

Collaborative Frameworks: A Proposal for an Archive in the Studio

Lily Diaz-Kommonen
University of Art and Design Helsinki, Media Lab
diaz@uia.fi

1. Abstract

This presentation describes a concept proposal for a system that will create an archive of the activities of the Studio at SIGGRAPH 2002. The initial parameters that constrain the design process are that the materials of such repository must be displayed and archived during the conference itself, and they must be formatted in such a manner that facilitates their retrieval and replay at a later date. Additionally, in order to reflect the diversity of content present, the archive must be created in a collaborative manner, and with the help of other Studio participants. The amplitude of the desired coverage is yet another factor to be considered. All of these factors must be considered in the light of the quantity of data that can be potentially generated by such endeavor.

2. Activity Coombs¹

One can visualize the proceedings of the Studio as a progressive narrative, or performance, that evolves through time and in diverse locations, or settings. The physical settings of the Studio can be visualized as Activity Coombs. They are hollow spaces progressively filled with events in the form of the different activities of the participants. With the help of participants of the Studio and student volunteers, strategically placed input devices, such as high-quality video cameras and microphones, capture as data aspects of these activities. As part of the capture operation, data is properly tagged with metadata, sent for re-display in several locations of the Studio, and archived in pre-configured directories on a server.

At zero, *n*-level, the system contains only media artifacts of the type created as part of preparatory operations. It is reasonable to assume that these artifacts are still image files that illustrate:

- The works chosen for the Art Exhibition,
- Works in the Emergent Technologies section
- Education and production stations in the Studio.

As the narrative moves forward in time, data captured is differentiated, and stored separately, as six phases, or levels, each corresponding to a period of 24 hours for each day of the conference. For the general coverage of the Studio SIGGRAPH 2002, three basic types of media artifacts are suggested:

- *t*
from interviews and presentations.
- Time lapse video animations, with a frame capture rate of 1 frame every four seconds, and which operate in the manner of a visual clocks recording the passage of time.
- High quality audio files resulting from interviews and presentations.

3. Classification and metadata strategy

A system, that uses a hierarchical classification model and a Dublin core compliant taxonomy is proposed:

- Author (John Smith)
- Title of Activity (Rapid Prototyping Workshop)
- Description (as keywords)
 - Participants (Industrial designers)
 - Objects created (Honeycomb shelf design prototype)
 - Tools used (3D graphics hardware, 3D software)
 - Institutions, communities (Design University)
 - Field(s) of knowledge represented (Design research)
- Date recorded.

4. Collaborative Frameworks in the Studio

Creation of an archive for the Studio is not a trivial task, but rather, one that requires that a group of participants *collaborate* in concert to achieve a common objective.² In Activity Theory, three levels of collaboration efforts have been described: Coordinated, cooperative and co-constructed collaboration. Whereas coordinated efforts involve routine, repetitive work that can be performed alone, in cooperative tasks “the actions of each agent influences the actions of others, enabling a synergistic effect.” Co-constructed activity pre-supposes reflection to promote re-elaboration and reconstruction of the work practice itself.³ It is to be expected that assembling the archive will include all three types of collaboration. Anticipating coordinated tasks in this type of project, is a relatively straightforward matter. Cooperative and co-constructed endeavors, however, are not obviously discerned. Special activities to reveal and promote these will have to be designed.

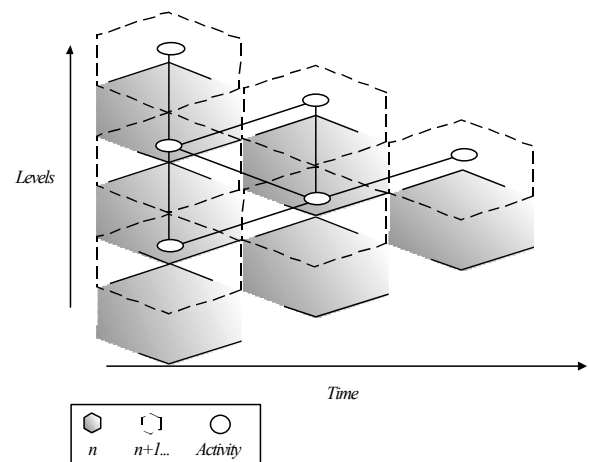


Figure 1: Studio Archive grows incrementally in time.

¹. Coomb from the Greek, the hollow of a vessel. Webster Dictionary, 1913, <http://machaut.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/WEBSTER.page.sh?PAGE=319>, (26.04.2002)

². Engeström Y, “Coordination, Cooperation and Communication in the Courts” as cited in Barthelmes P and K. M. Anderson, “A View of Software Development Environments Based on Activity Theory” in Special Issue of CSCW on Activity Theory and the Practice of Design, Kluwer Academic Publishers. (In Press.)

³. Ibid.