# Reflection Memory Exhibit Proposal

Danielle Canchola

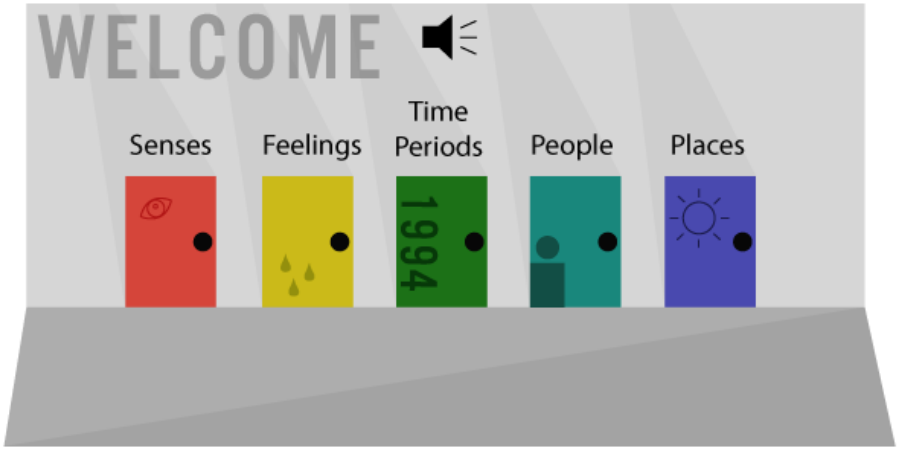
**Background**

The concept of storing information as abstract as memories of the brain into an organizational structure is a difficult one to grasp upon first consideration. We often only retrieve memories by thought or by captured media such as photo or video, so developing an organized outside structure through which to store memories is quite challenging. To tackle this challenge, I took into consideration the most common ways I organize things, whether it be items, concepts, files, etc. I found the most common theme in my perspective of organization is to give items their own spaces. To make this idea more concrete, I imagined organizing items into empty rooms. From this point, it became clear that I could fashion the idea of an exhibit with lots of rooms through which to store memories in. This exhibit would be called "Reflection," a name which encompasses several aspects of the involved concepts. Even with little knowledge of what one is looking for or how the experience generally works, this physical exhibit could help guide a person in the right direction for their interests.

**Exhibit Overview**

For this exhibit I imagine a place where memories can be reflected upon or "relived" in a sense. This would involve a grand building with a central hub of doors leading to other doors for up to eight levels deep. A guiding voice over a loudspeaker might help guests move through the exhibit and discover the correct doors for their search. The central hub would contain doors with the highest words in the memory taxonomy, therefore leading to other rooms with doors lower and lower in the taxonomy to help narrow down memories and relive them. The entire exhibit would be projection-based; therefore allowing for quick changes as necessary within the empty rooms and making memories capable of being "relived."

Sample visualization for first and second level exhibit rooms:





**Accessing Information**

Accessing information within this exhibit would be simple as the information is organized under categories that become more and more specific as one progresses into the deeper levels. The central hub room contains the broadest of categories as well as the guiding voice to point a participant in the right direction. Once one has chosen their direction, the categories displayed upon the doors become more specific and relevant to the chosen direction. In rooms with many categories to be displayed, the participant can opt to shuffle through them (a simple projection switch), or prompt the guide to display certain categories only according to their request or specification. Categories can allow for overlap since the exhibit is entirely projection based and no tampering with the actual rooms or doors is necessary.

**Metadata/Taxonomy**

In narrowing down terms to more specific search-oriented results within the exhibit, taxonomy for the information is important. Taxonomy is also necessary in the exhibit's design, as it will help organize which data belongs in which level. Following is a broad example of what this exhibit's taxonomy for the door of "senses" might look like:

1. **Senses (Level 1)**

**A detailed look at the taxonomy for searching for a bad smell in "Senses"…**

   a. **Smell (Level 2)**
      1. Bad Smells (Level 3)
         i. Worst Smells (Level 4)
            1. Familiar (Level 5)
               i. Family (Level 6)
                  a. (List of choices) (Level 7)
               ii. Friends
                  a. (List of choices) (Level 7)
               iii. Co-workers
                  a. (List of choices) (Level 7)
               iv. Animals
                  a. Pets (Level 7)
                     i. (List of choices) (Level 8)
                  b. Wild animals
                     i. (List of choices)
               v. Items
                  a. Food (Level 7)
                     i. (List of choices) (Level 8)
                  b. Drink
                     i. (List of choices) (Level 8)

c. Inanimate
    i. (List of choices) (Level 8)

vi. Environments
    a. Work (Level 7)
        i. (List of choices) (Level 8)
    b. Home
    c. School
    d. Friends' houses
    e. Families' houses
    f. Cities
    g. Nature

2. Unfamiliar (Level 5)
    i. People (Level 6)
        a. Strangers (Level 7)
            i. (List of choices) (Level 8)
        b. People I used to know
    ii. Places
    iii. Environments
3. (Year, Month, Date choices)

ii. Bad smells that remind me of things

**… the following work according to a similar pattern, allowing up to eight levels of data.**

2. Good Smells
    i. Best Smells
    ii. Best Smells that remind me of things
3. Recent Smells
    i. (Year choices)
    ii. (Month choices)
    iii. (Date Choices)

iv. General timeframe

4. Older Smells
    i. (Year choices)
    ii. (Month choices)
    iii. (Date Choices)
    iv. General timeframe

**b. Touch (Level 2)**

1. Textures (Level 3)
    i. Soft (Level 4)
    ii. Hard
    iii. Nice
    iv. Unpleasant
2. Things
    i. People
    ii. Items

**c. Taste (Level 2)**

1. Bad Tastes (Level 3)
    i. Least Favorite Tastes (Level 4)
2. Good Tastes
    i. Favorite Tastes
3. Okay Tastes
4. Food
    i. Favorite Foods
    ii. Okay Foods
    iii. Least Favorite Foods
5. Drink
    i. Favorite Drinks
    ii. Okay Drinks
    iii. Least Favorite Drinks

**d. Hear**

a. Loud Sounds
b. Soft Sounds
c. Familiar Sounds
d. Favorite Sounds
e. Least Favorite Sounds
f. Music
g. Songs
h. People
i. Animals

**e. See**

a. Colors
b. People
c. Places
d. Environments
e. Animals
f. Nature
g. Art
h. Media
i. Items

**Summary**

Based on the information I've compiled and ideas drawn from my own experiences, an experiential exhibit would prove a great way to help participants search for and retrieve/relive specific memories. It is likely the experiential aspect of the exhibit would truly help immerse a participant and get a feel for what they're looking for or what they might be interested in looking for. With this idea being entirely projection-based, a physical exhibit is very possible as there would be no demand for interior decoration. A limited number of doors/levels helps

eliminate the possibility of an endless experience or getting lost, and the guide within the exhibit would be key to helping guests find their way for the most fulfilling experience. This exhibit would be created with the intention of offering an organized search tool for participant memories as well as allowing participants to relive those memories. From an interaction design perspective, this method would be among the most organized and user-friendly concepts for memory retrieval.

# MEMORIES & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES IDEATION

## Brainstorming

While brainstorming I organized several lists of words I associate with the concept of "memory."

Remembering
Connecting
Relating
Reminding

Smells
Sounds
Tastes
Textures
Environments

Infancy
Childhood
Teenage
Young Adult

Favorite
Least Favorite
Prefer to Forget
Never want to Forget

Photos
Videos
Recordings
Writing

Happy
Sad
Scary
Exciting
Monumental
Embarrassing
Nostalgic

Drawers
Files
Folders
Sections
Boxes
Categories
Hierarchies
Diagrams

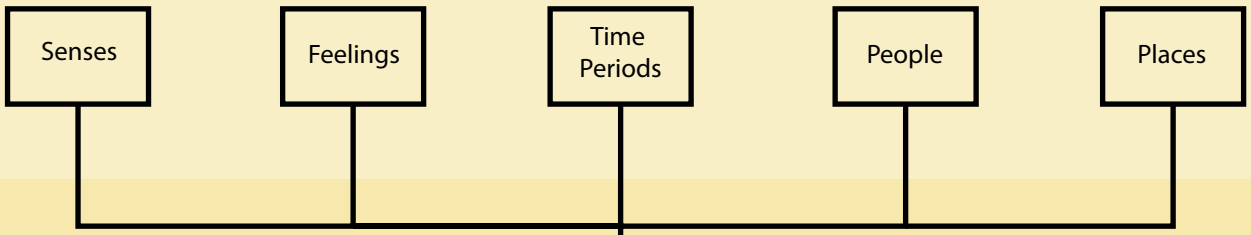
Art
Items
People
Dates
Weeks
Years

## Affinity Diagram

| Senses | Feelings | Age/Years | Reminders | Types |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Smells<br>Sounds<br>Tastes<br>Textures | Happy<br>Sad<br>Scary<br>Exciting<br>Embarrassing | Infancy<br>Childhood<br>Teenage<br>Young Adult<br>Years | Remembering<br>Connecting<br>Relating<br>Reminding<br>Photos<br>Videos<br>Recordings<br>Writing<br>Art<br>Items<br>People<br>Environments<br>Dates<br>Weeks<br>Years | Favorite<br>Least Favorite<br>Prefer to Forget<br>Never want to Forget<br>Monumental<br>Nostalgic |

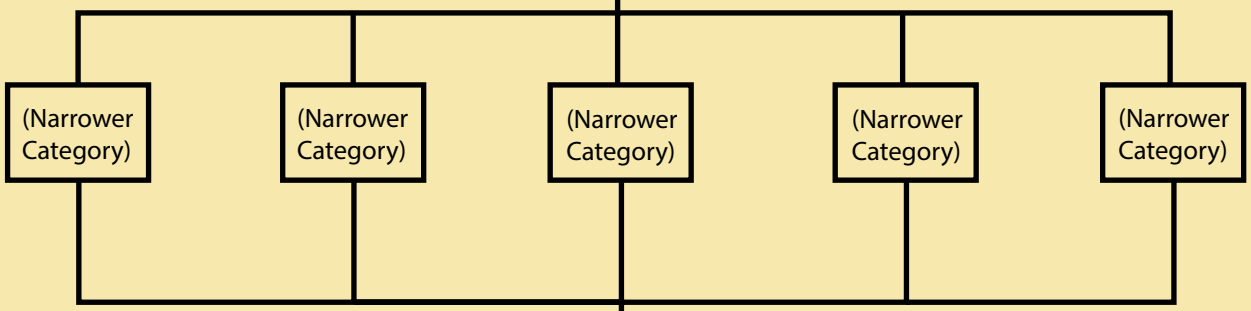
# ORGANIZATIONAL TEMPLATE

## LEVEL 1

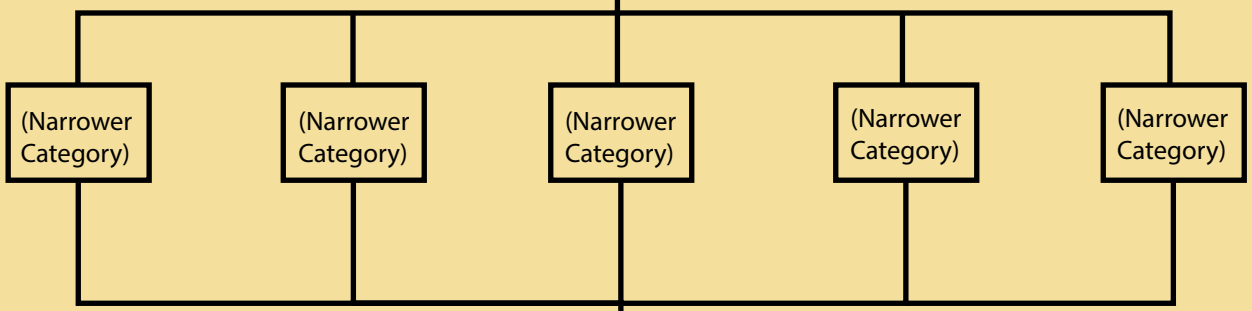



## LEVEL 2

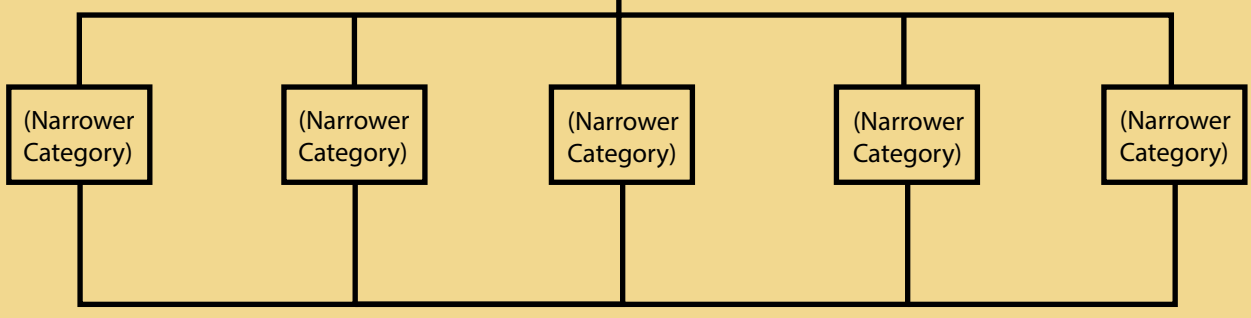
Note: Now shuffle/voice command enabled




## LEVEL 3




## LEVEL 4




## NOTES

--The organization of the exhibit continues in this fashion up through level 8, the final level.

--Each level contains five doors that all lead to the same room, the next level of five doors.

--There is no need for several dozen rooms because the exhibit is projection based. No matter which door is chosen, the appropriate categories for the next room will be projected.

--In all, there are eight rooms in total to experience within the exhibit. They do not all have to be entered if the user discovers their memory in an earlier level and chooses not to move forward.

# Reflection Voice Guide

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**Exhibit Voice & Tone**

The guiding voice for the Reflection exhibit is named E-GO, a name deriving from the word ego; the conscious mind. To provide an initial point of reference, the voice of E-GO could be comparable to Apple's Siri. As a guiding voice to all areas and types of memories, E-GO is not intended to have a specific personality that may lead participants to certain memories. This would ultimately create bias within the exhibit and provide a less fulfilling experience for participants. E-GO is a widely neutral guide with slight personality characteristics possessing the following qualities:

**Voice**

- Intelligent, but not condescending
- Warm, but not too relaxed
- Slight humor, but only when appropriate
- Intriguing, but not distracting
- Friendly. By the end of your time in the exhibit you should feel as if you confided in a friend

**Tone**

E-GO's tone is formal for the most part, as it is a robot. In areas where it is appropriate, its personality characteristics may show through. While robots cannot possess truly personable dialogue, E-GO could allow room for humor or empathy in certain situations. While E-GO describes a room or a memory to you, you should hear that "robot intelligence" but also get a feel for what you're about to experience and perhaps some empathy.

**Scenarios**

Scenario 1—A participant walks into the room of "feelings," looking for a "happy" memory. After entering the room of happy memories, the participant discovers a memory involving a favorite childhood location often visited with best friends. Upon walking up to the door, E-GO

should not explain the memory as cut-and-dry, but it should explain it intelligently and warmly. It should tell the participant what feelings the memory involves as well as what they may experience inside. The voice should make them feel good and confident about going in to see what's inside.

Scenario 2—A participant walks into the room of "feelings," browsing the memories of "disappointment." They find a door leading to a memory involving rejection from a major opportunity. E-GO would be cautious while describing this memory while still acting as an intelligent guide. It should again describe what this memory involves and warn the participant of its content. E-GO always has the participant's best interest in mind.

**Magic Words**

The doors are what will each contain "magic words" that will trigger certain actions and lead to memories the participant is looking for. Magic words will most likely be used as keywords within the exhibit. Keywords and search queries are important aspects of communicating with E-GO. They allow E-GO to retrieve the most relevant information the participant seeks as well as narrow down the categories. Often times, E-GO may suggest magic words to point participants in the right direction for their search.

Examples:

**"Time Periods" room**

Possible Magic Words: **"Infancy," "Toddler," "Childhood," "Teenager," "Young Adult," "College," "Preschool," "Millennium," "1994," "Winter"**

**"People" room**

Possible Magic Words: **"Family," "Strangers," "Celebrities," "Teachers," "Co-Workers," "Like," "Dislike," "Favorite," "3rd Grade"**

**"Places" room**

Possible Magic Words: **“Environments,” “Rooms,” “Nature,” “Vacation,” “Summer,” “With Mom,” “Red dress”**

**“Feelings” room**

Possible Magic Words: **“Crying,” “Laughing,” “Small,” “Beautiful,” “Sick,” “Empty,” “Free,” “Tied Down,” “Tall”**

**“Senses” room**

Possible Magic Words: **“Loud,” “Sting,” “Blue,” “Pie,” “Kitchen”**

These examples are just a few possibilities for the first level of doors. As illustrated, magic words allow for flexibility within the exhibit. E-GO can both suggest and understand these words and what direction each might lead the participant in. For instance, walking into the “Places” room might not instantly lead one to memories “with mom,” but simply saying those keywords allows E-GO to calculate the best direction and suggest the proper door for the participant to eventually find their memory “with mom.”

# SINGLE MEMORY SAMPLE

## Overview

This memory example documents what a walk through the exhibit might be like in order to retrieve the very vivid memory I have of the unique smell of my preschool.

## LEVEL 1

1. Walk into the "Welcome" room; the central hub of the exhibit.
   -- In this room are several doors, some major ones including:

Senses | Feelings | Time Periods | People | Places

2. A guiding voice over a loudspeaker welcomes the participant to the exhibit and explains a little of what it will be like. It then offers the prompt:
   -- "Please choose a door to begin your journey"

3. Participant chooses the "Senses" door

## LEVEL 2

1. Walk into the "Senses" room
   -- Doors in this room include:

Smell | Taste | Hear | Touch | See

2. Another greeting by the voice is given. Participant is given the option to hear more about the room or choose a door.

3. Participant chooses the "Smell" door

# SINGLE MEMORY SAMPLE (CONT.)

## LEVEL 3

1. Walk into the "Smells" room
   -- Doors in this room include:

| Bad Smells | Good Smells | Recent Smells | Older Smells |
|---|---|---|---|

2. Participant is prompted to choose which type of smell memory they are looking for.

3. Participant chooses the "Older Smells" door

## LEVEL 4

1. Walk into the "Older Smells" room
   -- This room includes all kinds of time periods to choose from. A few include:

| 1994 | 2000 | Pre-school | Elemen-tary School |
|---|---|---|---|

2. Once again, the voice helps the participant find the door they are looking for. The participant is able to request a shuffle of door categories according to their specifications. For example, because the participant is looking for a time period related to school, they can specifically prompt the guide to shuffle the door categories to keywords related to "school."

3. Participant chooses the "Preschool" door

# SINGLE MEMORY SAMPLE (CONT.)

## LEVEL 5

1. Walk into the "Preschool" room." This is the last required level for this memory search as the options have been narrowed down well enough. There is no need for the participant to complet all eight levels of doors.
    -- Doors in this room include several very specific preschool memories and keywords associated with my preschool experience.

| Class-room | McDon-alds' | School Building | Blueberry Muffins |
|---|---|---|---|

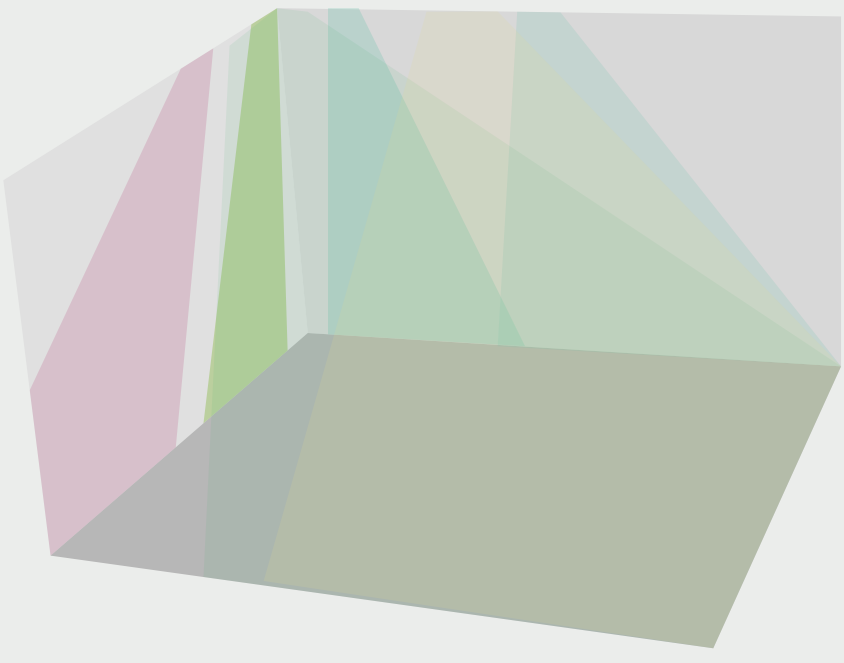
2. Participant can choose their direct memory from here or specify which specific memory they would like to shuffle to.

3. Participant chooses the "School Building" door

## Experiencing a Memory

Memories are experienced in whichever room the participant ends up locating their memory in. The room is transformed into a state of re-living with projections, smell-emitters, and visuals to recreate their memory. Each level includes an exit door so guests can leave from any room.

For this particular memory, the participant will see a depiction of the preschool and begin to smell the associated scent along with it.



# SCENARIO MAP

The following is a scenario map for using the exhibit to locate the memory of my first birthday:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Walk into the central hub and meet the guide | Decide to walk into the "Time Periods" door | Shuffle the keywords within "Time Periods" to locate year 1995 | Enter room of 1995 memories and select "Life Events" door | "Birthday" event is located with the keyword |
| Listening to the introduction in this room is required | Entering level 2 now enables voice requests and commands | Shuffle with the "shuffle" command or a specific categori-cal keyword | "Life Events" is an overlapping category, but this room only shows 1995 events | Memories can be selected by keyword, search query, or by already being a selectable door |
| This is the only room you can't shuffle categories in, they are set | The guide should give a synopsis of voice commands | May be useful to have the guide provide search suggestions | What if the user gets this far and realizes it's not where they wanted to be? | Once an event is found, the user should be able to go back or start over and see more |
| Without the option to shuffle, how many doors/categories should the user see? | | | They should have the option to go back | An exit door is also available, as is in every room of the exhibit |