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the open space in a story

Jan 28 – Feb 1, 2013

The Week in Review

In our third week, we shifted from broad brainstorming to a developing a more narrow proposal for a "story creator" for six to 10-year-olds based on our client's feedback.

Early in the week, we received feedback from our clients, the San Antonio Children's Museum and Argyle Designs, on a presentation we had given the previous Friday. As we had hoped, the presentation, which presented three disparate ideas using different technologies and approaches to storytelling, gave us a shared language to talk about the project's possibilities, the clients goals, and the constraints.

We used the clients' input to begin looking for overlaps: what did the clients consistently like? What did they dislike? What seemed to be their criteria for success? We now knew that what our clients wanted was something designed for "family style" collaboration, a space where kids could participate in storytelling alone or with Mom and Dad. We knew while open-ended, unstructured free play storytelling was interesting, for our client's purposes a linear approach was probably best. We knew that whatever we created, kids should not only be able to participate in the story, they should be able to "see" themselves within it. Finally, we knew we needed to provide kids with a strong sense of accomplishment after they had finished.

From this, we developed an idea that blended the best elements of each of our prior ideas into a single idea we would pitch at the end of the week, tentatively called "myHero Journey." Inspired by Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey
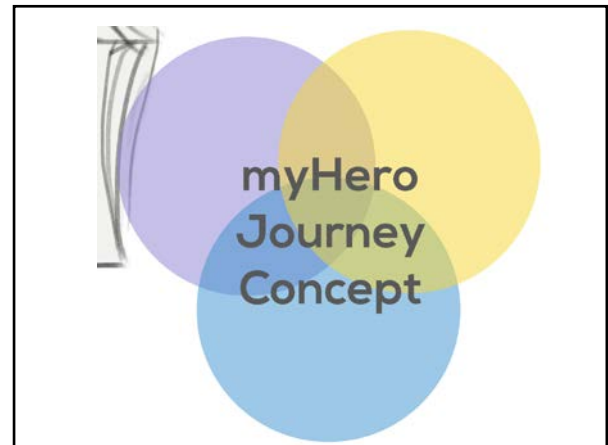
We present our latest concept as a blend of what our clients liked best about thee previous ideas

structure, we sought to present an idea that let kids do what they do best—be wild and imaginative—while offering a scaffolding to help them with one of the more challenging parts of storytelling: structure.

Simultaneously, we were able to look more seriously at technology, building on last week's work. We began looking more deeply at "surface computing," augmented reality, and touch and tablet technology, assessing what could be show-ready in thirteen weeks. At the end of the week, we presented our findings, along with a strong recommendation for tablet or touchscreen interfaces and pricing during the client phone call.

At the same time as we were building on our product work, we built upon the logo we created in the first week and designed a more complete brand identity. At a seminar on Friday, we presented this to our peers and faculty to mostly positive reviews.
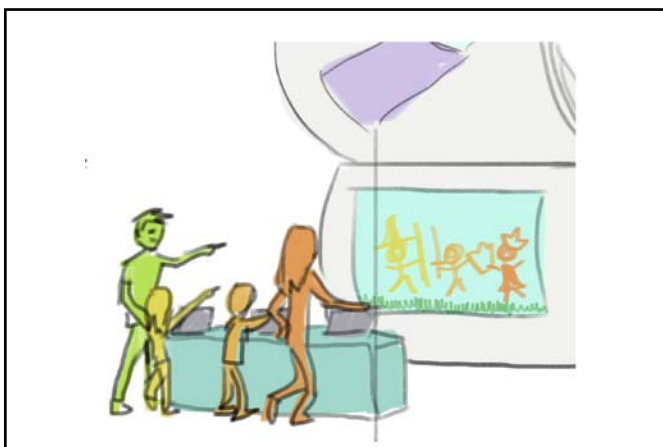
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Week 3: Rapid Prototyping

February 1, 2013
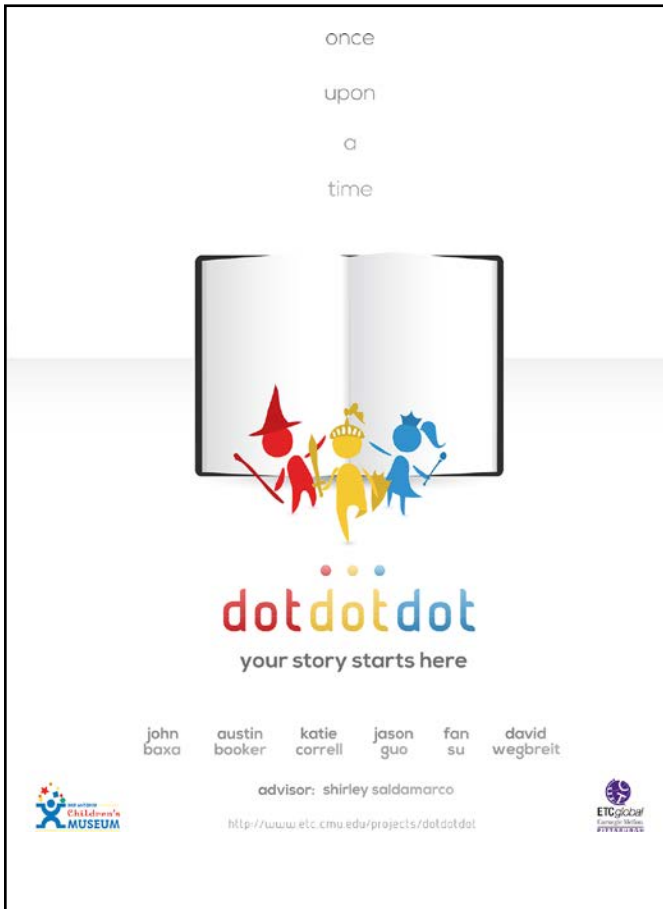
Above: A final version of our project poster.
Below: Concept art for our proposed exhibit.

We Suggest

- Studio for Creative Inquiry is right here at Carnegie Mellon and well worth a look.
- Double Fine's "Costume Quest" (XBox, PS3, and Windows) has great art and a playful tone.
- Slap That Zombie isn't a great game, but motion detection in the titular action is pretty amazing.
- For team's looking for an afforable group meal, look across the river to OTB (Over The Bar) Bicycle Cafe for Monday's $5 burger night.

The Week Ahead

With a go ahead on our concept from our client, we'll begin further developing our concept. We will:

- Prepare paper prototypes, which we plan to test internally throughout the week before presenting to children in the target demographic at a playtest during next weekend
- Begin demoing some of the core technology behind our project
- Work with main campus to better understand the build requirements of our proposed ideas
- Develop on art styles to present to the client