Inventing the Medium
NINCH Building Blocks Workshop
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Pattern

Whenever I design a chip the first thing I want to do is look at it under a microscope -- not because I think I can learn something new by looking at it but because I am always fascinated by how a pattern can create reality.

Danny Hillis *The Pattern in the Stone*
New Media
Soliloquy as Technology of Representation
Properties of the Medium

- Procedural
- Participatory
- Encyclopedic
- Spatial
Legacy Design Paradigms

- Graphic Design: Poster
- Human Computer Interaction: Appliance
- Television Producers: “Enhanced” TV
- Instructional Design: Distant Classroom
- Communication: Broadband Telephone
- Library Science: Card Catalog
- Literary/Cultural Studies: Potato Root System
A Medium of Representation
Script the interactor
Design Issues

• Is it a “show”?
• Is there a “movie underneath”?
• Segmentation and juxtaposition
• Standardized labels
• Encyclopedic expectation
Cross-Media Structures
Granularity, Juxtaposition
Textbook to Archive

Virtual Screening Room
Henry Jenkins, MIT

CD-ROM/DVD Project
A New Medium
Medium of Representation

allows us to:

– Inscribe perceptible signs
– Create patterns of meaning
– Preserve and transmit patterns
– Expand our understanding and our humanity
New Media
New Media
New Media
Moments of Invention
Patterns of Meaning
New Forms…New Knowledge

• Digital Archive
• Simulation
• Kaleidoscopic structure
Reinventing Biography

Overview

As an English and American Romantic-era woman, Rebecca Grimke was a unique figure in her time. Her focus on abolitionism, women's rights, and pacifism set her apart from many of her contemporaries. Her work as a speaker and author helped to advocate for the rights of African Americans and women in a society that often opposed such views. This presentation explores the life and work of Rebecca Grimke, highlighting her contributions to American history and her impact on the abolitionist movement.
The story of the Pilgrims and their Indian neighbors is familiar to most and many international visitors as well. It evokes powerful images of strength face of adversity, of ships on storm-tossed oceans and winters on bleak New England shores, yet also of harvest plenty, of Thanksgiving gatherings and golden autumnal afternoons. However, the historic reality which underlies greeting card imagery is far more complex.

How do they know what they know? How?
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Choose a Character

Sarah Osburn
The story of the Pilgrims and their Indian neighbors is familiar to most Americans, and many international visitors as well. It evokes powerful images of strength in the face of adversity, of ships on storm-tossed seas and winters.

Amanda Page
The story of the Pilgrims and their Indian neighbors is familiar to most Americans, and many international visitors as well. It evokes powerful images of strength in the face of adversity, of ships on storm-tossed seas and winters.

How do they know what they know?
How to invent the medium
Pick something complicated

- Think of a particular task you are obsessed by
- Do you know more about it than you can contain in books, classes, diagrams?
- Do you want to know something / explain something just beyond the reach of available means?
Think abstractly, build concretely

- What are the core tasks?
- What other tasks are like this one?
- What would this task be like if it were doable in the most perfect way?
Look for Harbinger Materials

Hot Norman:
A prototype for Digital TV

Based on
The Norman Conquests, Trilogy by Alan Ayckbourn

Built with
IBM “HotVideo”
Exploit the Medium

• Procedural: Patterns of Rule-Based Behavior
• Participatory: Patterns of Participation
• Encyclopedic: Patterns of Segmentation, Categorization, and Agglomeration
• Spatial: Patterns of Navigation and Boundary Definition
Create Authoring Tools

CharacterMaker 4
J. Murray, M. Privat
British Museum Stance

- Everything will be brought to you
- Everything has been indexed
- Every medium available
- Every artifact available
- Every part of every artifact at every level of granularity
- Every marginalized group/idea represented or addable
Design for the Future Environment

- Standardized metadata
- Distributed annotation
- Open ended archive
- Growing ability to manipulate with kaleidoscopic power
- Growing ability to replay, readjust parameters
Avoid Pitfalls

- Fetishism of legacy formats
- Constraints of legacy processes
- Confusing expert authority with legacy formats and processes
- “Hypertext”
- “Intuition”
Look for the patterns

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Danny Hillis *The Pattern in the Stone*
Remember what is sacred

• Not the book: it’s a legacy format
• Not the process: it can be improved
• The expansion of human knowledge and human understanding
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