

Preface

In September 2001, we organized the 1st International Conference on Virtual Storytelling in Avignon, France. This was the first international scientific event entirely devoted to the new discipline that links the ancient human art of storytelling to the latest high technologies of the Virtual Reality era.

Since this date, technology has not slowed its course. We all know that personal computers are even more powerful, but there have been huge advances in graphics boards. These are now programmable and can render in real time huge quantities of data as well as special effects that until recently required a dedicated graphics superworkstation. Applications that were in the research lab have now come to market. 3D Virtual Humans, the heroes of today's video games, are taking their first steps on e-business Web sites. These will be the stars of tomorrow. New topics are being intensively researched, especially, mixed and enhanced realities – the art of combining synthesized with real worlds.

This evolution raises many technical, applicational, artistic and even ethical questions. The occasion of the 2nd International Conference on Virtual Storytelling provided an excellent opportunity to once again gather researchers from the scientific, artistic and industrial communities to demonstrate new methods and techniques. This was the venue to show the latest results, and exchange concepts and ideas about the use of Virtual Reality technologies for creating, populating, rendering and interacting with stories, whatever their form, be it theatre, movie, cartoon, advertisement, puppet show, multimedia work, video games, etc.

We believe that participants in Virtual Storytelling 2003 found exciting guidelines for future scientific and artistic research as well as ideas for new applications and developments. Because Virtual Storytelling is a rapidly expanding discipline, new conferences are expected to be organized very soon to update the state of the art!

Toulouse, November 2003

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Acknowledgement

Organizing a conference on Virtual Storytelling was a joint initiative of the Virtual Reality Department of the Communications et Systèmes Group and the French Working Group on Virtual Reality (GT-RV).

However, Virtual Storytelling 2003 only came about thanks to the financial support of the IST Programme of the European Commission, of Grand Toulouse, the Paul Sabatier University of Toulouse, and the University of Glasgow. We really want to thank them all for offering the opportunity to organize a conference on so innovative a topic.

We would also like to thank the Eurographics Organization for supporting the conference as well as the members of the Scientific and Application Board who helped the organizers to define the conference topics, and proposed names of experts for the Program Committee. The members of the Program Committee deserve special acknowledgments for their amazing reviews of the large number of papers that were submitted (three times what we had initially expected!).

Last, but not least, we had the pleasure to welcome two companies, Immersion SA and NVIDIA Corporation, that offered prizes for Best Paper and Best Demonstration.

Finally, our thanks to the organization people from Sophie et Associés for their help during the conference preparation.

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