

**CLOSER: Augmented Reality for innovative interaction techniques**

**Category : Network**

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The goal of the CLOSER project is to bring audiovisual archives in a more direct relationship with the audience, using innovative interaction techniques like Augmented Reality.

Audiovisual cultural heritage collections nowadays are becoming accessible on a large scale through digital networks. Innovative ways of presentation and interaction can create an added value in disclosing these archives to the audience. CLOSER is a multidisciplinary research project, initiated by V2\_ Institute for the Unstable Media and the Netherlands Institute for Sound and Vision.

CLOSER aims to design new ways of experiencing audiovisual databases. These new concepts will employ technologies that are already developed by V2\_ and Sound and Vision as well as insights from the disciplines Augmented Reality, Semantic Web, Human Computer Interaction and Web Design. As a first step a multidisciplinary team of students will develop new concepts about interacting with audiovisual archives.

Bas Bergervoet, Kate Cunningham, Aestha van Dam, Shauna Jin and Connie Yeh were the five MA-students from different schools and universities who spent two months at V2\_ researching and thinking about new ways of using an archive. How would shifting the context of an archive influence the ways users access an archive and participate into building a collection.

The presentation started with a quick overview of the backgrounds of their thinking about archives, focusing on issues of access, technology, power and personal experience. 'How to extend the interactions of users to make the archive more visible' - was their reason to get into 'archive ecologies'. See them as decentralized archives, built on interactions between people, rather than on content - using the available content and adding to it.

The proposal of Shauna Jin was to mix 'slow' rituals with the 'fast' internet, the 'fast' online archive. Her central question was how to retain some of the positive aspects of visiting a library or museum and building those aspects into an online experience or application - for instance to make sure there will still be reflection. Her second idea was to have citizen-archivists: users who contribute to an archive using special tools, for instance tools which also do versioning control.

Bas' proposal gives people an interface to actively contextualize the news of the day, to create multiple perspectives, get a bigger picture, and enable discussions. The idea is to implement it in a display table, which could be at the Beeld & Geluid Institute or in a waiting room. More than one person should be able to play it together at the same time. A further development of this plan could add AR (Augmented Reality) aspects, or have it also play on a handheld device (an iPhone).

Kate focused on serendipity in the archive. She was most interested in how people access archives, and how they discover things. Is there a way to make accidental discoveries more possible, to stimulate curiosity and encourage exploration? (Instead of only a directive search). How to facilitate serendipity? One way she mentioned was to immerse the user in a world (compare the Youtube 'black hole').

Connie Yeh focused on raising awareness of and battling mainstream powers, but also on a sort of puzzle hunt based on archival content. Finally Aestha presented the idea for a puzzle mystery to be played on the streets using virtual tags and an iPhone, The content, in her idea, was based on the popular Dutch detective Baantjer, and just as in Connie Yeh's proposal, players should have to use information from archives in order to solve the mystery.

All the presentations were jam-packed with ideas, too many to present here, and had handled things like the analysis of the user base, and the interaction quite well. Yet none showed a workable prototype yet. In conclusion one could say that what all the interns had looked at had less to do with 'archiving', than with ways of building interactions, games and interfaces on top of archives, to create or stimulate different uses of the richness in content which lies 'hidden' in archives.

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