Pre-reflection

By Hubert Sia

In Fall 2020 at Cégep Édouard-Montpetit, I graduated from a technical program call: ‘’Technique intégration en Multimédia’’ (Technical integration in multimedia) or TIM for short. I took my first programming course, "Introduction en programmation" (Introduction in programing), where I learned JavaScript. Initially, it was overwhelming, and the assignments became increasingly complicated. We started by programming a Sudoku and by the end of the course, we were creating a Space Invaders game. Although I gained knowledge of JavaScript, I didn’t enjoy it as much compared to other languages I learned during the semester. In "Conception Web" (it’s a web class), I explored HTML and CSS (and later SCSS). These were easier to learn, thanks to the teacher’s clear explanations. I also learned PHP during ‘’Programmation serveur et bases de donnée’’ (Server programing and data base) while creating a personal theme in WordPress, but I rarely used it. Typically, I build websites using HTML, SCSS, and JavaScript for projects like my portfolio, but I never saw these as tools for creative expression. I suppose my portfolio is an exception since it describes who I am and what I work. I also learned C# in ‘’Média Intéractif I, II, III’’ (Media interactive but now rename to Video Game classes), but I found it more as a curse than useful for me. For context, when you have a team that I only have one programmer who is capable of coding it, it gives you more pressure and stress than usual. However, in "Média Interactif IV" (now just named media interacif), I finally saw programming align with creative expression. In this course, we used software called TouchDesigner, which involved Python and Tscript. We created digital, audiovisual, and interactive visuals, with the projects driven by our creativity. This experience deepened my interest in interactive media and is one of the reasons I joined CART.

One of the creative programming projects that inspires me is an immersive exhibition called OASIS Immersion, located at "Les Galeries du Palais." This expo takes a unique approach to showcasing art by combining modern art and installation work. The public can interact with the installations and be amazed by the visuals. The expo features several rooms, each focused on a specific theme, where the entire room lights up to tell a visual story. The programming incorporates various elements, it involves infrared sensors to detect people for interactivity, numerous projection placements, and processing through TouchDesigner, often with third-party add-ons or other techniques. Each exhibit tells its own story, from a stranger’s personal tale to Van Gogh’s life or as well as narratives about nature, history, and society.

Another example is an interactive installation called "Empreintes sonores," created by Jean-Philippe Côté (a teacher back in my program) and Victor Drouin-Trempe. This installation uses audio interactivity to connect with the public. A Google Nest device captures audio and plays it back with altered pitch. The audio is also displayed visually on a screen, along with a second screen showing a themed technology interface that appears to be recording and processing sounds. The goal of the installation is to raise awareness of how household technologies, like Google Home, can record conversations without people realizing it. It highlights the unethical nature of companies collecting user data without consumer knowledge, making the installation both fun and educational.

The final example comes from the Pottermore website, where users can take the Patronus test. This personality quiz assigns users one of over 150 Patronuses based on their responses. The webpage is processed with JavaScript, which tracks user choices and generates beautiful assets. The experience is accompanied by captivating music, making it a must-try for any Harry Potter fan. The quiz reflects on the user's choice base on the personality. It's fun but with a little bit of effort comes a long way. Patronus test it's a perfect example of it.

A dream project I would like to create is an interactive immersive experience. It would be an installation that tells a story, either from history or about a tale of a person. The installation would use infrared sensors, such as an Xbox Kinect or Azure camera, to detect interaction. TouchDesigner would be essential for the project, along with various add-ons or additional tools. Any other methods then TouchDesigner However, I hope to discover other alternatives through this class.