

TV of the future may be a sphere (Update)

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Ateme general manager Mike Antonovich demonstrates the LiveSphere 360-degree television system on January 9, 2015 in Las Vegas, Nevada

The TV of the future may not be a rectangle, but a sphere.

Some visitors to the 2015 Consumer Electronics Show got a peek at this new way to view 360-degree video.

The new viewing experience was shown as part of a collaboration among several partners including French video software firm Ateme and British-

based Pufferfish Displays, which makes the spherical projection module.

Although 360-degree video can be viewed on a standard television or tablet, the spherical module adds a new dimension, said Mike Antonovich, the Ateme general manager for the Americas.

This "can augment the experience of viewing a live concert or sporting event," Antonovich said.

Using the sphere makes the viewing an interactive and collaborative experience, said Geoff Kell of Pufferfish.

"It will be an addition to the viewing experience, but it also has great value as a data visualization tool" for research or other purposes, Kell said.

Ateme and its partners recently produced the first live 360-degree broadcasts using the trademark LiveSphere.

"You can view from different angles, so if you are watching a concert you might want to be part of the audience, and then switch to be part of the band," Antonovich said.

While 360-degree imaging has been around for several years in services such as Google Maps, Ateme said it is far more challenging to produce this for live television.

It "is completely different to do 360 degrees for live TV, and making it seamless," said Ateme research manager Jerome Vieron.

Other partners in LiveSphere include the Finnish technology group Finwe and France-based Kolor, which specializes in "image-stitching."

The partners are working with broadcasters around the world to produce live events, using the 360-degree interactive format.

The navigation on the Pufferfish display is done by hand, while remote control can be used for viewing on a television screen.

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