

April 12th, 2014

Final Bowtie Newsletter

Project Semester Wrap-up

Project

After a very productive semester with some up and downs, we can confidently say that despite some problems we were able to deliver a comprehensive research and a usable open source tool based on the mentioned research.

Our initial goal was to provide an interface that was going to manipulate all HERB's parameters in order to transform it into a skillful actor. As the semester advanced we started facing several technical and operational challenges but we iterated some of our initial ideas and we kept pushing to create the initial deliverable.

We finally delivered a functional interface based on the concepts of "openness" and "intensity" we researched during. Despite not being able to completely use our interface for the final May 1st performance, we had the opportunity to demonstrate how our system was more dynamic, flexible and user-friendly.

As a team, we truly believe that our interface concept and the theory in which it relies, are enough powerful to give traction to future research projects on the same body of knowledge.

Deliverables

Here is a brief description of our planned deliverables and the final outcome and the end of this semester.

1) Set of expressive animations for the May 1st performance, adjusted to meet the needs of director Sam French.

Result: We delivered approximately 60% of the animations for the May 1st final performance as well as over 100 parameterized animations.

2) A fully functioning interface that can support the needs of the performance.

Result: Not in time to be used in rehearsals, but we delivered an interface that can support the play and our parameterized actions

3) Open-source code

Result: Delivered code for our interface and parameterization plug-in to the lab.

Team and Final Thanks

Bowtie biggest lesson this semester was the value of behaving as a team, facing challenges as a team, and solving problems as a team.

This project was risky, but we assumed with seriousness and responsibility the different problems we found in our journey. Besides all the technical lessons in robotics, drama, play testing, fast prototyping and iteration techniques, we think the most valuable lesson was the importance of team work and commitment.

Since this is our final newsletter, we would like to express all our gratitude to the ETC faculty who also support us and help us to overcome problems, especially to our advisors Mike Christel and Shirley Saldamarco.

We also would also like to express our gratitude to all the people in the Personal Robotics Labs that were always very helpful and supportive.

Finally we would like to thank HERB, our beloved robot who taught us some invaluable lessons that as a team and especially as individuals we would never forget.

