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Sonic Environment Enrichment for Birds in Zoos

Project Overview

I am continuing the research with the Opera of the Future group at the Media Lab that I worked on this summer. We are studying how animals, specifically birds in zoos, respond to enrichments to their auditory environments (in this case, music that they can control). We are analyzing video data that was recorded of birds using the lab's Joy Branch, a joystick with the appearance of a tree branch that plays music when moved, to determine whether it improves the birds' general affective states through the behaviors that they demonstrate. Overall, we are looking at the three-way relationship between animals, humans, and technology and seeing how each affects the other. We are working on submitting a paper to the CHI conference, an international conference that focuses on human-computer interactions, in hopes of bringing a different perspective on the topic that involves animals.

Personal Role & Responsibilities

This fall, I will be responsible for writing and organizing parts of the paper that we will be submitting to the conference. In particular, I will be synthesizing the research that I worked on over the summer and writing about the methods that I used to collect and analyze the data as well as the results that I found. Much of the work that I completed revolves around creating visualizations for the data collected, and so I will continue to figure out what visualizations we should use to best communicate our findings. I will also be helping out with the general writing and planning of the paper, such as writing about the background and methods utilized in the project.

Goals

I hope to gain a better understanding of what it's like to do research and also experience writing a complete research paper. I'm also excited to continue developing skills that are very relevant to my career interests, such as data analysis and statistics. My main goal is just to use my personal strengths and interests to contribute as much as I can to what the lab is working on.

Personal Statement

I had a really great experience working with the Opera of the Future lab and am excited to be with them again this semester. This UROP has already taught me many valuable skills related to programming, data analysis, planning and organization, and working in a team on a large project. I know that these skills will continue to be strengthened this semester, and I'm eager to see how this project continues to develop.