

Aaron C. May

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Research Focus

Whole-body natural user interfaces such as the Microsoft Kinect show great promise because they don't require mastery of a complicated physical controller to operate. However, because they lack affordances such as joysticks or buttons, these user interfaces may be confusing to a new user. I am interested in assessing the intuitiveness and learnability of different interaction sets for natural user interfaces.

Education

September 2012-
Present

Simon Fraser University

MA Candidate in Interactive Arts and Technology

The School of Interactive Arts + Technology

A School of Interactive Arts + Technology (SIAT) education combines the science of human experience, the analysis of media and culture, the creation of original and experimental works of art, and the implementation of new technologies. I am supervised by Dr. Alissa Antle in the TECI lab.

August 2008-
December 2010

Washington State University Vancouver

BA in Digital Technology & Culture

The Creative Media & Digital Culture Program

Anchored within the field of digital media with emphasis on the intersection of art, technology, and the humanities, the Creative Media & Digital Culture (CMDC) Program features a strong interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary focus across Humanities, Communication, and Computer Science. The Program emphasizes undergraduate research expressed through creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving and aims to educate the next generation of digital media leaders and entrepreneurs.

3.81 cumulative GPA (equivalent to first-class honours)

Employment

January 2011-
August 2012

Washington State University Vancouver

The Creative Media & Digital Culture Program Research/Lab Assistant

Employed to address hardware and software needs in three cutting-edge multimedia labs used for The CMDC Program's courses, including web design and development, 2 and 3D animation, video and sound production, motion-tracking environments, and electronic literature archives, along with other types of applications. I also acted as a liaison to students, explored partnerships with local businesses and organizations, conceived, planned, and executed program events, and assisted the program director in all other aspects.

January 2011-
August 2012

Dick Hannah Dealerships

Social Media Strategist

Employed to oversee the social media-based efforts of the largest family-owned auto dealer group in the state of Washington. In this capacity, I engaged with customers through social networking services, developed corporate best practices and policies, monitored online reputation, attended community events, and established relationships with local organizations and businesses.

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Research

September 2013

Presenter at International Games Innovation Conference 2013

Presented original research in the paper *A Mixed-Methods Evaluation of Nonverbal Communication in Collaborative Video Games* at the IEEE Games Innovation Conference (IGIC) 2013. The paper explored how players used their hands to communicate while playing a two-player version of the classic game *Snake*.

May 2013-
Present

Youtopia Research Assistant

Acted as a Research Assistant for Dr. Alissa Antle's Youtopia Project, a hybrid tangible and multi-touch activity developed to get children to work together and communicate on sustainability and environmental planning. I worked with a team of other researchers to deploy Youtopia in classrooms, facilitate the user studies, develop new video coding frameworks, and analyze the resulting data.

October 2011-
January 2012

Electronic Literature Exhibit Curator's Assistant and Docent

Aided Dr. Dene Grigar, Dr. Kathi Berens, and Dr. Lori Emerson in the creation of the Electronic Literature Exhibit for the 2012 Modern Language Association Conference. The exhibit compiled significant works spanning more than forty years of electronic literature in categories such as *Experiments With Form*, *Literary Games*, and *Multimodal Poetry*. A variety of hardware, including mobile devices, were necessary to display the works. My primary responsibilities included managing the technical aspects of the machines and acting as a docent for mobile and geolocative works.

October 2011

Teaching Mobile Design Panelist

Acted as a representative of Washington State University Vancouver's The Creative Media & Digital Culture Program and Dick Hannah Dealerships during the *Teaching Mobile Design* panel at the 2011 International Digital Media and Arts Association (IDMAA) Conference. The panel presented our findings on the successful completion of the Mobile Tech Research Initiative conducted during the Summer 2011 semester. My role was to comment on the relationship between the initiative's business and education aspects.

September 2011-
August 2012

Social Media Report Cards

Developed Report Cards that evaluate a business or individual's efforts on a variety of Social Networking Services. Theoretically, consistent monitoring of vital metrics combined with follow-up training for online asset managers will lead to an increase in skills, capability, and influence. Some of the challenges with this project included balancing the reporting system so it is both informative for the asset managers and accessible enough for their less-savvy supervisors, adapting the target scores to constantly changing Social Media platforms, and fairly incorporating feedback from the assortment of brands and individuals that utilize the system.

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Additional Research

March 2011-
July 2011

Mobile Tech Research Initiative Research Assistant

Acted as Research Assistant to the Director of the Mobile Tech Research Initiative, an intensive 12-week program focused on teaching the design and development of mobile applications and introducing a new local creative industry- the creation of mobile apps for small businesses. Responsibilities included solving software/hardware needs and managing the relationships among students, faculty, and the Initiative's benefactor- Dick Hannah Dealerships.

January 2011-
August 2012

Digital Commons

Conceptualized and supervised the development of *Digital Commons*, an online social platform created exclusively for The Creative Media & Digital Culture Program's students. The project's start stemmed from the question, "What if school was more like a game?" *Digital Commons* assigns achievements for course completion, community service, and other constructive pursuits and aims to build community, showcase efforts, and increase involvement within The CMDC Program.

August 2010-
December 2010

MOVE Lab Fellow

Participated in and acted as Project Manager for a team of advanced undergraduates working in Dr. Dene Grigar's Motion-Tracking Virtual Environment (MOVE) Lab. The MOVE Lab is used for the production of sensor-based multimedia experiences, including performances, digital storytelling, exhibits, and physical games. The MOVE Lab Fellows' work culminated in the creation of *Media Scare*, an all-digital interpretation of the haunted house. In addition to being featured in campus publications and local news articles, *Media Scare* was one of the five projects that earned WSUV the Honorable Mention award at the 2010 International Digital Media and Arts Association Conference Student Showcase.

Awards

June 2013

Digital Humanities Summer Institute Tuition Scholarship

Awarded a \$450 Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI) 2013 Tuition Scholarship to attend the course *3D Modeling for the Digital Humanities and Social Sciences* taught by John Bonnett. We were instructed in using SketchUp to create digital versions of historical, now non-existent, buildings.

March 2012

Graduate Student Entrance Scholarship

Awarded a \$10,000 Graduate Student Entrance Scholarship for the 2012-2013 academic year by the Simon Fraser University Senate Graduate Awards Adjudication Committee. From the offer letter, "There were a large number of excellent nominees; succeeding in this competition is a significant accomplishment."

August 2011

HASTAC Scholar

Selected as a Humanities, Arts, Science, and Technology Advanced Collaboratory (HASTAC) Scholar. This program is comprised of graduate and undergraduate students engaged with innovative projects at the intersection of digital media and learning.

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Additional Awards

March 2011

Washington State University Academic Showcase

The system-wide committee for Washington State University's Academic Showcase accepted five projects from the Vancouver campus' CMDC Program. I created or had significant responsibilities for three of them (*Media Scare*, *Fort Vancouver Mobile Project*, and *Collegetown*).

December 2010

Graduated Magna Cum Laude from Washington State University Vancouver

Earned the distinction Magna Cum Laude upon graduation, after being placed on the President's Honor Roll all five semesters at Washington State University Vancouver.

November 2010

Honorable Mention, 2010 IDMAA Conference Student Showcase

Washington State University Vancouver's CMDC Program was awarded Honorable Mention for the five projects it presented in the 2010 International Digital Media and Arts Association (IDMAA) Conference Student Showcase. I created or had significant responsibilities for two of the five projects (*Media Scare* and *Fort Vancouver Mobile Project*). The Honorable Mention award had never been given and was created to acknowledge the WSUV undergraduates' breadth of research, applied knowledge, and zeal.

Teaching

September 2013-
December 2013

IAT309W Writing for Design, Teaching Assistant for Chantal Gibson

Marked and graded undergraduate writing with the aim of developing students toward stronger communication skills. Facilitated class discussions about critical thinking and media.

May 2013-
July 2013

IAT309W Writing for Design, Teaching Assistant for Chantal Gibson

Marked and graded undergraduate writing with the aim of developing students toward stronger communication skills. Facilitated class discussions about critical thinking and media.

January 2013-
April 2013

IAT309W Writing for Design, Teaching Assistant for Chantal Gibson

Marked and graded undergraduate writing with the aim of developing students toward stronger communication skills. Facilitated class discussions about critical thinking and media.

June 2012

Digital Humanities Projects for the Mobile Environment Co-Instructor

Acted as co-instructor of the *Creating Digital Humanities Projects for the Mobile Environment* course at Digital Humanities Summer Institute (DHSI) 2012. Solved hardware and software needs for participants with a variety of academic backgrounds and technical skills and contributed to class discussions as a hardware expert.

February 2012

DTC466 Digital Video Editing, Guest Instructor for Dr. Will Luers

Facilitated a class discussion on the technical and narrative techniques used by filmmaker Josh Fox in his documentary, *Gasland*.

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Additional Teaching

- October 2011 **DTC336 Composition & Design, Guest Instructor for Dr. Dene Grigar**
Continued to oversee the annotation of electronic literature pieces that had been selected for an Electronic Literature Exhibit at the 2012 Modern Language Association Conference.
- September 2011 **DTC336 Composition & Design, Guest Instructor for Dr. Dene Grigar**
Oversaw the annotation of electronic literature pieces that had been selected for an Electronic Literature Exhibit at the 2012 Modern Language Association Conference.
- September 2011 **DTC375 Language Texts & Technology, Guest Instructor for Frank Mungeam**
Evaluated student presentations of Comic Without Words, an exercise that required them to make a word-free comic strip that remediated a previously selected (and memorized) passage of text.
- September 2011 **DTC354 Digital Storytelling, Guest Lecturer for Dr. Dene Grigar**
Demonstrated the technology and capabilities of the Motion-Tracking Virtual Environment (MOVE) Lab. Spoke about using audio and visual cues to guide players through an empty space.
- August 2011 **DTC338 Social Media, Guest Lecturer for Dr. Kathi Inman Berens**
Managed an online discussion about some of the benefits and dangers that come with the territory of Social Media. Utilized online learning software that incorporated an editable whiteboard with audio and video chat for remote face-to-face.
- March 2011 **DTC475 Digital Diversity, Guest Lecturer for Dr. Dene Grigar**
Conducted a live demonstration of popular video games, including Grand Theft Auto and Halo. Spoke about the depiction of gender, race, and socio-economic status in modern games.
- February 2011 **DTC354 Digital Storytelling, Guest Lecturer for Dr. Dene Grigar**
Demonstrated the technology and capabilities of the Motion-Tracking Virtual Environment (MOVE) Lab. Spoke about using audio and visual cues to guide players through an empty space.
- February 2011 **DTC477 Advanced Multimedia Authoring, Guest Lecturer for Dr. Will Luers**
Demonstrated the technology and capabilities of the Motion-Tracking Virtual Environment (MOVE) Lab. Spoke about the difficulties designing and programming for three-dimensional space.
- August 2010-
December 2010 **DTC475 Digital Diversity (online), Teaching Assistant for Dr. Dene Grigar**
Received, sorted, and logged student assignments, communicated with students about course/material questions and concerns, helped problem-solve the issues that came with a new instruction format.

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Additional Teaching

August 2010-
December 2010

DTC336 Composition & Design, Teaching Assistant for Professor Kathi Rick

Oversaw student development in the areas of graphic design, technical writing, and concept execution. Guest lectured on corporate graphic identity and design, particularly through automobiles.

January 2010-
June 2010

DTC475 Digital Diversity, Teaching Assistant for Professor Kathi Rick

Tracked student participation in class discussions, evaluated presentations, encouraged critical thinking, and ran an online discussion group to extend the impact of engaging topics.

Summary

I am a reliable and good-natured individual continuing my academic career in a top-tier learning environment. With extensive experience developing new ideas and adapting to a variety of digital technologies, I delight in analyzing problems for improved alternatives to the status quo. I have experience with digital composition and design, social media marketing, server management, multimedia production, writing, and teaching. I enjoy exploring all aspects of multimedia culture, but am particularly interested in user interaction and game studies.