

THE INTERPRESENCE PROJECT – DESIGN IN PROGRESS

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Abstract

The Interpresence Project exercises the language of communication design and mediatecture to propose planetary coalescence through complex and innovative informational flows through cyberspace allowing for human teleactive encounters.

Key words: mediatecture, interpresence, media design, teleactivity, interactive television.

The Interpresence Project – design in progress

> Meta-art

> Media-ecture

> Tele-vision

> Inter-culture

1. Research for teleactive human language

The **Interpresence Project** favours worldwide cultural integration allowing for educational projects, interactive television, teleactive events, interactional performances, and the experience of telebrations between distant cities. It integrates telecommunication, architecture, design, media integration, television, performance, linguistics, graphics and programming, with implications for cultural studies, anthropology and other human sciences.

'Interpresence' is defined as mutually sensed human telepresence made possible by audiovisual teletechnology. The curatorial concept purports the creative telepresential encounter, providing for the valorization of the Other through mutual knowledge and co-authored aesthetic experiences. 'Interpresenter' would be able to see and to be seen, to be intervisible, to listen and to be listened, to be interaudible, experiencing interpresence.

2. Interpresence vision

Interpresence represents an alternative format for global television. It introduces a political proposition, claiming a right to communicate through existing technologies that only have to be reconfigured to provide for interpresential experiences.

The long-term social design involves the gradual creation of a worldwide network of community- or university-operated educational institutions. Design and implementation will be carried out through

web-based property-free communication projects and systems triggering continuous co-evolution.

Those inter-institutional and inter-individual connections will form a pervasive web of collaboration, creativity and mutual responsibility providing the human structure needed for the unfolding of quality institutions, projects and events. The network should entail technology evaluation, systemic evolution, co-creation of scripts of events and finally the actualization of tele-events.

3. Media-designing Interspace

The experience of interpresence allows for multisensed human encounters in cyberspace. Videoconferencing terminals, specially conceived and designed, will work simultaneously and continuously providing for audio-video-data communication. Mediatectural projects for terminals should be flexible enough to permit for a variety of modes of long distance human interaction.

Teleactive systems will allow players to intercommunicate through vertical or horizontal plasma display positions. The systems will provide possibilities for intervisibility, interaudibility and interdata between local and remote players and audiences, promoting the emergence of a cybrid, dual, presential-virtual space, an entity that could be properly called interspace.

4. Mediatecture for teleactive interpresence

Each terminal will have either a vertical platform system, a horizontal platform system, with option for extending it into a mixed format, or eventually all of them. Each mediatectural project integrates a performance space, an audience space and a technical area, for equipment and personnel. Those mediaspaces have to be telematically connected to a similar entity to be fully operational, to perform their functions.

A vertical platform articulates a large plasma television monitor, held on a wall in portrait mode, with two or more videocameras,

forming one unit in a bilocal telecommunication system, allowing for body-to-body interactive conversational mode.

A horizontal platform articulates, a large plasma television monitor set over a table articulated with a video camera above pointing to the monitor, thus forming one unit in a bilocal telecommunication system, allowing for a 'table' mode interactive mode.

An extended version of this horizontal system could include one or two smaller plasma displays set exactly in front of local players articulated with a second video camera thus providing for a third vertical-horizontal interactive mode.

In the conversational face-to-face mode, teleactive interconnections are established through images of standing individuals projected in a vertical screen, set in portrait mode, allowing for real time, real size, simulated face to face, and simulated eye contact.

In the table mode, connected individuals interact through horizontal displays; the system entails interaction through objects, materials, hands, gestures, movements, drawings, written texts, calligraphy, or other visual languages ideograms. Remote presence can be sensed through voices and identified through moving hands on a table although faces are not visible.

In the third mixed mode the two vertical-horizontal possibilities may occur at the same time providing for objects and some body parts, especially hands, to be visible alternatively or simultaneously in both horizontal and vertical screens. Remote human presence becomes more intensely perceived, hands, faces and moving objects being simultaneously perceived in adjacent multiple screens.

5. Media-ecture for teleactivity

In the conversational face-to-face mode, interaction occurs between real and virtual standing individuals, intervisible in portrait mode, allowing for real time, real size, simulated face to face communication along with simulated eye contact.

A space, adjacent to the vertical platform, enables a local audience to observe the local interspace represented through two facing screens exhibiting the local-remote interplay. The audience, seated in swivel chairs, can observe players-performers, as they watch themselves, move, gesture, talk and listen to each other in two facing screens.

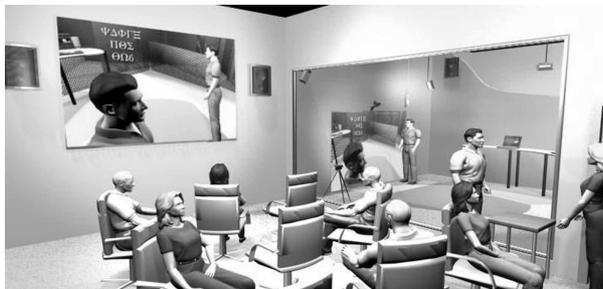


Figure 1: Vertical platform. Audience space with view through glass window to performance space.



Figure 2: Vertical platform. Remote space and protagonist in communication with local space and protagonist, forming an inhabited interspace.



Figure 3: Vertical platform. Performance space with view through glass window to audience space.

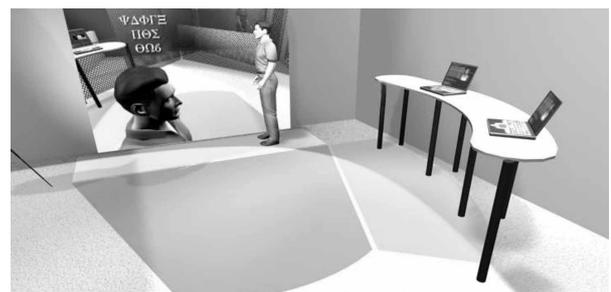


Figure 4: Vertical platform. Performance space with local and remote protagonists in communication. At right table for data exchange.

In the surface-oriented, table mode interspace, real and virtual individuals communicate through horizontal televisual displays; the system entails interaction through voices, hands, gestures, movements, objects, materials, drawings, words, calligraphy, or other visual languages. Local interpresenters perceive virtual presences at the other side of the table but seats are empty. The virtual 'Others' are invisible or faceless, yet locally sensed and 'present' through their remote manifestations at the screen-table.

The horizontal platform will also be endowed with a space, adjacent to the performance space, enabling a local audience to observe a representation of the local interspace represented by two facing screens, one above, one below, exhibiting layered images of local and remote static and moving objects, drawings, writing and acting hands.

At the third mixed vertical-horizontal platform, the virtual Others at the other side of the table become visible. Two plasma screens vertically placed provide facial and bodily representation of remote players.

At the audience space, adjacent to the performance space, interspace becomes more complex. Four interrelated screens describe horizontal interactions occurring in two interconnected table screens while the two vertical screens exhibited face-to-face and audio interactions between players in two distant terminals. The resulting interspace merges both horizontal and vertical screen-spaces providing an unheard-of audioideal interspatial experience for local and remote players and audiences.



Figure 5: Vertical-horizontal platform. Overview of complete mediatecture project, including performane and audience spaces in partial views.



Figure 6: Vertical-horizontal platform. Performance space with two players as seen through the passageway leading to the audience space.



Figure 7: Vertical-horizontal platform. Performance space with two players facing screens, interacting through diverse objects with remote players.



Figure 8: Vertical-horizontal platform. Local audience experiencing interspace, formed by four large screens, providing interrelated views of local and remote players integrated with objects they are manipulating. At the background, partial view of technical area.

6. Media design for co-evolutionary development

A permanent webpresence would enable long-term design co-evolution and quality interaction between participating involved institutions. An intercreative process will be gradually extended through net-collaboration. Concepts, designs, technologies, projects, propositions will be published as released information, as publicly-licensed property, providing for a worldwide collective planning, a linux-like co-evolutionary development of the project design.

Intervisions, teleactions and videologues would result from community and artistic initiatives supported by institutional agreements requiring complex planning and coordinated actions. Such a structure would entail a diversity of increasingly creative long-distance human encounters.

Propositions for projects, programs, events and actual tele-interactions will gradually trigger long-distance affects. As propositions and interconnections develop through networking they are mapped, categorized and data-processed. Thus, intelligent agents may enable eventual new interrelations to arise.

The project establishes a schedule for teleperformances to be enacted between players and individuals in the interconnected terminals. It foresees integrated actions, designed to actualize planned events, conceived to happen simultaneously at networked cities.