iLand: A tangible Location Aware Narrative Experience

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Abstract

iLand is a technology enhanced location aware narrative experience that captures and exposes the rich oral culture and traditions in the Island of Madeira for a wide variety of audience in particular foreigners and tourists. Using the Madeira main city, Funchal, as a setting to bring a new level of engagement of the audience with the old part of the city and its traditional stories. With this aim in mind we designed an immersive experience in the old part of the city were the local settings and its tangible details merge with the story world and events. As the experience unfolds the audience is taken deeper into the local traditions as well as into the old part of the city. In order to achieve this we designed and produced a series of short stories carefully distributed in the real space. The experience is mediated through the Placeware location aware mobile story platform [1] to functions as a tangible interface between the local stories and architectural setting and its audience.

Keywords

Interactive narrative, Locative media, Mobile Devices, Narrative experience design

ACM Classification Keywords

J.5. Arts and Humanities, H5.2. User Interfaces.

General Terms

Design

Introduction

Stories are all around us but sometimes it's hard to access to them. Often the people who have them do not find the right opportunity or setting to share. Through the iLand project we designed an opportunity to uncover and share this stories.

iLand: the narrative experience

We started by connecting with local people part of our social network like friends and relatives asking them for stories. The stories collected in this way were colored by personal shades of drama, personal details and warmth that could not be found in formally written accounts. We selected eight stories for production, based on the potential drama and the thematic connection to religious and spiritual matters. We wanted our audience to learn about the folklore of the island and to remain open regarding the truth and the value of these folkloristic tales.

While developing the stories' plot and characters we designed the iLand LAMS experience as a whole. We targeted foreigners as well as madeiran users, as long as they not familiar with Funchal old part of town. The location chosen was Rua Santa Maria in Funchal, since it is has a mysterious as well as traditional atmosphere that fits the type of experience that we want our audience to have.

Fig. 1. Video Frames from the iLand stories.

The tangible delivery platform

As our story delivery platform we used Placeware [1], the second iteration of the system used for the MPL experience. Placeware runs on a Window Mobile, GPS enabled smart phone. It has wide touch screen that allows an easy use of a map based interface and the presentation of multimedia videos. As the application starts, a map of the place is displayed and the system obtains the GPS coordinates for the user's position, represented as a circle on the map. The circle moves as the user walks. Small dots represent the stories on the map. When the user position overlaps with the dots the phone vibrates and the dot enlarges. The user has then the option of clicking on the dot to watch the story video fragment. After watching the story the application returns to the map and the user continues the tour.
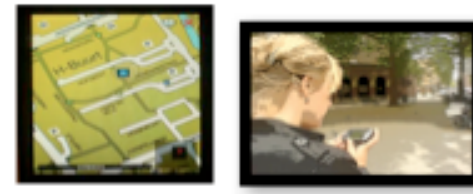

Fig. 2. Placeware interface

References

[1] Nisi, Valentina, Ian Oakley, Martine Posthuma de Boer (2010) "Locative Narratives as Experience: A New Perspective on Location Aware Multimedia Stories" in *ARTECH 2010 Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Digital Arts*, Guimarães, Portugal, 59-64.

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