

Interactive storytelling & XIMPEL applications

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Who are we?

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Today's subjects

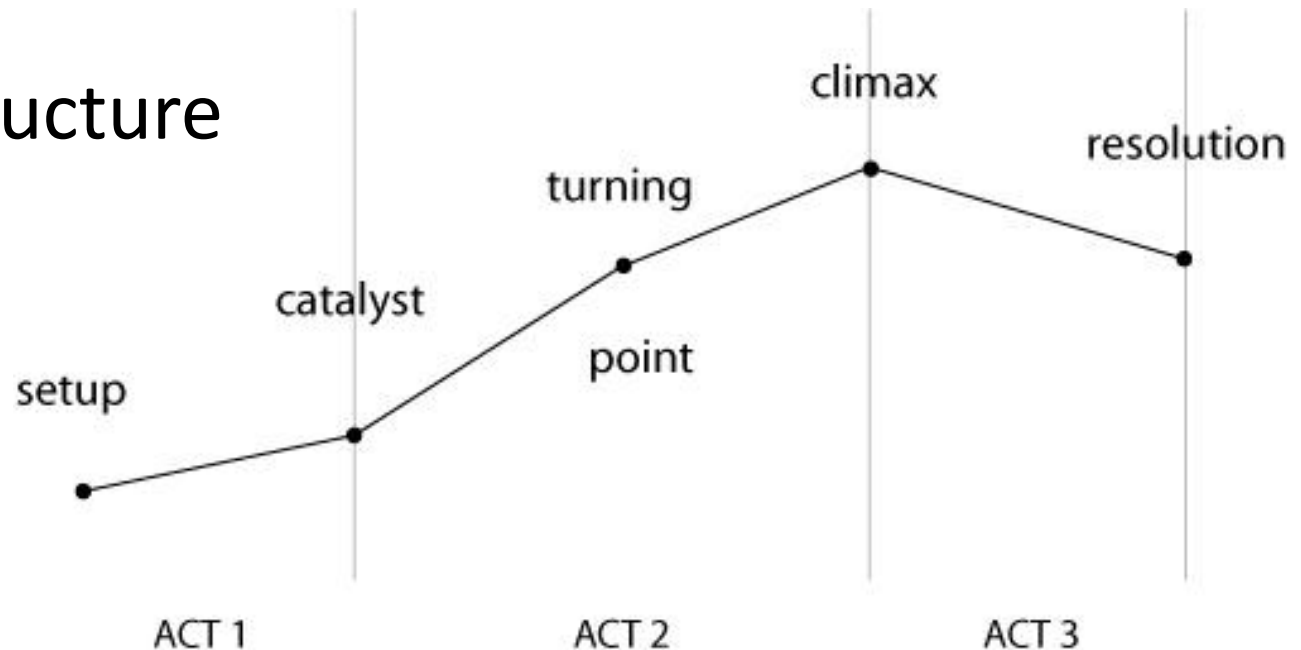
- (Interactive) storytelling and gameplay
- Story Graphs
- XIMPEL Applications
- XIMPEL 2.0

Storytelling basics

Definition of narrative

- “the systematic recitation of an event or series of events”

- 3 Act Structure





GLADIATOR

©2000 Dreamworks

storytelling example

www.charlotte.com/justgo/m

FROM
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GLADIATOR

ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER
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Narrative formats

- Films
- Books
- Speech
- ..

And:

- Games
- Interactive video

Narrative in games

- *Interactive* narrative

Interactive narrative issues (1/2)

- ‘Conflict of control and coherence’
- The higher the *degree of control* of a user, the more difficult it will be to ensure that the story remains *coherent* and the user’s actions do not interfere with the causal dependencies.

(Riedl, Young, 2006)

Interactive narrative issues (2/2)

- Problems
 - The Problem of Amnesia
 - Do characters understand their world?
 - The Problem of Narrative Flow
 - How do we make sure the player is prepared for the dramatic climax of the story when it arrives?
 - The Problem of Internal Consistency
 - Stories must be true to their inner laws ([example video](#))

(Ernest Adams, 1999)

Consider **Superman**. Superman is a character who is congenitally incapable of ignoring a baby who's crying in a burning building. He never says,

"You know, I'm gonna let somebody else deal with this for once."

But what if our player is being Superman in a computer game? Here's the burning building. Does he run in and save the baby? Well, he has to if he's Superman, and if he doesn't do it, then he has **violated Superman's basic nature.**

There's this **conflict** that arises between the player's desire to do as he chooses, and your desire to impose a plot and characterization on him. It's a tough one. How can you be sure that the player is going to do something that is coherent, that goes along with your story?

(Adams, 1999)



Interactive narrative structures (1/3)

- Possible structures that an interactive narrative may have include:
 - *tree* (most common in text-based works due to cost)
 - *parallel plot structure*, in which different versions of the story are told at the same time and the reader/viewer can switch between the different parallel versions

(Lindley 2005, Majewski 2003, Adams 2005)



Meanwhile (www.meanwhile.ca)

Interactive narrative structures (2/3)

- *nodal, or dead-end structure*, typical for action/adventure games, involving numerous alternative paths and dead-ends, which may or may not be (but usually are) reversible, generally along a main sequence eventually leading from the beginning of the game to the end.
- ‘*String of Pearls*’ model, players can move around freely inside the pearl, until the story converges back to its main path, leading to the next pearl (also called *modulated structure*)





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Interactive narrative structures (3/3)

- an *open structure* in which sets of story elements are associated with different *physical places*; links between places are open, so the player can wander around discovering different elements of the story. This is the form typical of early adventure games
- an *open structure* in which there is *no story arc*. This is the form typical of simulation-based games, strategy games and open world-based games, like massively-multiplayer on-line role-playing games (MMORPGs)
 - “worlds in which stories can happen”



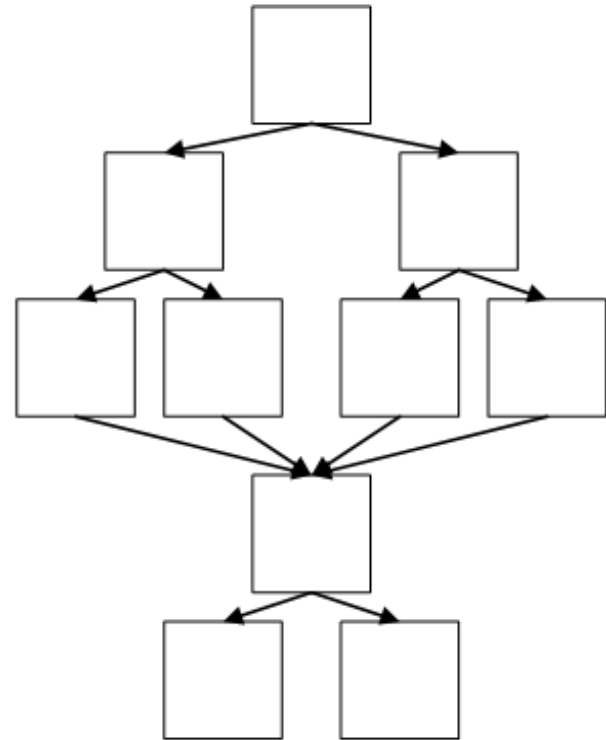
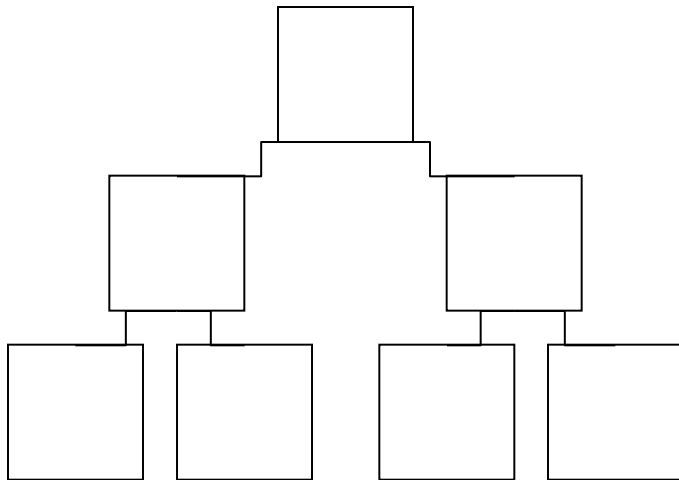
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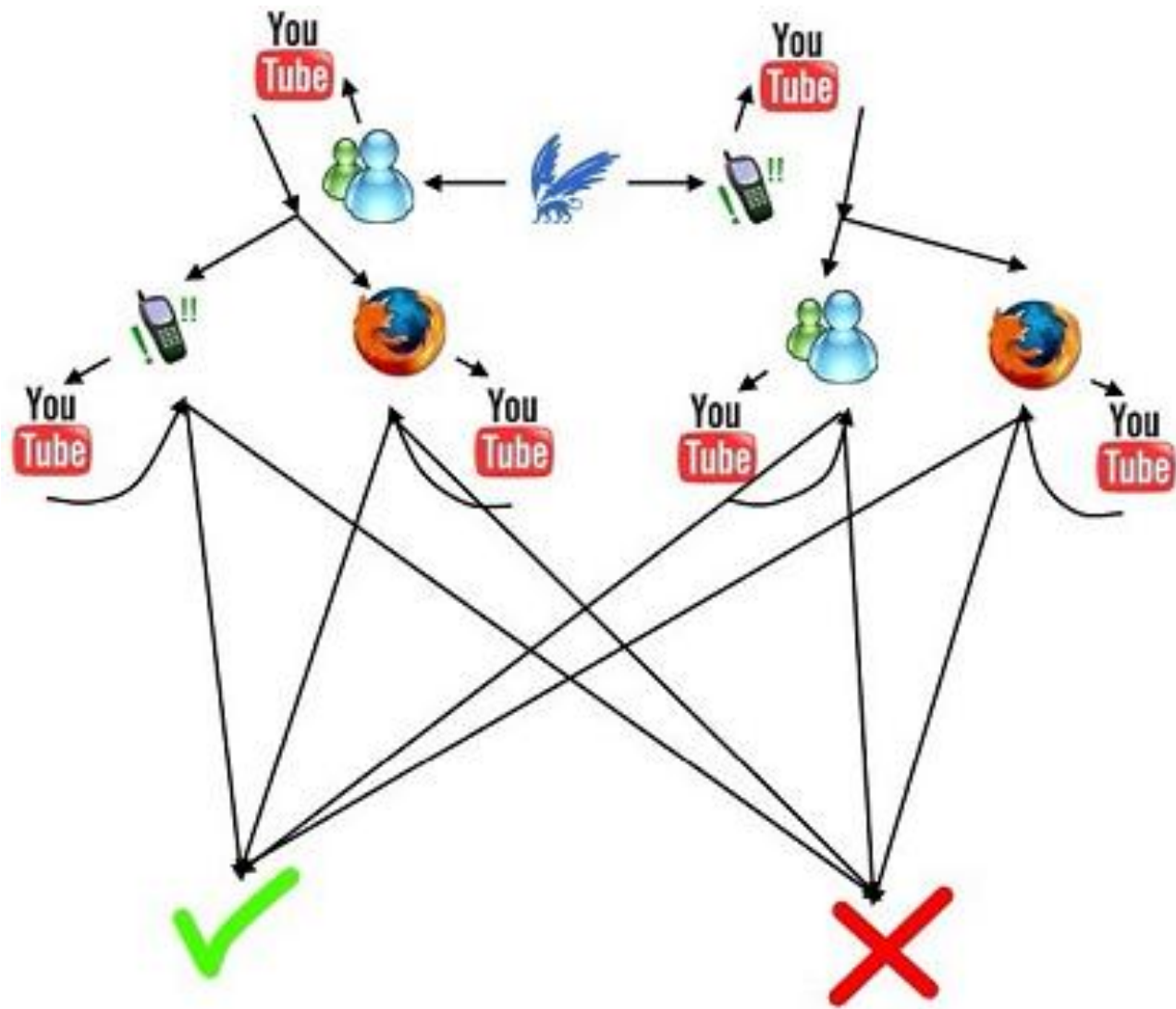


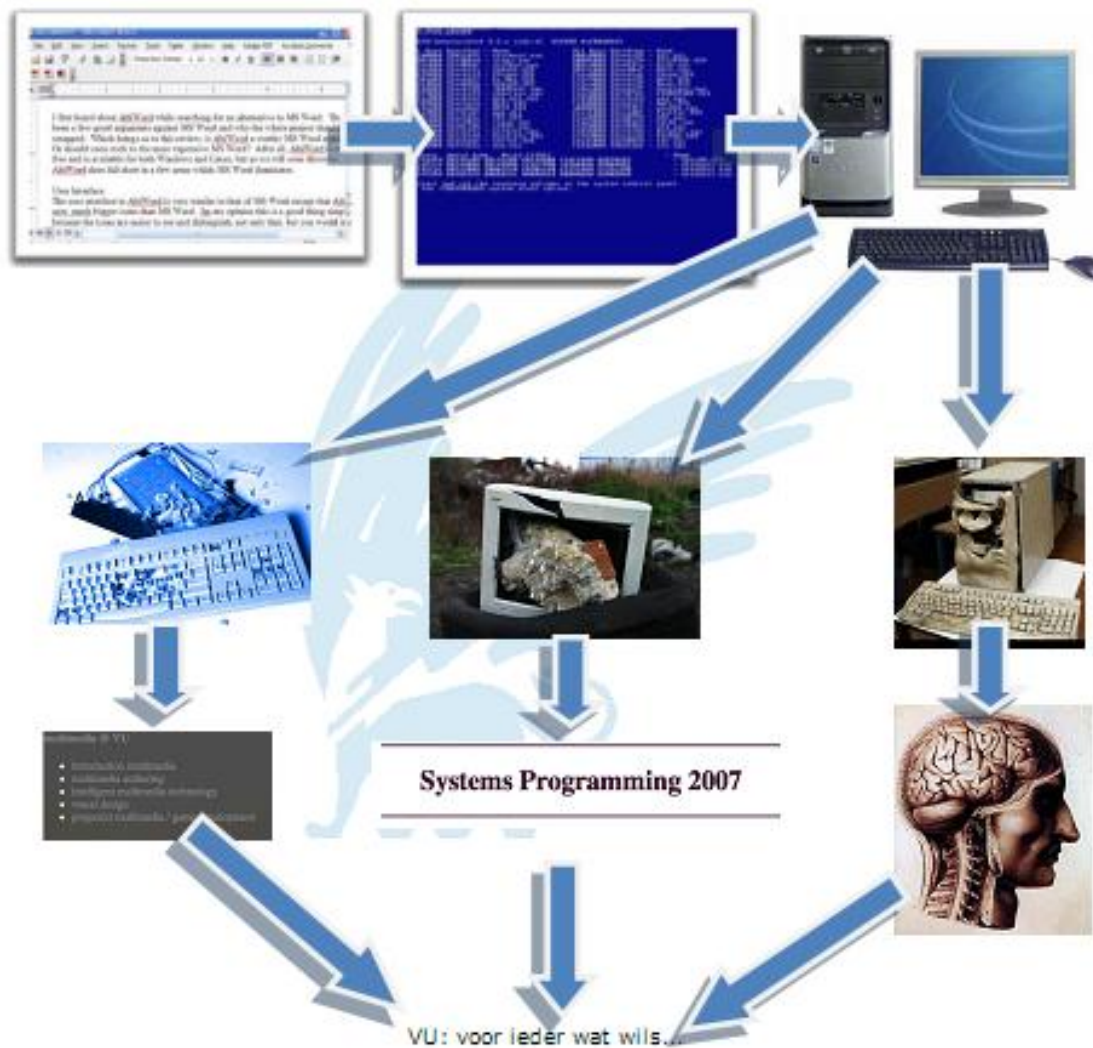
Narrative structures in interactive video

Visualization: story graphs

- Branching / converging paths









XIMPEL Applications

XIMPEL Applications

- Braaf (origami) versus Gewaagd (gangster)
- Film (which way to go) versus Game (minibrain)
- Spannend (beeckestein) versus Informatief (faculteit E)
- Grappig (ximpel fit) versus Serieus (project M)
- Waar in het spectrum zitten jullie?


Advanced Apps using XIMPEL

- Open Beelden demo (freely available video material)
- Pixel Video
- XIMPEL 2.0: www.timelessfuture.com/ximpel
- XIMPEL 2.0 demo
- Monty Python demo (from YouTube video to int. video)

50s Driving Challenge

By Hugo Huurdeman and Winoe Bhikharie

Start Game



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