

Moments in Nature

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ABSTRACT

Paradise creek, is a small river running between two cities. Realizing some of the original environment was altered, we created a story where herons and humans encounter each other in unexpected ways and the original river space could be discovered. The story unfolds as the audience observes the heron in flight. Telling the story of the heron becomes a collaborative effort between a team on stage and audience members in the theater. The participants on stage help to find and rescue the red heron. In real-time, viewers witness on screen the interactive story unfolding inside the virtual river.

1 ON BOARDING

One of our group members will be holding an iPad, and the remaining three will be given to audience members brought onstage with us. Some participants or audience members are asked to use a tablet to fly a virtual bird over the river. Other participants control a virtual camera inside a scene. As the heron is piloted past each scene, a side-by-side simultaneous view of the heron flying and the heron as seen from the ground is shown on the projection screen. Each participant discovers an intuitive and collaborative way to interact with the virtual world. We first see (scene 1) a view of the blue heron flying over the landscape and towards the scenes located on the river. One participant (iPad 1) controls the movement of the character of the heron. The other participants (iPads 2 and 3) control the camera in their respective scenes of the virtual world. The heron flies toward scenes 2 and 3. The audience member is told to look up and finds the heron as it flies overhead. The heron will eventually land in the last person's scene. As we go from scene to scene, we will introduce aspects of the virtual environment, as well as a third character, a woman who visits the river. From there we will continue on with the story.

2 STORY

A story will be told of the blue and red herons' exploration of the river and its surrounding environment. After the red heron flies off, it enters a dry and desolate land. It becomes weak and collapses, but its feathers are swept downstream back to the blue heron. The blue heron and the lady will then embark on a search through the drylands to save the red heron. As the story progresses, the heron flights are piloted with an iPad. There are four tablets with 3D prints of flying herons passed to members of the audience. Participants use their tablets to direct the virtual camera inside a scene. The participants can decide where the heron flies and lands, and how they may rescue the red heron.

3 TECHNICAL SETUP

Motion of handheld 3D prints mounted on tablets acts as low-tech motion capture. Local network phone technology acts also as motion capture for mirroring camera movements in the virtual world. Sound and visual cues help the audience to acknowledge the receipt of interaction visible on screen. The setup includes a table with four laptops, which will be connected to the main screen via an HDMI splitter. There will be four iPads, each connected to a laptop over a local network connection using our own router and WiFi. In addition to controlling a character or a virtual camera inside a scene, the iPad allows the player to interact with the timeline of the story. A participant explores future moment of a scene by moving the cursor across the timeline manually to play ahead. A participant can also replay a scene from the beginning.

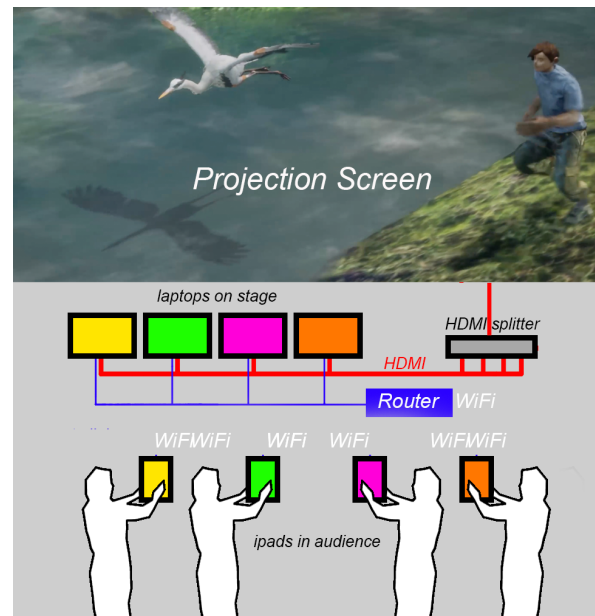


Figure 1: Representation of the technical elements of Moments in Nature

4 CREDITS

Created by Jean-Marc Gauthier and Payton Finney. Music by Alex Ho. Thank you to Emma Ferguson, Clayton Christensen and Randall Erickson.