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TrainFlow

(250 words in total)

Background

TrainFlow is an interactive video installation. The content of the piece based on many videos of views from train journeys throughout Europe, focusing on the patterns, rhythms and textures emerging from the vistas. A rich number of images is a result of landscapes, urban patterns, large structures such as bridges, and encounters with other trains.

In the final piece a matrix of 3x3 simultaneously playing video streams is presented to the audience in such a way that the parameter of speed of each individual video stream may be influenced by the players, creating unique patterns. Using infrared proximity sensors with a range of bout 60 cm., a pattern was created on the glass facade in front of the video projection, allowing the audience to manipulate the delivery of the video content, playing with the way the video streams of trains and patterns interacted.

Contribution

Due to the nature of the projections there was a strong visual presence at the DAB faculty courtyard, inviting passers-by to interact. The main purpose of this work, however, is comparable to the role of an experiment in scientific research. To address research questions (about interaction mappings, see below), the experiment is carried out in the form of a public art work. The design process, research, and analysis and reflection on the results are published in academic papers (forthcoming in 2009).

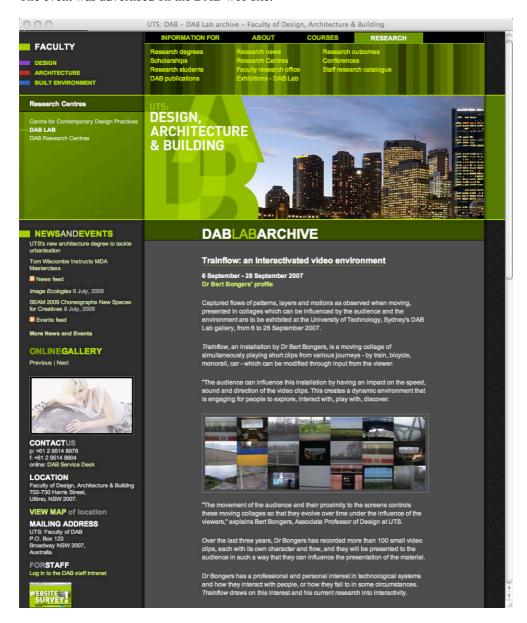
Significance

The work is an investigation of the appropriate mappings between the 'palette' of real-world parameters (the audience movements picked up by sensors), the palette of media parameters, and feedback to provide clarity in the interaction. This development is guided by a structured approach, based on an interaction framework of Modes, Modalities and Levels as described in earlier publications. The interactive video pieces are placed in a theoretical framework which gives a context for art forms from static, to dynamic, performative etc. to distinguish different Levels of interactivity. Audience interaction in public spaces such as exhibitions is a topic informed by the results of the observations, analysis and findings throughout the process of development and presentation of the installation.

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

See photographs of the next page. The Opening event had a very good attendance, many colleagues and interested parties from the Faculty, other UTS groups (such as the Creativity and Cognition Studios), and outside visited.

The event was advertised on the DAB web site.



The installation run for three weeks in the (curated) faculty gallery, the DAB Lab, in August 2007. For the opening event a special version was created allowing different interactions. I have found that the context of an opening is so different from normal visiting times, particularly because there are so many more people present, that it needs a different design allowing different interactions. The change between the different sets of images (the TrainFlow worlds) was determined by the audience through special versions of the invitation cards. The cards were tagged with RFID chips, so each of the special guests who received such a card could call up a TrainFlow world by bringing their personal invitation card near the RFID reader in the installation (its location was indicated by a invitation card stuck on the window in front of the reader). For that evening I had no control over this parameter, instead given over that control to the audience. During normal operation change of TrainFlow worlds occurred after a certain amount of interaction.



IMAGES OF EXHIBITION / WORK

Flyer designed together with Niall Durney (a poster was created as well, advertising the opening event around UTS).







