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Exploring the relationship between presence and enjoyment in a virtual museum

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Abstract

The Augmented Representation of Cultural Objects (ARCO) system, developed as a part of an EU ICT project, provides museum curators with software and interface tools to develop web-based virtual museum exhibitions by integrating augmented reality (AR) and 3D computer graphics. ARCO technologies could also be deployed in order to implement educational kiosks placed in real-world museums. The main purpose of the system is to offer an entertaining, informative and enjoyable experience to virtual museum visitors. This paper presents a formal usability study that has been undertaken in order to explore participants' perceived sense of being there and enjoyment while exposed to a virtual museum exhibition in relation to real-world visits. The virtual museum implemented was based on an existing gallery in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK. It is of interest to determine whether a high level of presence results in enhanced enjoyment. After exposure to the system, participants

completed standardized presence questionnaires related to the perceived realism of cultural artifacts referred to as AR objects' presence, as well as to participants' generic perceived presence in the virtual museum referred to as VR presence. The studies conducted indicate that previous experience with ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) did not correlate with perceived AR objects' presence or VR presence while exposed to a virtual heritage environment. Enjoyment and both AR objects' presence and VR presence were found to be positively correlated. Therefore, a high level of perceived presence could be closely associated with satisfaction and gratification which contribute towards an appealing experience while interacting with a museum simulation system.



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Keywords

Presence; Virtual museum; User study; Usability.

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