Multi Mega Book in the CAVE
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What is the Multi Mega Book in the CAVE?

The Multi Mega Book in the CAVE [VR application] expands one maxi-page of the ongoing Multi Mega Book multi-media installation [an "up-to-date" electronic book sculpture] — the shift from the printed+book to the electronic text+digital skin.

The user experiences, and creatively interacts with, two moments of human history — the Renaissance and the Electronic Age integrated into one unique environment. The application juxtaposes two revolutions which have transformed the history of communication and in consequence human history.

The interactive visitor freely explores the different dimensions of the two key centuries through the use of the CAVE[TM] a Virtual Reality Theater. When the user enters the CAVE, the Multi Mega Book is in front of him/her. S/he can turn the pages, and move through them into various parts of the worlds within. One world is an idealized Renaissance city; the user can see famous buildings, walk through Leonardo's Last Supper, and visit and use Gutenberg's printing press.

A tunnel leads from here to another city — a "CD-City" which visualizes the movement of digital, networked information, a city in which everything is interactive.

The navigation and the interaction of the Multi Mega Book is often surprising, designed to draw the user from the Renaissance to the Information Age, exploring two different modes of communication and showing how both eras combined mathematics, innovation, art and cutting edge technology.

In its entirety the Multi Mega Book is a metaphor for means of communication through time. The different pages of the Multi Mega Book-installation give access to different aspects of the history of communication. The Multi Mega Book in the CAVE focuses on the specific argument of "The shift from the printed+book to the electronic text+digital skin".

Nem: The Avatar in the Multi Mega Book

Nem is composed using basic geometric forms — circle, triangle, sphere. These shapes shift to create a column or a character. In the Renaissance city he appears first as an "info-point" column. As the visitors approach, he opens up into a "humanoid" figure and establishes an interactive relationship with them as he guides them through the environment.

In the CD-City Nem is a "network agent" — he no longer guides the visitor from place to place but acts as a node for sending and receiving information.

The changes in Nem's shape and behavior are related to the epoch. In the Renaissance, both guide and visitor have to move their bodies to get to the original source of the information. In the CD-City where the information is mainly digitalized, Nem exists as a "high speed carrier", bringing information to the user who is not required to travel to its physical source. However, as the digital interchange flows around the CD-City, the visitor is encouraged to travel, and to interact with any of several Nem network agents.

Concept

The age of the "scrivener" is transformed by the arrival of the printing industries — the printed book is itself transformed by the arrival of digital "inputs". There is a change and we are part of this revolution. Instead of fearing that run-away-technology will create a collective amnesia in culture and in literature, we like to approach and use the media to invent new technological systems, to construct new memories, to develop contemporary forms of communication and to extend the idea and the concept of the communication, the ways you approach the intangibility and versatility of information. Let's deal with content in a much more creative, free and futuristic way, more adapted to the way people communicate today: let's create new information pathways which are interactive, volatile, versatile, radical, but always aesthetically challenging and sublime!!

Mission — Statement
* To explore the technological potential of the CAVE [cave virtual environment]
* To explore and expand the boundaries of traditional artistic media and of visitor participation in an art-work
* To create an application which will be an example of how an immersive, interface technology, such as the CAVE, can be used
* To illustrate and interpret a crucial transformation in the evolution of communication and technology
* To create an emotional, immersive experience for the public of being in different centuries and in different worlds all in one unique container, the Multi Mega Book in the CAVE
* To stimulate the visitor, both through audio/visual impact and through the sense of excitement and control that navigating through and interacting with a VR environment brings
* To make the interface with the complex technology invisible and the illusion seamless, so that the visitor is caught up in the spirit of the experience and does not feel threatened by lifeless metallic machinery
* Creating and integrating Avatars, which will be used for CAVE to CAVE interaction over high speed networks, so that users in different geographical locations can share this VR Renaissance city and 21st century city and in the visualization of information

In Co-operation with Dave Pape and Josephine Anstey, EVL [Electronic Visualisation Lab], University of Illinois at Chicago.