Waxweb 2.0 is the first interactive, intercommunicative feature film on the World Wide Web. It is also the first Internet-distributed narrative to offer real-time 3D navigation through a story.

Based on the feature film "WAX or the discovery of television among the bees," Waxweb 2.0 consists of 3000 Web pages with 25,000 hyperlinks; 85 minutes of digital video; a soundtrack in English, German, French, and Japanese; 5000 color stills; and more than 250 real-time 3D scenes filled with thousands of spatial hyperlinks. It is the first large-scale, dynamic implementation of the Virtual Reality Modeling Language (VRML), the accepted standard for distributed virtual reality on the Internet. Digicash, a digital payment scheme, and Sesame, a system for real-time, multi-user communication on the World Wide Web, have also been implemented.

Waxweb 2.0 runs on a modified MOO capable of serving both HTML and 3D VRML to multiple simultaneous users. Two-dimensional users logon as a character and enter the hyperfilm at the SUPERSTORY, a multi-page condensation of the narrative. From there, they can travel to SHORT STORY, the hypermedia film with a medium level of detail, and finally to SHOT BY SHOT, where every shot in the film is described, and where the film can be downloaded and viewed. From there, users can travel to a 250-category visual index. Also available are several hundred pages of additional backstory in FRAGMENTS and sections based on more than 400 KEYWORDS, which are used to re-edit both SHOT BY SHOT and FRAGMENTS. Despite this complexity, it is always easy to find out how a page or part of a page fits into the entire story.

Users can enter the 3D "Optoplasmic Void" from many places in the document, or by using a direct URL. Hyperlinked 3D objects are loaded into the VRML browser, and users can click on parts of the objects to load new scenes, change the web browser's page, or play parts of the movie. Users can also add to the story with their own immediate, publicly visible hypermedia, using an authoring interface built into the site. Custom scenes that dynamically recombine Waxweb and user-added VRML objects allow creation of a dynamic 3D interstory on the network.

While most videoserver trials take place on closed networks, Waxweb 2.0 uses open-system tools and existing bandwidth to experimentally demonstrate a practical, globally distributed, intercommunicative, scalable, and financially independent hypernarrative server, incorporating hypertext, audio, video, and virtual reality.

2D entrance: http://bug.
   village.virginia.edu
3D entrance: http://bug.
   village.virginia.edu/vrml
MOO entrance: telnet to
bug.village.virginia.edu.7777

David Blair
artist1@interport.net

Contributors

Authoring
David Blair

Technical Director
Tom Meyer

Suzanne Hader
David Klaphaak
Anna Youseffi
Melynda Barnhardt
Emma Johnson
Laura Mullen