

the open space in a story

Feb. 4 – Feb. 8, 2013

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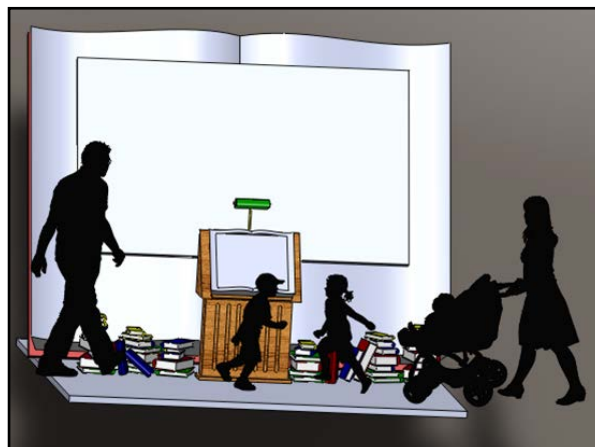
he Week in Review

With our client on board with our concept of an interactive, animated storybook that lets families insert themselves into a hero's journey, we moved this week from a concept to building proofs of concept for our projects story, art, interactions, and technology.

In terms of story and interaction, we iterated upon a story map we had devised the week prior. At first, our goal was to simplify and clarify but, we found we weren't hitting our mark—the experience didn't feel satisfying. And so we broke out Joseph Campbell again and began placing scraps of paper with story elements and bits of meta-structure written on them on a table. We shifted and added until we had the bones of a more resonant story structure that resembled a simplified version of Campbell's model.

As we worked on story, we worked in parallel on developing potential art styles. On a previous call, our client had given us one critical direction: we need to be unimimidating. Since a portion of our project requires children to draw their answers, we didn't want them feeling discouraged by art that was beyond their abilities. We wanted them to feel "I can do better than that." From this, we created two kinds of elevated child's art styles: one based on stick figures and crayons and the other on paper cut-outs for our client to review.

In terms of technology, we developed proof of concepts for two features in our experience: networking and drawing as input. The simple drawing program mentioned above will allow children to draw their answers to some ques-



A proposal for the station which will house our experience at the San Antonio Children's Museum.

tions. The networking feature will be used to send this image from a touchscreen to a local server, where it will be used for animation. Both tests were successful.

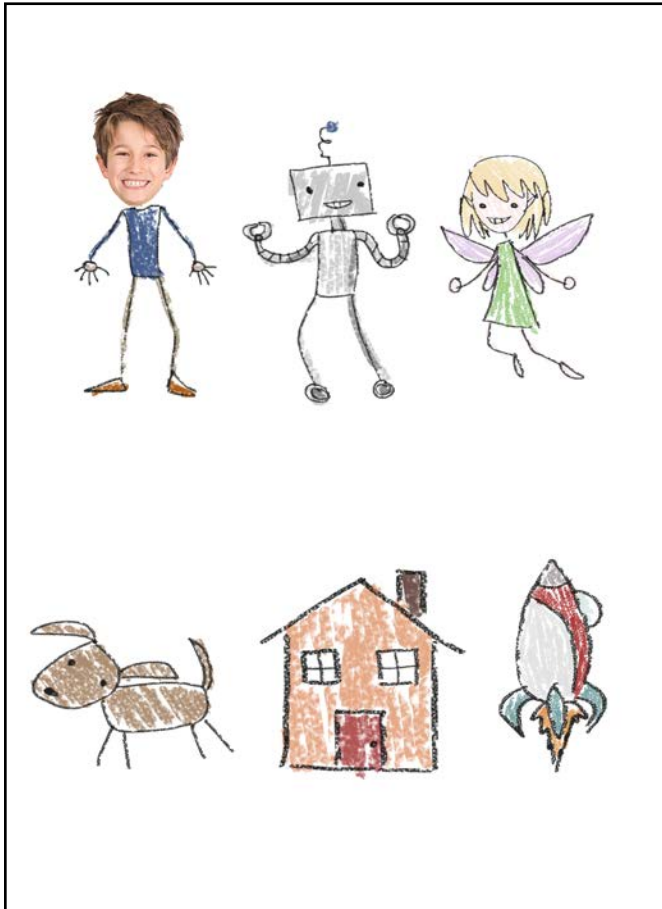
Since our project requires the we deliver a "museum ready" interactive kiosk or exhibit for play-testing at the museum this summer, we decided to tap into local resources and spoke with Ben Carter on main campus about what it would take to realize our vision and how he might be able to help. At the same time, we began developing guidelines for our design, better understanding the constraints we would need to design within, including ergonomics for children and families and the American with Disabilities Act requirements.

As usual, at the week's end we presented our progress to the client to favorable reviews. But this weekend, when we present our paper prototype in a playtest with children at the Carnegie Science Center, we find the answer to the most important question: "Do the kids like it?"

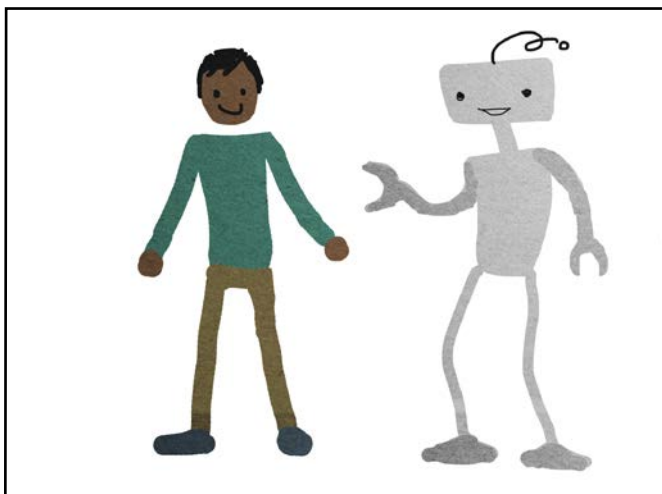


Week 4: To Proof of Concept

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Above: A crayon-style proposed art style.
Below: A paper cut-out alternative art style.



We Suggest

- Talking to our ETC forefathers. The My StoryMaker team (ETC '07) were tremendously helpful in pointing out pitfalls and sharing practical advice.
- *The Amazing Story Generator* (Chronicle Books) is an interactive book that lets readers create story prompts by flipping divide pages to select beginnings, middles, and ends (for example "As an incurable plague rages across the globe / a night watchman / meets the ghost of Ernest Hemingway.")
- Those wanting a quick refresher in the Hero's Journey should watch Matthew Winkler's four-minute animated TEDEd Talk.

The Week Ahead

We continue to move from a concept phase into a pre-production and production phase, developing the technologies and art that will drive our experience.

- On Monday we present our progress to date to faculty during Quarters presentations.
- Depending on the success of our play-test, we'll begin moving our work from paper prototype towards a digital prototype.
- At the same time, we'll be improving our paper prototype in preparation for our first client visit the week after next.

