the illustrations

COMMUNICATION, ART, AND AESTHETICS:
Communicative Art and Today's Classroom

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vancements of the digital age.   Accordingly, communicative art is growing in
portance and focus from industries across the board. In universities across the
tion, academic knowledge is advancing, and so too should the methods with which
resented. The most direct and effective way to accomplish this goal is to reach the
university and collegiate students. The aim of *the Illustrations* is to reach out to educators in these
institutions, in order to promote and assist their usage of communicative art through technology in the
classroom.

Background

In August 1998 the German Federal Ministry for Science and Research commissioned a
feasibility study that eventually resulted in the project known as CAT, Communication of Art and
Technology. The core of CAT's research came from the notion that the relationship between
aesthetics and communication had changed in a digital age; today, "aesthetics no longer allies
itself with art but rather with communication." The study focused not on the development or
display of software itself, but rather, "how experiences of artists, scientists and designers with
information technology systems can be made sensory and meaningful for today's society." CAT
eventually developed a focus on the exchange and development of expertise, and the crossing of
discipline boundaries. The belief developed that while our technological age can readily develop
media infrastructure, the content areas—art, education, entertainment, or public relations—also
require the same development and advancement. Without this we can hardly see an interaction
between the content and the architecture which presents the content.

Here, *the Illustrations* step forward. Looking at the research pioneered by CAT, our goal is to
assist in the process of advancing the understanding of the development of communicative art in
the content areas outlined by CAT above. The most direct and effective way to achieve this goal
is to reach out to the future developers of this content by working with institutions of higher
education. At universities world wide efforts are constantly being made to advance the thought
process of each discipline. While these advancements are made, so too should the
advancements in the knowledge of students regarding the media infrastructures available to
them.

As college graduates enter the workforce today they must be prepared in ways past generations
could only imagine. The business world is turning to technology to create an environment like
none other seen before. It is of great benefit for graduates to be well versed in this digital age's
opportunities. But more important than knowing simply how to use technology is knowing how to
use it appropriately and to ones best advantage. Full emersion in a comparable environment
while being educated is clearly the best way to prepare students.

In a world where multimedia is becoming the norm, college graduates must have at least a familiarity with communicative art. Whether their specialization is in social sciences, art, science, or in the public sector they must be prepared to interpret and utilize media to its fullest. This makes for better employees, and at a growing rate employers want to see this. Colleges and universities can make this happen. Budget is a complicated issue for the largest and smallest of institutions, but the enrichment of the quality of education is never a negotiable issue. Emerging graduates will enter the workforce understanding that in this highly visual world they must develop the content and the delivery of the message for it to be interpreted fully. Assisting in the preparation of this goal is a priceless endeavor with incalculable future economic benefit.

Research

Education is one of the most pressing issues our society can address. The impact is tremendous and long reaching. Accordingly, in order to appropriately address the needs of today's academic it is important to understand teaching theories and methodologies which are currently in place. Communicative art is in and of itself a growing field in the business world, and today we see new businesses emerging with "new media" as their platform or specialization. Understanding the needs of both of these environments in order to address ways to assist their correlation is fundamental in our mission. The following is a sample of the information garnished regarding education, technology, and art.

Academic Resources:

AODR. "Learning Theories"
        http://www.aodr.com/Reference/Education/Methods_and_Theories/Learning_Theories/

This page is run by AODR, an online directory of resources and this section is devoted almost exclusively to the varying types of learning theories currently and most commonly in practice. As stated on their site, "learning is the absorption, transfer, or acquisition of data, information, or knowledge. A Theory is like a clump of interrelated ideas. Theories are somewhat different from philosophy (more pragmatic and testable). Learning theories are about how people learn. They are not philosophies of education which are more about what should be taught or how the education system should work."

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. "Knowledge Media Laboratory,"
        http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/KML/index.htm.

The Carnegie Foundation for the advancement of Teaching's K*nowledge Media Laboratory* contains a gallery of teaching and learning. Making Teaching Public and Creating Networks for the development of web-based tools and resources that make it possible for faculty to create,

critique, and exchange the knowledge they need to transform their schools and institutions into high-powered communities of practice and reflection.

http://www.unc.edu/cit/infobits/index.html

CIT Infobits is an electronic services of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill ITS Center for Instructional Technology. Each month the CIT's Information Resources Consultant monitors and selects from a number of information resources and instructional technology resources and provides brief notes for electronic dissemination to educators.

Jackson, John, "Teaching with Multimedia: Methods, Tools, Compromises and Payoffs," University of Virginia School of Medicine, last revised November 4, 2004. http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/ome/edtech/teachingWmultimedia.cfm.

This site is operated by the University of Virginia School of Medicine, and last revised on November 4, 2004 by Jogn Jackson, M.Ed., Director of Educational Technology. It contains an extensive overview of teaching with multimedia, and touches on the use of multiple forms, including slide presentations, digital video, converting lecture handouts, using PDF files, practice questions, online testing, plug-ins for Netscape and Internet Explorer, case simulations, as well as the use of Java and JavaScript in the classroom. Also, there is discussion on linking case simulations, practice quizzes, study images, movies, sounds and animations with descriptions and multiple levels of magnification, teaching modules, links to related web sites and grades. The educational multimedia includes designing an effective educational product that meets teaching needs, scanning images, building animations, digitizing and editing video and putting the whole package together.

Science for All Americans Online. "Effective Learning and Teaching," http://www.project2061.org/tools/sfaaol/Chap13.htm.

This site is operated by Science for All Americans through American Association for the Advancement of Science. This resource addresses both teaching and learning with the principles designed to encompass numerous disciplines, but focuses primarily on science. For example, under a section titled *Learning is Not Necessarily an Outcome of Teaching:* This finding suggests that parsimony is essential in setting out educational goals: Schools should pick the most important concepts and skills to emphasize so that they can concentrate on the quality of understanding rather than on the quantity of information presented." Other principles and topics listed include where the focus in education should be, the amount of time educators should put forth into their classes, and varying approaches to learning styles.

University of Hawai'i Honolulu Community College. *Faculty Development: Teaching Tips Index*.
http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm

Links used under the index include:
http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/comteach.htm

Information taken from "Getting the Most out of Your AIDS/HIV Trainings" East Bay AIDS Education Training Center Revised from 1989 addition by Pat McCarthy, RN, MSN, 1992. States that the some of the most common teaching methods include pure lecture, lecture with discussion, brainstorming, video, class discussion, small group discussion, case studies, role playing, report-back sessions, worksheets, or guest speakers. This site explains the strengths, limitation, and preparation for each method.

http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/visuals.htm

The information here is also drawn from "Getting the Most out of Your AIDS/HIV Trainings," and states that the most common visual aids are flip charts, posters, slides, videos, overhead transparencies, computer projections (i.e., PowerPoint). This page also addresses the advantages and disadvantages for each.

http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/delivery.htm

Also drawn from "Getting the Most out of Your AIDS/HIV Trainings," this section focuses on selecting a delivery strategy that is most appropriate for the needs of the information and the students.

http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/topten.htm

This article by Richard Leblanc of York University, Ontario appeared in *The Teaching Professor* after Professor Leblanc won a Seymous Schulich Award for Teaching Excellence. Details the ten requirements of quality education, such as "good teaching is as much about passion as it is about reason" and "good teaching is about substance and treating students as consumers of knowledge" while remembering to have fun.

New Media Resources:

http://www.digitaldeliverance.com/philosophy/definition/definition.html

Stating that the very complexity of new media lies in its simplicity, the sit details what "media" and "medium" are and are not, while explaining the only three communications media that exist. The first two, *Interpersonal Medium*—which is individualized and participants have equal and

reciprocal roles in communication—and *Mass Medium*—where the same information goes to all participants and only the sender has control—were the precursors of *New Media*. The site offers a detailed explanation and definition of New Media and the issues that surround its use.

University of Minnesota Institute for New Media Studies, (accessed 3 April 2005).
http://www.inms.umn.edu/

The Institute focuses on the study of the media of the 21st century and the impact it has been making and will continue to make on creativity, innovation and information content. With the primary focus being the content across a broad range of fields, including journalism, advertising, public relations, social marketing, education, arts and entertainment, the institute uses the University as a spring board for research options ranging across the current scholarly spectrum.

The Center for History and New Media, (accessed 3 April 2005). http://chnm.gmu.edu/
The Center for History and New Media has a decade of work in new media research and involvement in the academic and scholarly world. As stated on their website, "since 1994, the Center for History and New Media has used digital media and computer technology to democratize history—to incorporate multiple voices, reach diverse audiences, and encourage popular participation in presenting and preserving the past. We sponsor more than a dozen digital history projects and offer free tools and resources for historians."

Rhizome.org, (accessed 2 April 2005). http://rhizome.org/info/.

Rhizome is a non-profit organization founded to provide a "platform for the global new media art community." With "programs and services support the creation, presentation, discussion and preservation of contemporary art that uses new technologies in significant ways" and comprised of artists, curators, writers, designers, programmers, students, educators and new media professionals spread internationally, Rhizome.org is an organization at the forefront of New Media advancements.

Opinions Within the Field:
Beyond the scholarly resources which are available generally already, understanding the wants and needs of current students and professors is a vital piece in our proposal. Students who were surveyed[1] regarding the incorporation of communicative art technologies in classrooms expressed interests and concerns. Concerns revolved primarily around the economic impact on institutions. However, they expressed some interest in professors experimenting with new methods of delivering lecture information and perhaps in class assignments, but as one student

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[1] Please refer to *Appendix A* for a blank survey form provided to students.

put it, while it is an interesting idea there is concern that grades should not be "predicated on how well I respond to the presentation rather than how well I learn the material." Additionally, students indicated that while they are most familiar with a traditional lecture format, that it eases the "boredom of a semester long class" when instructors are willing to try and provide a variety of methods of presenting material. When asked what they would like instructors to incorporate, students replied that they wanted more visuals, such as PowerPoint presentations and perhaps video, incorporated into the traditional structure of the classroom.

The responses from surveyed instructors[2] indicate a range in personalities and teaching styles. Instructors with a history of teaching mediated classes or classes which require technology as a means of class delivery (i.e. online class) clearly have greater comfort with technology and ways to utilize it in a classroom setting. Instructors also indicate the heavy reliance on email as a method of communicating with their students. In class examples range from chalk or white board use up to "video games, films, art-history slides, books, audio, skateboards, surfboards, posters, internet, whatever works."

Ultimately, both students and instructors express an interest in attempting new practices, but it is accompanied by wariness. The concern expressed that the method should not supersede the material is a valid one, and one that certainly should be allayed. The incorporation of CAT's philosophy—primarily the idea of encouraging the use of communicative art in the disciplines across the board—would never be at the expense of the academic quality. As stated before, the information is advancing, so to should the infrastructure which surrounds, presents, and supports it. With the increasing symbiosis of communication and aesthetics, and the growing prevalence of technology in our world today, college graduates need to have a grasp of the new challenges in the work force. Those able to absorb the intricacies of their discipline and respect the increasingly technological and visual world that surrounds them will find success, but perhaps most significantly, it is they who will mold our futures.

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[2] Please refer to *Appendix B* for a blank survey form provided to professors.

Appendix A

1) Select which of the following you attend: four year university or community college or other

-type here

2) Rate your level of comfort with the following types of lecture experience

1. Comfortable	2. Okay	3. I do not like
Chalk Board		Video / Audio
White Board		Computer Projector
Slide Projector		Online
Overhead Projector		PowerPoint
Course Website		Other: _____

3) If you could decide what types of presentation methods your instructor would use in class (i.e. PowerPoint, slides, audio/video) what methods would you choose? Why? Feel free to use more than one example.

-type here

4) How is your comfort level affected when your professor lectures in a unique way, for example, the incorporation of multimedia? Do you want your instructors to try new things with lectures and assignments, or would this make you uncomfortable?

-type here

5) How do you feel you learn best—straight lecture, hands on, visual or audio, etc.? What is your favorite teaching method, one that you enjoy and feel is effective?

-type here

Appendix B

1) How long have you been teaching? (at university, community college, other)

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-type here
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2) What course(s) do you currently teach?

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-type here
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3) How many days do you lecture in a week, how many hours in a day?

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-type here
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4) Do you teach in a classroom environment? Do you teach an online course?

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-type here
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5) Do you use props to aid you when teaching? What do you use?

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-type here
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6) How do you give an example during your lecture? (read an example, draw an example, etc.)

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-type here
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7) How often do you use the following in a semester?

1. Sometimes   **2. Everyday**   **3. Never**

Chalk Board	Video / Audio
White Board	Computer Projector
Slide Projector	Online
Overhead Projector	PowerPoint
Course Website	Other:_____

8) Would you be willing to explore a different presentation of your lecture materials? Are you familiar with CAT or other methods of incorporating new media into the classroom? Please explain

-type here

9) What options do you make available to your students? (office hours, email, office phone number, etc.)

-type here

10) What manner of communication do your students utilize the most?

-type here