

Contributing to the global digital economy with new media technologies and ways of storytelling

Narrative & Interactive Media, Goldsmiths, University of London

Meeting Global Challenges

The 'Narrative and Interactive Media' [NIM] programme of research currently ongoing in the Goldsmiths Computing Department directly addresses the major international challenge of the emerging global digital economy.

A Multidisciplinary Approach

The research programme has employed an interdisciplinary approach, combining: film making, news, moving image narrativity, design and installation art, at the non-technological (non-STEM) end, and artificial intelligence, digital media technologies and software engineering and development, at the technological (STEM) end. With an aim of developing new means of creative expression and contextualized information, particularly with moving image, NIM has harnessed this multi-disciplinary approach to produce the first computer programmes for interactive films, called Narrative Structure Language. NIM is also involved in the development of new means for mediated informal communication, which combines moving picture narrativity, psychology, sociology, design and ICT.

Research Impact

The NIM group has already had, and is continuing to have, a real tangible impact. As a result of the collaborative work carried out in NM2, NIM has created the first computer programmes for moving picture narratives (such as such as films, documentaries, entertainment shows, etc.), called Narrative Structure Language, the core of the ShapeShifting Media Technology. ShapeShifting Media provides the first production and genre independent technology dedicated to authoring and delivering moving picture narratives. Rather than being subjected to a pre-produced story, viewers are able to explore a story space, with the story arc still being enforced, therefore receiving a personalised narration.

The ShapeShifting Media technology has opened up opportunities for the development of better means of communication mediated by moving-image between groups of people separated by time and location. This is being addressed in the current TA2 project.

New and more natural moving-image-based communication technologies are being developed which will allow family and friends situated in different locations to share moments of fun whilst playing social games or recounting past memories, seeing and hearing each other, as if they were together in the same space. This will go far beyond the static face to face video conferencing facility that we are used to, and will include cinematic techniques, similar to those employed in the production of good quality TV narratives, that will be automatically applied to the capturing and editing of the content. Giving control of industry quality entertainment to the individual, rather than the industry.

Funding Sources

NIM's research would not have been conducted without the early provision of QR funding or the subsequent allocation of responsive mode grant income. From 2002, QR funding was used to support the development of Goldsmiths' Computing Department which specialises in the study of computer science within creative, cognitive and social contexts. QR provided the financial resource to make several new strategic appointments and to establish a cross-disciplinary research centre, Goldsmiths Digital Studios. Over the subsequent 7 years the department has generated over £6 million of external research funding, contrasting with under £30k prior to 2001.

The NIM group could not have existed without the strategic QR investment, and has been particularly successful in generating responsive mode grant income. It has received approximately €2.25 Million in external funding by participating in research projects totalling over €25 Million, such as the EU Integrated Projects NM2 (New Millennium, New Media), which ran between 2004 and 2007, and TA2 (Together Anywhere, Together Anytime), running from 2008 to 2012.