

Mike Brinker  
CTIN 532/534 Interactive Proposal  
Final Project Description and Schedule

Type: Interactive Experiment / Installation Art Piece

Title: "VCR Mentality"

Physical Description:

The installation itself is rather large, measuring about 6 feet wide by 8 feet tall. The illusion is that the installation is massive, when the actual physical properties of it are quite small. It is composed of several audio/video rack mount cabinets that are actually constructed out of wood to match that of a real audio/video rack installation. Within these fake rack-mounted cabinets will be lots of old video and audio control deck faces. They will contain a massive amount of buttons, switches, knobs, levers, LED's and digital readout displays. Next to this installation will be a small TV set and a simple looking VCR. Next to the VCR will be a VHS tape labeled, "Play Me". It sits freely on the table beside the VCR, in plain view.

Basic Interactivity:

The viewer/user is allowed to touch, push, play, fiddle and mess with any and every control function associated with the piece. Most every button, knob, lever and switch will give the viewer/user some sort of auditory or visual feedback, mostly relating to the particular function that goes with its' own label. IE, the play button will, when pressed, will activate the LED within the button, signifying that it is indeed switched on. What the user will not get is the correct feedback, which is the tape playing on the VCR.

In order for the viewer/user to play the tape in the VCR, they must insert the tape into the deck, push the play button on that particular deck...and wait at least five to ten minutes without pushing any buttons anywhere else in order to see the video.

Purpose:

The purpose of this interactive art piece is to challenge the user to not automatically press buttons when something appears to function incorrectly. This will be frustrating for the user, but ultimately will lead to discoveries about the system and the eventual reward of a video sequence. This piece can be looked at as an experiment or as a piece of art, but overall as the ultimate test of ones knee jerk reactions.

History:

As a student worker at the Robert Zemeckis Center for Digital Arts, I have seen many students, TA's, CA's and Professors try and operate projector equipment and audio visual systems in the same manner as I have described above involving "VCR Mentality". If

something doesn't automatically work for them, they begin to "press buttons" in order to remedy the problem. This only makes things worse!!!

System Functionality:

The system will actually function on a simple countdown timer when the actual VCR play button is pressed. When this occurs, a timer will start to count down from about 3 to 5 minutes, when this timer reaches zero, the stand-a-lone VCR will begin to play the video. The catch is; whenever a button is pushed, or a lever flipped, the system will add 5 or 10 seconds to the counter.

Programming:

Through MAX/MSP and Jitter 1.0, the video effects can be achieved. This may need to be hooked up through the serial port of the machine and a basic stamp may need to be added to support the addition of the timer. The video effects must also be run through a video out port on the computer to the television.

Work Schedule:

All junk components found and organized:	October 31 <sup>st</sup> , 2003
All wiring completed:	November 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
All programming completed:	November 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2003
Installation finalized and tweaked:	November 29th, 2003