

Swamped! Using Plush Toys to Direct Autonomous Animated Characters

Synthetic Characters Group
& Vision and Modeling Group
MIT Media Lab

Swamped! is a multi-user interactive environment in which instrumented plush toys are used as an iconic and tangible interface to influence autonomous animated characters. Each character has a distinct personality and decides in real time what it should do based on its perception of its environment, its motivational and emotional state, and input from its "conscience," the guest. A guest can influence how a given character acts and feels by manipulating a stuffed animal corresponding to the character. For example, the guest could direct her character's attention by moving the stuffed animal's head, comfort it by stroking its belly, or have it wave at another character by waving its arm. Automatic camera control is used to help reveal the emotional content of each scene. By combining research in autonomous character design, automatic camera control, tangible interfaces and action interpretation, Swamped! seeks to create a rich, evocative and novel experience.

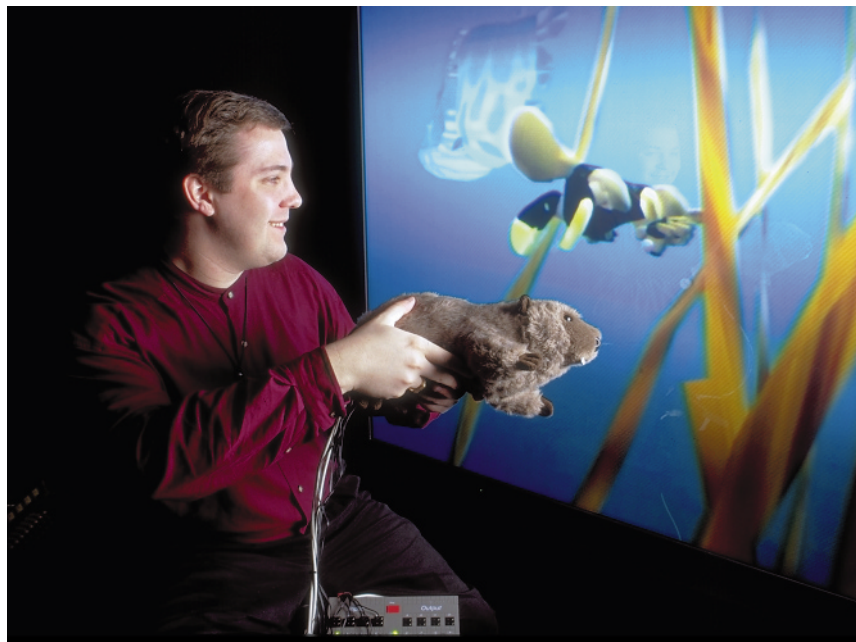
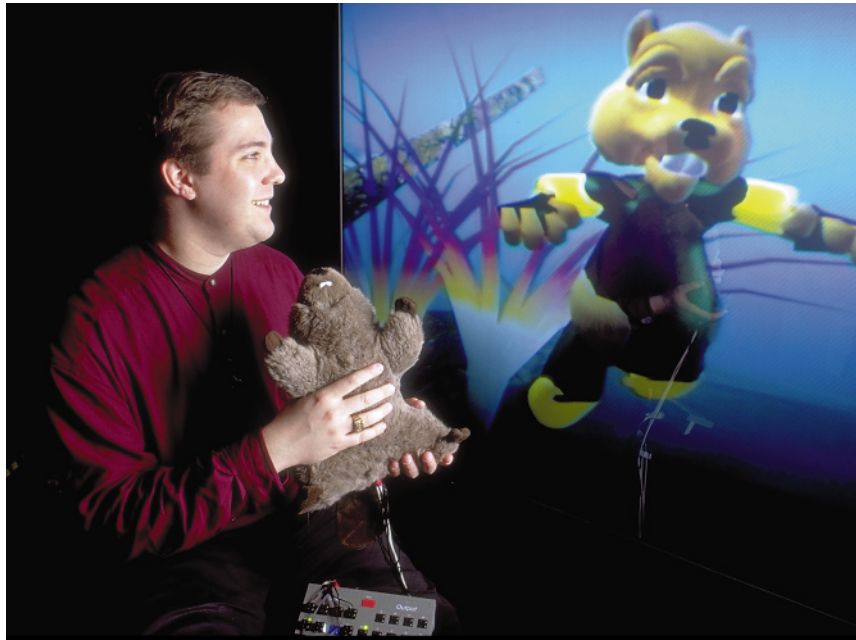
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