

INHABITED VIRTUAL WORLD VIDEO MONTAGE AS COLLABORATION EXPERIENCE REFLECTION TOOL

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ABSTRACT. This paper describes the use of video montage made within an inhabited virtual world to reflect on the collaboration experience. This video montage serves as a tool that is used to review the experience in totality. The paper begins with an overview of inhabited virtual world components and properties that promote collaboration. KOLB Learning Cycle is used as the central basis to explain the experiential process. Each stage of the cycle is discussed in relations to the use of video montage reflecting on the social interactions that had taken place. Emphasis is made on the reflection observation stage. It is suggested that this stage happens at two levels i.e. during review of captured video segments to be composed into a particular story and when reviewing the video montage as a whole. Finally, the paper provides an example of using an inhabited virtual world video montage made in Forsaken World™ to reflect on collaboration experience.

Keywords: Inhabited virtual world, collaboration experience, reuse, video montage

INTRODUCTION

Inhabited virtual world (IVW) provides a platform for collaboration. This is enabled by the component virtual communities of an IVW. Figure 1 shows the components of an IVW. Virtual communities provide the social mechanism for collaborations to take place. The main idea underlying collaborative projects is that the joint effort of many actors leads to a better outcome than any actor could achieve individually (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Certain tasks are simply more engaging and meaningful when done with others. Social participation enhances the experience. Lin (2005) mentioned that a shared virtual space for learners to observe, manipulate objects, and work together for the sake of sustaining learning community in the learning environment needs to be provided.

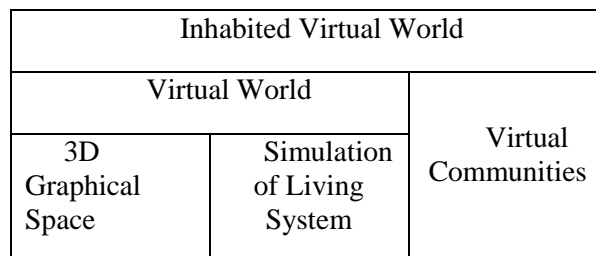


Figure 1. Inhabited Virtual World Components

Based on the components of IVW in Figure 1, properties that would promote collaboration are motivation in affiliation (virtual communities), social functions provided by the system

(simulation of living system) and fidelity (of the 3D graphical space). Experience within the IVW revolves around these three components.

REFLECTING ON EXPERIENCE

A user in a IVW will encounter events akin to the real world. The occurrence of events could be system generated or other user initiated. These events provide rich potentials for users to take part. Thoughts, opinion, emotion and perhaps memory are formed when a user undergo the events. Experience is then built. Reflecting on the experience would heighten the experience. It is a process of making sense of the experience by having deeper thoughts, validating opinions and rationalizing emotion. Kolb (1984) suggested that it is necessary to reflect on the experience to make generalizations and formulate concepts which can then be applied to new situations. Figure 2 shows the Kolb Experiential Learning Cycle. In the context of an IVW, the entry point is the concrete experience. This is when a person navigates and does things in the events within the IVW represented by an avatar. Each action taken and choices made are part of the concrete experience. Users interact with each other and artificial intelligent agents in a IVW.

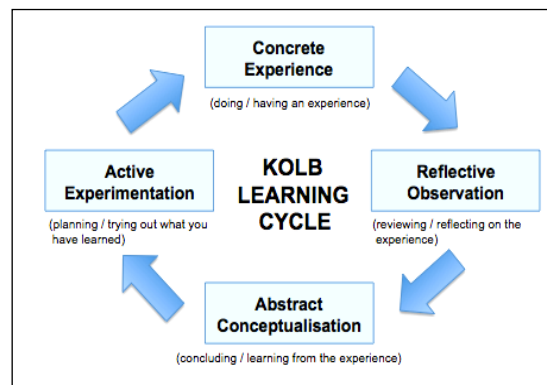


Figure 2. KOLB Learning Cycle

Capturing the experience in a video montage of this firsthand experience provides an interpreted content to be reflected on. As opposed to a non-edited video capture of the user tracking, a video montage of the experience will contain a story told by the user itself rather than a linear log. The story is derived within the IVW by the user's interpretation of the observed events. Concrete experience centrals to taking part in the events. The feeling and observing surroundings for social cues contribute to the experience.

In the next stage, reflective observation is rooted at rationalising and validating the gathered experience. This involves reviewing the actions and reactions happened. Reflective observation happens in two levels with IVW video montage. Level one happens at the point when the video montage is created. The second level involves reviewing the IVW video montage as a whole. Reflection observations made are the basis for continuous analysis of the past experience. Identification of certain patterns pertaining to the experience will lead to a conclusion. This abstract conceptualization is the stage where learning from the experience happens. The abstract concept is stored for adaptation in the future. The memory of the experience serves as the basis for further experience to be built upon. Active experimentation of the experience is done on situations recognize as able to build upon past experience.

REUSE OF INHABITED VIRTUAL WORLD ELEMENTS IN CREATING VIDEO MONTAGE TO CAPTURE EXPERIENCE

Level one of reflective observation occurs during the video montage creation process. This is when the user makes interpretation and judgment of the experience and package it in a form of a story. This story then is conveyed by editing the captured video segments within the IVW. This facilitates articulation of reflection on the experience. The second level involves reviewing the IVW video montage for further reflection. The experience is reflected cohesively to heighten the experience and make deeper meaning out of it. Gaps in level one could be bridged at this level.

The IVW is the stage for the collaboration to happen. By capturing segments of deemed important moment of the social interaction while in the midst of a collaboration and stitched these segments together, one can see itself as if a movie is made on him. Taking a stage performance as a comparison, a virtual world provides the same for the people who populate the VW. The main three component of a stage are environment, props and actors. The environment sets the boundaries and the context of the world. Props can be divided into two categories based on the role it play. First, props that serve as items that the actor can interacts with. Second, props that merely populate the environment to enhance the fidelity of the context and not interact able. Avatars in IVW are the actors. These actors have specific roles.

AN EXAMPLE OF ABSTRACTING CAPTURED EXPERIENCE

An IVW video montage in Forsaken World™ is made. Reflective observation is conducted by reviewing the video montage in totality. Segments that reflect the experience in collaborating in IVW is identified. Figure 3 shows the level of detailing made in avatar customization. Intangible attributes and appearance were customized. By including these segments of event in the video montage indicates the act of playing with identity is deemed important in the IVW collaboration.



Figure 3. Screen Capture 1

Placement of avatar observes proximity between it with other avatars for an interaction to happen in Figure 4. It was also reflected that the chat box is made highly visible in the screen. Appearance of avatars that circles each other portrayed certain similarities. Association with familiarity is observed. Reflecting on the experience, the way avatar is customized will influence acceptance for collaborating.



Figure 4. Screen Capture 2

In Figure 5, negotiation to be affiliated is taking place. This reflects the extent of working togetherness. Choices made reflecting virtues such as patience, aggression, etc. The choice made to collaborate with 'real' people avatar instead of artificial agents is also observed. The process of 'getting to know and let's collaborate' is a highlighted experience.



Figure 5. Screen Capture 3

CONCLUSION

The use of IVW as platform of collaboration could be leveraged as a tool to reflect on the collaboration experience. Video capture of concrete experience within the IVW could be reviewed to identify important events which are composed to make a montage that tells the experience in a story manner. Further reflection observation is made to obtain more insights on the experience. Conclusion of the experience is reached by constantly interpreting and analyzing the identified highlights which lead to an abstract conceptualization of the experience. This becomes the basis for further experience enrichment by actively experimenting for adaptation.

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