

# An Overview of My Research Activities

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Presented to my friends and colleagues in HCI/D  
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# The Grand Questions

# My Broad Agenda

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- What is “humanistic informatics”?
  - Is it the same as “cultural computing”?
- How does humanistic informatics mesh with HCI/D?
- Where does “new media” fit into all this?

# Humanistic Informatics, according to me

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- Explores the concepts and issues of the humanities, as they relate to computing
- Adapts and adopts the methodologies of the humanities to contribute to the interpretation, criticism, and analysis of computing

# Humanistic Informatics: Concepts and Issues

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- Aesthetics, or the experience of pleasure and self-improvement
- Ideology, the construction of worlds, and the place of social justice
- Identity, the reception/experience of interfaces and the construction of self
- Authorship, or the agency of creativity

# Humanistic Informatics: Methodologies

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- Semiotics

- Explicating relationships of meaning among people, technologies, and artifacts
- What are the underlying structures that enable the emergence of significance from interfaces/interactions?
- To what extent does “intentionality” or “agency” lie not in human cognition but in systems?
- What is a meme? Where do they come from and what is their significance?

- Phenomenology

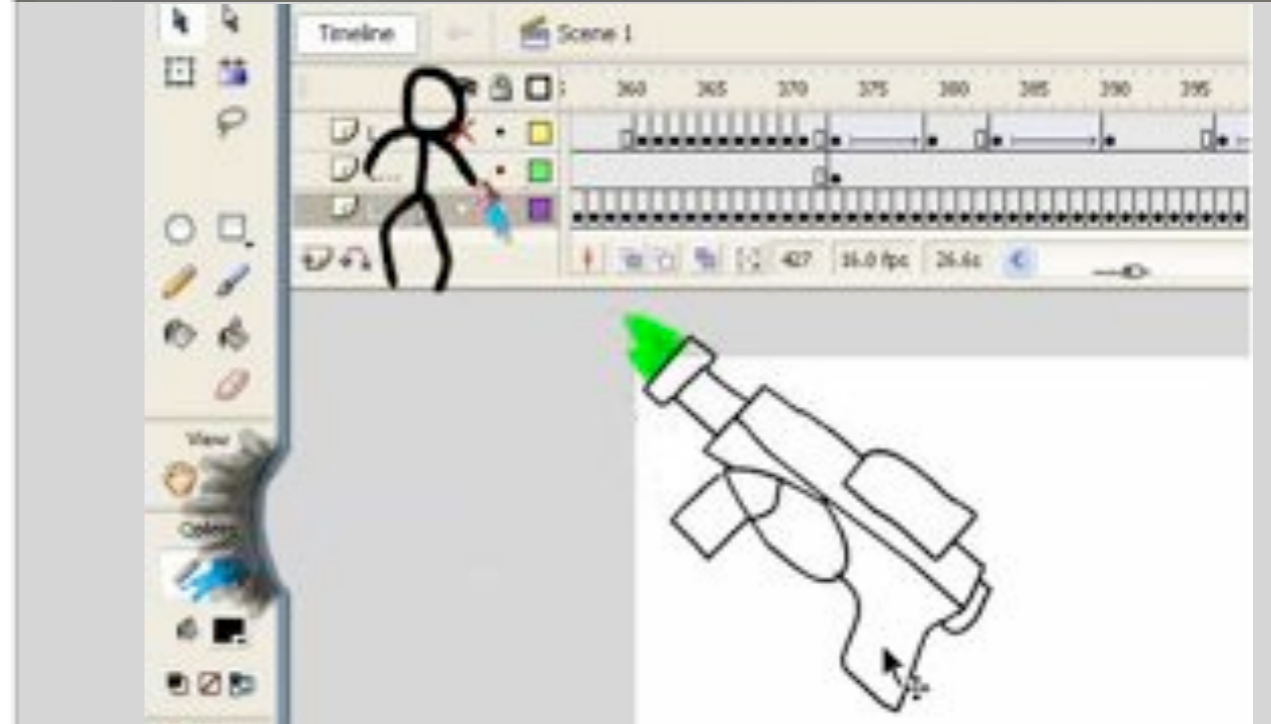
- How do the lifeworlds and horizons of designers become embedded in designs?
- How do users fuse their horizons with those embedded in interfaces?
- How are interfaces subjectively experienced?
  - When they work?
  - When they break down?
  - When they lead to unpredictable or emergent results?

Projects

# Amateur Multimedia (AMM)

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- What is the value of AMM for its community?
- What are the conditions of its possibility?
- How can AMM help us understand ways that multimedia authoring software “projects” a notion of creativity?
- How do amateurs theorize about their multimedia, and what is the significance of amateur theorization of amateur multimedia?



# Amateur Multimedia Publications

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- Bardzell, J. (Forthcoming). Creativity in Amateur Multimedia: Popular Culture, Critical Theory, and HCI. *Human Technology: An International Journal on Humans in ICT Environments*, Volume 2 (2).
- Bardzell, J. (2006). Emerging Aesthetics of Amateur Multimedia. *Perform.Media*, Bloomington, IN.
- Bardzell, J. (2006). Creativity in Amateur Multimedia: Popular Culture, Critical Theory, and HCI. *Symposium on Culture and Creativity, HCI 2006*, London, UK.
- Bardzell, J., and Bardzell, S. (2005). Fostering Creativity in Learning Media: Applying Insights Learned From Creative Design Software. *Ed Media 2005 World Conference on Educational Multimedia, Hypermedia & Telecommunications*, Montreal, Canada.
- Paolillo, J. and Bardzell, J. (2005). Humor, Multimedia and the Internet: the 'Numa Numa' Phenomenon. *International Society of Humor Studies*. Youngstown, OH.





Machinima and the Evolution of “Machinimatic Language”



# Machinima and the Evolution of “Machinimatic Language”

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- Where is machinima as an art form today, and where is it going?
  - How do existing features of technologies contribute to its meaning (or, more fundamentally, capacity for meaning)?
  - Machinima is born of the interaction between cinematic expression and video game play. How does machinima deal with the deep incompatibilities between these two logics?
  - Beyond entertainment and self-expression, how can machinima be useful for “serious” computing, such as its use as a platform for virtual video prototyping?
- Publications & Conferences
    - Bardzell, J., Ryan, W., & Bardzell, S. (Forthcoming). Radical Game Play: The Confrontation Between Machinima Platforms and Filmmakers. Book chapter: *The Machinima Reader*. Ed. H. Lowood and M. Nitsche. Cambridge: MIT Press.
    - Bardzell, J., Bardzell, S., Briggs, C., Makice, K., Ryan, W., & Weldon, M. (2006). Machinima Prototyping: An Approach to Evaluation. *NordiCHI 2006*, Oslo, Norway.

# Online Identity Construction as a Techno-Aesthetic

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- Online identity is often studied as a psychological (e.g., Turkle) or a sociological phenomenon (e.g., Nakamura)
- It can also be seen as an aesthetic phenomenon (the design of the self as a form of beauty); Foucault (*History of Sexuality*) talks about the construction and maintenance of identity as an aesthetic activity
- Can we view the design and development of avatars as a form of amateur multimedia? Yes!
- If we combine Foucault's notion of the aesthetics of sexual self-formation with what I've learned from other amateur multimedia research, what is likely to occur?
- Hypothesis: Tools of avatar creation/ customization (body, gender, race, and class pickers; appearance sliders; clothing options; backstory; RP servers; clan membership; parasitic forms, etc.) shape the meaning of identities much as primitives shape AMM.



# Online Identity Construction as a Techno-Aesthetic

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- Publications

- Bardzell, J. (2006). Identity Traveling: The Aesthetics of Self in Second Life. *Trials & Tribulations: Negotiating Research Methods in Cyberspace*, Montreal, Quebec.
- Bardzell, S., & Bardzell, J. (2006). Sex-Interface-Aesthetics: The Docile Avatars and Embodied Pixels of Second Life BDSM. *CHI 2006 World Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, Montreal, Quebec.



# Fanergy™: A VR Platform for Sports Fans

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# Fanergy™: A VR Platform for Sports Fans

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- Design of a platform for sports fans
- Would be a multi-million dollar project, if it ever happens
- Lots of hands-on design work and design research
  - Rapid ethnography
  - Dialogue and collaboration with industry partners
    - Indianapolis Colts
    - Mad Doc software
- Evaluation
  - Comps and demos
  - RL experiments
  - Machinima prototyping
- Publications & Conferences
  - Bardzell, S., Bardzell, J., Ryan W. (2006). Double Dribble: Mixed reality game design for sports informatics. *International Conference on Entertainment Computing*, Cambridge, UK, September 2006.
  - Bardzell, J., Bardzell, S., Birchler, C. & Ryan, W. Double Dribble: Evaluating the Design Direction for a Mixed Reality Environment. Submitted to CHI 2007 (under review).

# Grand Themes

# Research Themes Going Forward

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- The role of multimedia authoring software
  - In creativity
  - In design
  - As the basis for the “digital materiality” of our arts
- Restoring a rich conceptualization of aesthetics in a discipline (HCI) that has given it short change
- Exploring entertainment technologies from many perspectives as a key new frontier of cultural computing
- Discovering connections among diverse theoretical traditions, with the project of “fusing” their implied “horizons” (if one may speak so of theoretical traditions, instead of people)
- I don’t believe that people exist (not literally true)

