

Workshop 3

Escaping Reality?!

Organizers

Matthias Rauterberg

Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands

Wijnand Ijsselsteijn

Eindhoven University of Technology, The Netherlands

Huib de Ridder

Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands

Abstract

This workshop will focus on the human experience when interacting with different media, such as virtual reality, computer games, simulation rides, television shows, radio programmes, or books. On the one hand, many of these media attempt to represent reality as convincingly as possible, whereas on the other hand many people seek out these media to escape reality, to become immersed in a different world. Media differ considerably along various dimensions. For instance, the amount of immersion offered to the user, the level of interactivity, the realism of the reproduction, or the nature and complexity of the narrative. However, the effects on the user of the interaction between the (technological) form of media, and the content they represent, are still ill understood. It is of particular interest under what conditions the user is willing to suspend disbelief. Additionally, users also differ in significant ways themselves. Not only in age, gender, experience, or ability, but also in cultural background. For instance, a recent paper (Shirabe & Baba, 1997; Proceedings HCI international '97) underlined the relevance of cross-cultural comparisons by arguing that U.S. and Japanese video games differ considerably in the way they try to involve the user: "US video games connect players with their world by their "reality," while Japanese ones use the player's empathy" (p. 851).

Escaping Reality?! aims to bring together researchers and practitioners from various disciplines and cultural backgrounds to explore these issues in depth, and to arrive at a common understanding of what drives subjective experiences such as excitement, involvement, presence, or flow.