

Interacting With Urbanity

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ABSTRACT

This project has explored means of interaction between creators and recipients of mediated culture within the realm of architectural space through the use of video.

Categories and Subject Descriptors

H.5.1 [Information Interfaces and Presentation]: Multimedia Information Systems – *Artificial, augmented and virtual realities, Evaluation/Methodology, Video.*

General Terms

Documentation, Performance, Design, Experimentation.

Keywords

Bananas, 'nanas, urban planning, video prototyping, role playing (sexy kind).

1. INTRODUCTION

Our focus has been on incorporating people's means of expression into the urban landscape by means of liquid and pliable experiential forms of mediated content. For this, a new mental model needs to be constructed; this is visualized using video.

2. USE, NO CASE

Public space has yet to fully live up to its name, but through this design it will grow increasingly accessible. This domain which hitherto has been reserved for architects, politicians, city planners and the occasional street artist - and, of course, commercial interests.

The tangibility increases as information is dispersed throughout the physical world, but at the same time embedded and therefore "placed" within the urban fabric. This might add to, accentuate or comment on the architectural space. But, as opposed to existing landscape, this layer is pliable and liquid and even, one might say, evanescent. Through the evolution of this layer, it can "vaporize".

This new layer is not separated from the cityscape, but rather an enrichment of, and an addition to, existing architectural space and is available for exploration. It's utility is determined by its usage. If not found usable in a specific situation, it can be neglected - i.e. one can choose whether to acknowledge this asset or not.

3. INTERACTION MODEL

3.1 Action transparency

This design will increase the feeling of agency; knowing that there is a person behind all actions performed. This would not be

possible by the canonical zero order control view surrounding human computer interface design. Our aim is to eliminate computer administrative debris [1].

3.2 Levels of resolution

We use the metaphor of radiation to determine the "value" of certain content. Therefore, one can adapt one's sensitivity to radiation according to how deep into the layer's structure one wants to venture. This makes the "web" fully adaptable to individuals' interests and emotive states. But also, it enables exploration through the use of different resolution levels, both on the part of the sender and the receiver. Although the sender/receiver model will cease to be the primary descriptor; it will leave the once monolithic structure where the producer/consumer discrepancy saturated people's mental models. [2]

The landscape perceived, perhaps through augmented reality, can be adjusted in accordance with what one wants to experience. One's interest may be toward the ornamental or aesthetic level, or perhaps one chooses to delve deeper...

3.3 Emergence

We project cluster effects as being part of the main emergent effects. Also, the enablement of directed and projected emotive expression and response may in itself lead to increasing complexity which in turn could generate "tribal doppler effects"; also these are subject to the evanescent nature of liquidity.



Figure 1. Interference between tribes

We have sketched a possibility for people to explore the interaction field, enabling them to participate in creation, experience and critique. The content, or message, submitted on this layer is not fixed, and is therefore open to expression, interpretation and reaction by all participating agents. This in a platform situated in specific places throughout the "urban" landscape. The aim is to create a spatial mapping, absent from today's electronic media distribution system.

The design trajectory in the project has aimed towards enablement and power of aesthetic expression, limited only by the creativity of its users.

4. SHAPING INTERACTION

The design proposal is illustrated through the use of video. The aim was to evince a narrative instead of mental models.

4.1 Leaving traces

In the video named "TGG" [3] we employ a metaphorical narrative to represent a creative expression being communicated.

The chewing of gum represents the creative act. The posting of gum on a public wall thus represents the process of sharing the creative content in physical space, accentuated by the woman's fingerprint.

The acts performed are not metaphorical per se, but refer to situated distribution and acquisition of ideas. However, the suggested form of interaction; posting, is also to be interpreted literally. This pertaining to the means of distribution within the system we propose.

In the part of the video following after the man has found the trace left by the woman, you will see a representation of the man experiencing and interacting with the content.



Figure 2. Leaving traces

4.2 Deconstruction decomposed

In the video titled "Snowman" [4], the metaphor is "content" manifested in a snowman, which is de-constructable as a result of emotive and/or intellectual response of an individual to said content. This makes the content subject to the power of crowds [5], both by means of construction and deconstruction. But as opposed to e.g. commenting or citations, it's the accumulation of positives and negatives by magnitude, not by numbers, that makes or breaks the content.

4.3 The 'nanas Project

This [6] differs from the other videos as it documents part of our design process. Hence, it's the only instance without solely original artwork by the designers. The experiment is exploratory aiming to penetrate the minds and mental models of people and people's relation to interactive media and artifacts. The participants were subjected to a psychological test for the reason of priming them into an experiment-like setting. Script, clothing and paraphernalia were also summoned from the empiricist scientific discourse to add to the experience. Based on the assumption that participants were mentally grounded in a scientific milieu, they were subjected to a thought experiment of them being situated in a video-game-like environment. They were given a banana to represent some kind of artifact in the suggested condition. They were then asked to specify what kind of functions would be incorporated in such an artifact and encouraged to act out and describe the interaction, and if necessary, draw any shapes, buttons or additions to the artifact on its peel.

5. POINTS FOR TAKING HOME

Under this rubric we collect our conclusions and provide modus operandi for HCI educators.

5.1 Ethnography for the future

In designing the future, one cannot look solely at the present. One can not infer future patterns of interaction by focusing on the present. It could even be considered counter-productive.

An ethnographical study at a shopping mall was performed in order to examine existing behavior. The result of the study was the conclusion that the mall environment was a display of unwanted design trajectories. This method was therefore deemed useless in the current context.

5.2 Investigating attitudes and imagined use

The 'nanas experiment was a great way to encounter peoples';

- a. Image of what tech and tech artifacts can, should and ought to perform
- b. Perception of problems that may be encountered and needs that need to be met by technology in a hypothetical world

For example, one subject suggested that the object should act as a prescription pad. On the question of why that would be a good idea, she explained that as a doctor she needs to have such an item readily available. When further questioned about why it shouldn't be a dispenser of medicines, she replied that she would then be out of a job.

5.3 Method of hat

Grounded in de Bono and his seminal thinking hats [7], the method was taken one step further. Through evolutionary experimentation with different alternative hats led to new input into the specific method but also generalizations to other methods.

Instead of accepting the rigid framework of de Bono, new hats were brought to the table, those representing different perspective agents or opinions relevant to the project at hand. evolutionary experimentation.

5.4 Monkey see, monkey don't

Escaping the monkey see, monkey do method implementation practice. For an interaction designer, it's important to establish an autonomous relation to method implementation.

Students of HCI and design-related fields must start out by learning and applying existing methodological frameworks. This in order to later be able to employ creativity in creation, selection, application, and adaptation of methods. By trying out methods one learns the merits and disadvantages of each method, information which then can be applied in above processes.

The HCI/interaction design process, by default, has a larger degree of elasticity than physically restricted design fields such as architecture, due to the use of non-material materials. This endemic quality should be used to its advantage, in the following ways; not to restrict the design process to an a priori specified expanding-contracting (< >) model.

This is pertaining to interaction design not being restricted to external material factors, which give several degrees of freedom that should be utilized in shaping the design process.

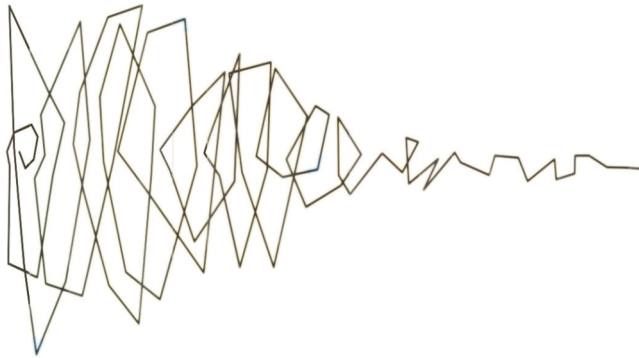


Figure 3. Do. Adapted from graphic in [8].

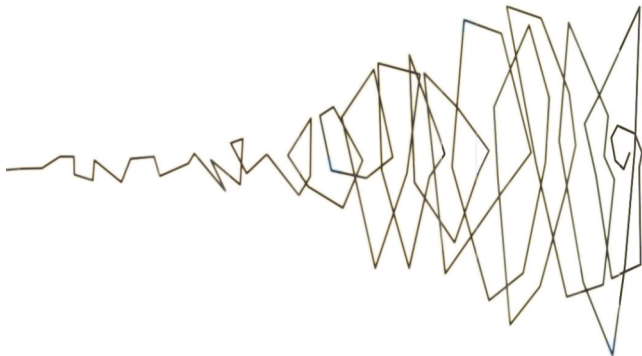


Figure 4. Don't, ibid.

In the design of the design process itself, one can choose according to the nature of the design problem when to expand and explore the problem space or narrow it down. N.B. this is to be applied once the method implementation has been well grounded earlier in one's design education.

From this follows, earlier phases in these types of design education should focus on methodology, and the assignments should be limited in scope. Later in the process of development as a designer, the tasks can be freer and less pre-defined.

6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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