

FEATURED

# IU professor's app features restored Roman Colosseum District

By Michael Reschke The Herald-Times

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View of the Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheater) and nearby 100'-tall bronze statue of the Sun God in the VR app "Rome Reborn: Colosseum District." Courtesy and copyright Flyover Zone Productions 2019. All rights reserved.

The Colosseum is one of the most iconic images of ancient Rome. It has had an enormous impact on architects, serving as inspiration for modern day stadiums. But it was built as a slaughterhouse.

Spectators watched as people were fed to animals. Those same animals were later killed by other people. During the lunch break, prisoners were executed in such colorful ways as being dressed up as birds and catapulted into the air before falling to their deaths inside the arena. It was appalling, disgusting, incomprehensible, Frischer said. Yet, it had to be included.

"Eventually, what I decided was not to whitewash but confront it and make people think about the role of violence, even in our own society," he said.

As in other [Rome Reborn applications](#), voice overs from experts explain what users are seeing as they move around the virtual city. The [Colosseum District application](#) includes recreations of scenes that are believed to have occurred inside the arena. They are bloody and violent, but users will be warned so they don't stumble upon something they don't want to see.



application. In the app, Prof. Frischer contrasts the ancient and modern attitudes toward public state-organized violence. Courtesy and copyright 2019 Flyover Zone Productions. All rights reserved.

Other digital reconstructions in the new application include the Temple of Venus and Roma. Users can go inside the temple to see immense statues of the Roman goddesses as they were meant to look. They can also move up close to see the details of historical reliefs on the Arch of Constantine. The reliefs are in color, as they would have been when they were created.

All the structures depicted in the application are made to look as historically accurate as possible. This is why Frischer thinks virtual reality applications such as the Rome Reborn series will be used to teach history in the future.

To help spread the adoption of such tools, Frischer said he will donate five Oculus Go virtual reality headsets to area schools that contact him through the Rome Reborn website, [romereborn.org](http://romereborn.org).

The Colosseum District and other apps can be purchased and downloaded from [romereborn.org](http://romereborn.org). The applications work on personal computers, but the virtual reality experience requires a headset, such as Google Daydream, Google Cardboard, HTC Vive or Oculus.

Two new applications in the Rome Reborn series, the Imperial Fora and the Imperial Palace, are in the works. There are also plans for projects that will create virtual reality tours of ancient Athens and the Roman city of Baalbek in Lebanon.

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