more culture at the scenic area. In the past, culture was "told"; now it is "experienced", and in the past, symbols were static exhibits; now they are dynamic props. Cultural brands are abstract concepts, but when they are converted into experience, they will be more memorable for tourists.

In order to expand the scope of brand collaboration, personalised story lines and different endings related to local culture have been designed according to the various behaviour characteristics of tourists to motivate them to explore independently. Based on the above data, the proportion of tourists who have shown interest in further consumption after participating in AR-based role-playing games has risen by 32%, and the memory-output index of the regional cultural brand has met its goals. Research has also shown that the digital reproduction of traditional culture is attractive to young people and has promoted intergenerational integration of cultural narrative experiences.

## 4 Reconstruction and Expansion of the Cultural Values in Traditional Scenic Areas.

### 4.1 Digital Empowerment: From Static Exhibition to Living Heritage

In the process of giving new life to old scenic areas through digital content, both the technology and culture can be integrated to carry forward traditional culture in a modern way. Organise all the traditional cultural heritage in the scenic area and decide whether each part can be displayed digitally and whether it is material or intangible cultural heritage. Based on the above data, a plan for the digital transformation of cultural content should be developed; this plan needs to cover, but not be limited to, the design of interactive scenes for AR-based role-playing games and the development of cultural stories to ensure the inheritance and accuracy of the culture.

Note that the specific direction of research and development and resource allocation at different stages of development needs to be decided precisely through thorough research and foresight to promote the upgrade of cultural content from static display to dynamic immersion, and from traditional experience to situational interaction; it can provide strong driving force for the upgrading of cultural IP in scenic areas and support the construction and optimisation of a long-term commercial value chain.

### 4.2 Cultural and Creative Products and Interactive Exploration for Tourists

In the pursuit of optimisation for the interaction mode of cultural and creative products with tourists, changes in tourists' behaviour, new technologies, and the sense of immersion felt by tourists are among the reasons. Based on an accurate analysis of tourists' needs and the main topics contained in the cultural resources, it should be guaranteed that the design of the themes meets the psychological expectations of tourists. Traditional cultural and creative products of scenic areas often fall into the trap of "white-labeling", and although they are relatively cheap, there is little cultural content. AR-based role-playing games are a new way to promote the development of cultural and creative products by having the products themselves be narrative props. For example, in the "Mystery Realm" application, the "token" tourists obtain in the role-playing game is not only a souvenir but can also unlock hidden stories by means of AR codes. A "task manual" is both a game guide and a travelogue. The "interactive cultural and creative product" has expanded the space and time for cultural experience. After leaving the tourist area, one can still scan image anchors on the cultural and creative products to view extra stories, unlock characters' side stories, and join online discussions. Cultural consumption includes not only the experience at the tourist site but also various activities after returning home. Thus, not only will the added value of cultural and creative products increase, but also the culture of the scenic area will be able to "step out" of physical walls and enter tourists' daily lives.

Augmented reality technology can enhance people's sense of immersion in the integration of virtual and real worlds, and also provide various cultural resources from different tourist spots for plot-driven development in murder mystery game elements. A dual-engine model can show the cultural values in scenic areas and arouse the public's interest; therefore, various forms of cultural tourism development are underway.

## 5 Conclusion

This paper aims to investigate the main problem of how to activate and reconstruct the cultural value of traditional scenic spots through AR script murder tourism mode. A system of four types of analysis has been put forward to organise how to carry out the construction of immersive experience design based on virtual and real elements, regional cultural brand reshaping, digital content empowerment and interactive exploration of cultural and creative products. Based on the above research, augmented reality (AR) technology can be applied to the protection of cultural heritage at old city sites; as it is interactive in real time and can display spatial superposition at a low cost, it has shown good results in presenting traditional culture [14]. The driving mechanism of the story and the logic of role-playing can create emotional attraction for tourists at the level of cognition. A Tourism Experience System with cultural production values has been built jointly by the two.

The murder mode of AR scripts has begun to use local historical symbols, intangible cultural heritage, character plot arcs, and so on in its structure to make the cultural content more dynamic and less static. It is not just a change in technology and packaging; rather, it is an re-expression and meaning creation for the cultural genes of a certain area [15]. By establishing a cultural dialogue mechanism of virtual and real co-existence, role-playing and plot-driven narratives can be used to have tourists move from "seeing the scenery" to "living the story",

scenic spots can become "narrative spaces", and the spread of culture will be in the form of "emotional resonance" rather than "knowledge indoctrination". The transformation of tourism is a process that can be extended to other fields; it makes us think that in the digital age, living inheritance of cultural heritage should not only be presented in museums and schools but also spread everywhere. It can happen in the streets people walk on, in the brick walls they touch, and in the laughter of solving puzzles. Technology is merely a tool. The real goal is to restore the sense of emotional connection between the people and culture.

In short, the activation of cultural values by the AR-based murder mystery tourism model is not only a technological innovation but also a structural integration of the logic of technology, the logic of narrative and the logic of cultural dissemination in the physical space of the scenic area. In the reconstruction of the cultural values for traditional scenic spots, it is necessary to preserve the essence and historical solemnity of the culture, and at the same time, use digital interactive means to create a proactive dialogue path with tourists about cultural heritage. Thus, the scenic area has become the beginning of cultural experience rather than just a location for cultural display, and it is now a new node in the spread of culture.

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