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Assignment THEN - Proposal
CART 360, Fall 2018
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"Chordant"

github.com/stockhuman/CART-360/ASSIGNMENTS/THEN

Project Description

The device I intend to build has one foot in the role of musical instrument and another as a learning machine. The device takes input as actions on the device to influence the 'character' of the machine. This character is represented as a continuously generated stream of textural music.

The machine prompts the user to add to the sound with questions on a screen. These questions vary from ethical and political choices to everyday activities and opinions. At first, the machine is a blank slate, with very simple questions asked, and very simple sequences of steps required to answer them in any which way. As the character forms, and the texture builds, the bias represented in answers will inform future questions and question sets. Should one want to change the character, they'd have to perform increasingly more complex actions on the controls of the device. In this milieux, while the machine is not aligned in opinions, the textural experience will become more discordant, the bias ever more difficult to alter. Lack of interaction will very slowly bring the machine to baseline.

The Context

The machine is to live in a public space, or at least one where a difference of opinion is bound to be found. Total groupthink would only illustrate half of the machine's functionality. Being somewhat of a noise machine, an environment where those changes can be heard would be essential as well.

The Relationship

The machine plays specifically with the notion of algorithmic authority, and how human behaviour changes so as to work for the machine instead of the other way around.

The idea here is to illustrate how the desire for consonance and uniformity, especially tied with the added cost of changing the nature of that uniformity, will make people act against what they may weakly hold onto as belief.

Say, the machine proclaiming a set of statements about policy opinion invites the user to add the next sound that fits this set of opinions, and 'voting' against it carries the penalty of increased effort and more dissonant sound whilst order is unmaintained.

Empowerment

Bending the machine to one's views is to be rewarded. To achieve a complete switch of opinion, and fight dissonant noise in the process and the laborious interaction with dials and controls, is a victory that I'd hope will illustrate how one can affect change, yet only with some element of perseverance. Conversely, playing to the wishes of the machine and easily building up it's bias will lead to increasingly more extreme opinions, and watching that complacency in oneself is also a desirable lens on human behaviour I'd like to explore.

Meaning

I wish for an increased awareness towards the behaviour and opinion influencing powers of an algorithm and the machine mask that hides it.

Intention & ID/XD

The aesthetic of the experience is that of a PDP-11 lookalike, evoking an era in which the human effort to interact with machines was substantial - where we communicated in their language rather than our own.

Question?

Actions 4 AFFIRM
Actions 4 NEGATE
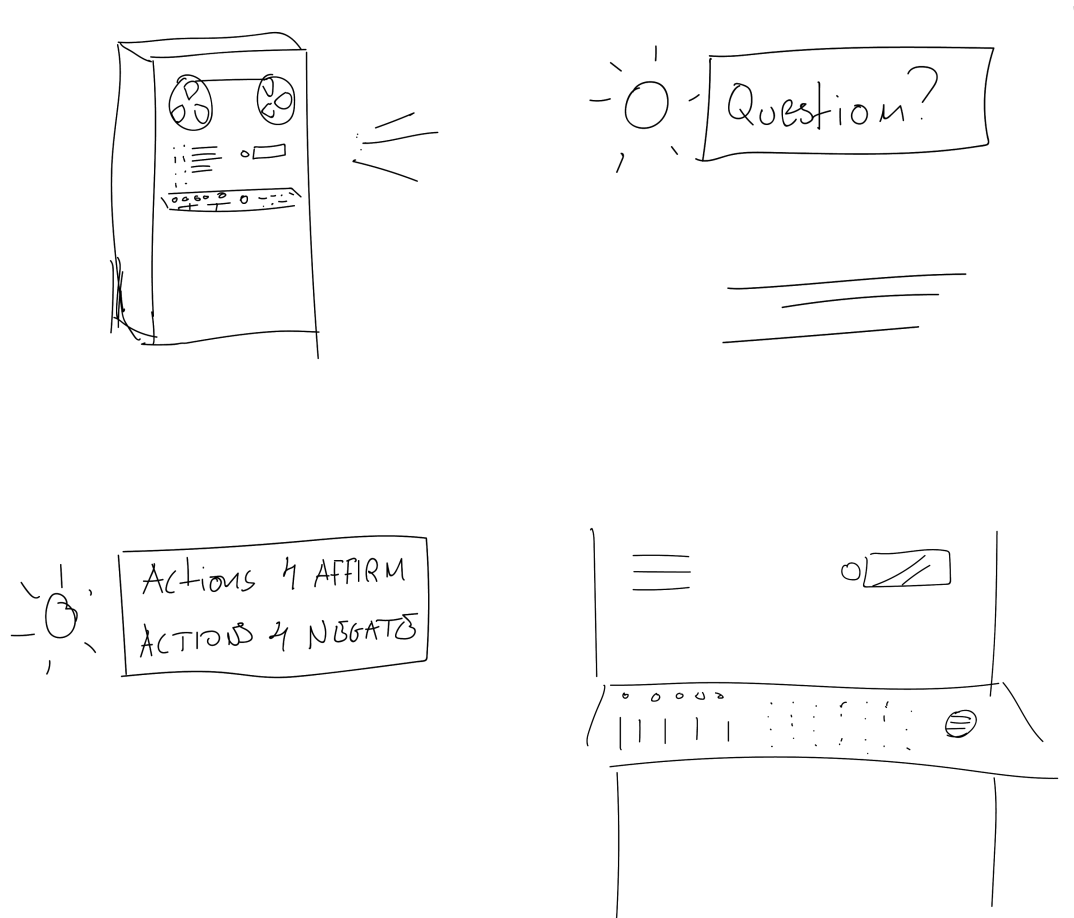
ANSWER
ACKNOWLEDGED
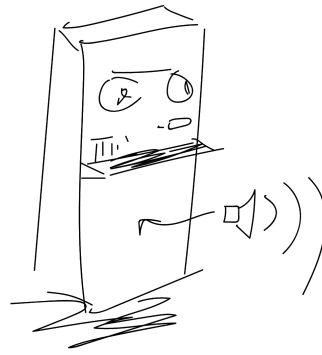
IN IDLE STATE

I KNOW
[ANSWER] IS TRUE.
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PRESS 1 THING TO ADD
DRUMS AND AGREE.

↓

FOLLOW THESE 13
STOPS TO DISAGREE.

Similar Work

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Differentiation

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