When my great-grandmother

taught be to bake challah,

she would throw the ingre-

dients in one by one and say

in Yiddish, "a bisel und a

bisel machn a fule chisel"

which translates as "a bit

and a bit makes a full bowl."

The skills a designer needs

are a bit and a bit of tradi-

tional graphic design (such

as layout, color theory, ty-

pography and fonts); com-

puter skills (including inter-

face design, interaction de-

sign, information design;

conceptual skills (the hard-

*est to quantify but perhaps*

the most important); col-

Designers' Tales

Kristee Rosendahl, Rosendahl Arts & Design

Abbe Don, IN CONTEXT

Designers' Tales, a Macintosh-based, real-time video bulletin board system, enables users to contribute to an evolving portrait of the design community. The system is intended to collect stories about the design process, tricks of the trade, or other personal anecdotes, especially those that reveal the kind of knowledge that designers learn by participating in hands-on collaborations rather than the formal knowledge available in design text books.

The design challenges for this project range from understanding the technical limitations of digital video on the Macintosh to overall interaction design, both on screen and in the physical installation.
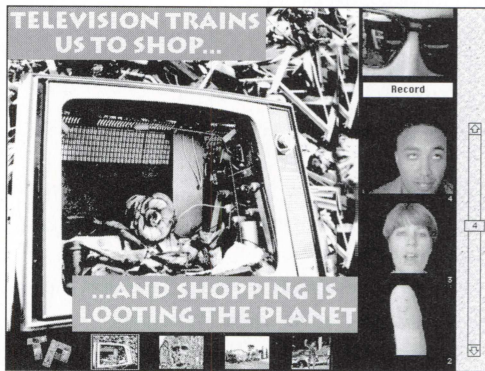
The specific steps in the design process include:

1) Select appropriate topics and questions. The system will offer several topics to act as a catalyst for discussion. Topics include some playful questions as well as some questions culled from the interviews conducted with each of the contributors to the SIGGRAPH designing technology show.

Inspiration
What do you do for inspiration?
What people have influenced or inspired you?
Are they designers or from another field?

Process
What is your favorite part of the design process?
What is your least favorite part of the design process?

Tricks of the trade
What are your favorite tools?
What are your favorite toys?
What are your favorite fonts?

Designer identity
What do you call yourself?
What is the stereotype of a designer?
Are you doing what you were trained to do?

2) Set a context through the look and feel of the screens that encourages users to offer thoughtful responses.

3) Lay out the individual digital video segments so that it is easy to navigate through them. The layout will be based on a traditional grid system that is a classic graphic design tool. It also melds well with digital video that is best displayed in a rectangle with a 4:3 ratio.

4) Develop an easy-to-use interface for recording and reviewing a video response.

Designers' Tales is the second in a series of installations intended to explore how digital video technology can be used to build communities and foster dialog among users in a public setting. Future systems will be networked and enable users to add their own topics. The current system is based on TPTV, a real-time video bulletin board about environmental issues, created by Abbe Don, Mark Petrakis, Nick West, and Mitchell Yawitz, exhibited at The Interactive Experience at SIGCHI 1992, in Monterey, CA.

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