

Pre-conference Demo Workshop “Little Red Cap”: The Authoring Process in Interactive Storytelling

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Workshop Abstract

Over the last several years, conferences in the field of interactive entertainment have showcased numerous presentations concerning concepts and technology for Interactive Digital Storytelling: runtime systems, such as story engines, intelligent / autonomous agents, drama managers and conversational systems. They focus on solutions to the problem of combining dramatic storytelling with user interactivity. In contrast to the many technical contributions concerning runtime performance, few discussions have been initiated about the question of how a new breed of “interactive storytellers” would create concrete original artefacts with the proposed systems. In our opinion, the authoring process is likely to be a serious bottleneck for generating innovative products in the future.

This workshop takes a detailed and applied look at the creative process currently associated with state-of-the-art technology. Creators, researchers and tool developers present authoring approaches, show hands-on examples of creation and discuss with each other the prospects of a shared understanding of the future production process in Interactive Digital Storytelling. Demonstrations cover the principles and usage of visual editors for non-programmers, as well as the detailed steps of using script languages in an explained design process.



In order to better compare different creative approaches and philosophies, a reference story is used, serving as a shared theme for short demonstrations: the widely

known Grimm's tale of "Little Red Cap" (German original: "Rotkäppchen"), sometimes also known as "Little Red Riding Hood". Each contributor presents a brief treatment showing his/her particular adaptation of "Little Red Cap" to the philosophy of the respective interactive storytelling system. Then, the associated authoring steps and tools are demonstrated and illustrated by means of a short piece of content prepared in advance.

Following up, plenary discussions in the context of the creative process include questions, such as:

- What is interactive storytelling, anyway?
- What is the scope of an author's work; who or what controls the resulting plot, and how?
- What constitutes the production chain in Interactive Digital Storytelling, which steps does it involve, and which cycles?
- What kind of editors and tools exist? What aspects can or could be handled by visual authoring tools, and where is programming really required?
- How does collaboration between experts of different domains work?
- Which aspect causes the biggest work load?
- How much of the process is intuition and creativity, and how much is software engineering or simply assiduity?

Participants take away valuable insight into the interactive story "factories" of others, as well as important feedback for their own work. Workshop results are subsequently reported on the Web.