

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar
Faculty of Media
Degree Program Computer Science and Media

Can't Touch This - A Prototype for Public Pointing Interaction

Master Thesis

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Date of Submission: 2nd December 2014

Abstract

Museums can be perceived as old fashioned. Potential audiences therefore often do not consider visiting one for themselves. Nevertheless, there are many modern and open minded ones, which are willing to experiment with new possibilities, to get rid of their dusted reputation and to evolve.

In order to increase interactive potential of exhibits behind glass, I implemented a novel information interaction system for a museum of pre- and protohistoric history. The challenge was not only to develop a working, intuitive prototype, but also consider low maintenance and robustness for everyday use. The system I developed employs the natural behavior of visitors by detecting potential users and enabling them to interact with the system via pointing gestures. Additionally, the museum personnel can easily set up and maintain the system themselves.

Interaction of the system is initiated automatically with a visitor walking up to the installation. No additional devices on the users side are required, they only need to point at one of the interactive exhibits inside the showcase. The system then determines which exhibit is addressed and displays corresponding information in the form of explanatory texts and detailed images on a screen.

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Affidavit

Affidavit

I hereby declare that this master thesis has been written only by the undersigned and without any assistance from third parties. Furthermore, I confirm that no sources have been used in the preparation of this thesis other than those indicated in the thesis itself, as well as that the thesis has not yet been handled in neither in this nor in equal form at any other official commission.

Michael Pannier

Abbreviations

IMI	Interactive Museum Installation
MS	Microsoft
RFID	Radio-Frequency Identification
FSD	Functional Specification Document
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
SDMS	Spacial Data-Management System
WYSIWYG	”What you see is what you get”
GUI	Graphical User Interface
SUI	Single-User Interface
MUI	Multi-User Interface
HCI	Human Computer-Interaction
TUI	Tangible User Interface
VR	Virtual Reality
3D	three-dimensional
HMD	head-mounted display
DOF	degrees of freedom
AR	Augmented Reality
SDK	Software Development Kit
2D	two-dimensional

BCI	Brain-Computer Interface
MVT	Museumsverband Thüringen
HDD	Hard Disk Drive
PDLC	Polymer Dispersed Liquid Crystal
IR	infra-red
FUBI	Full Body Interaction Framework
UI	User Interface
wpm	words per minute
cpm	characters per minute
IV	independent variable

1 Introduction

In this work, I describe the development of an Interactive Museum Installation (IMI). The system presents a novel way to augment public displays with a system that is intuitive to use, easy to maintain, and inexpensive. Natural interaction without additionally required devices on the users end lowers inhibition and frustration while simultaneously raising awareness.

Before this system could be developed, a collaboration with a local museum had to be established. Because the installation would be based on in- and output modalities that actually make sense in a museum, visitors and staff had to be observed and interviewed. After looking at several suitable museum candidates in Weimar. I chose the one with the most promise in fitting properties as well as institutional openness for my purposes. Together, we conceived some ideas for possible installations. Not all of them were applicable or too far off my expertise. Nevertheless, there were two concepts, we were very interested in and excited about.

The first concept, "*Interaction with Tangibles*", was directly addressing visitors' haptic perception. Therefore, it was planned to use Microsoft (MS) Gadgeteer-hardware¹ as embedded components of tangible devices. A number of reproductions could be placed outside the showcase. Each interactive tangible could then be manipulated or placed on a pedestal to gain information about its corresponding exhibit. Here, certain exhibits could have been photogrammetrically scanned in three dimensions. After that, the digital model could be scaled to a handy size and otherwisely modified. Ultimately, the tangible could be printed or casted. Such an object could then be enhanced by using Radio-

¹ MS Gadgeteer is a modular system of various hardware-components distributed by GHI Electronics. It resembles Arduino- and other microcontrollers.

Frequency Identification (RFID)-technology². In order to make it interactive, it would be fitted with such a RFID-tag. There is a RFID-module for Gadgeteer, which would have allowed identification of each tangible. The corresponding information could then be provided by any medium compatible with Gadgeteer.

A different approach was based on an assumption of natural behavior of visitors. After a meeting at the museum, a second concept of *"Interaction by Pointing"* emerged. Later the underlying assumption was confirmed by the observation of visitors' behavior around showcases. Visitors do not only talk about exhibits, but they also point at certain exhibits during interaction with each other. Therefore, a device should be build or utilized for users to point with, enabling them to select a certain exhibit inside the showcase. Additional information about the point of interest would then be displayed in an appropriate manner.

While all involved understood these concepts were fairly comprehensible, their technical realizations were unclear at first. Throughout further investigations, the work turned from testing various modes of input to a more technical approach. Both ways of input are special and revealed different challenges along the way.

Throughout the following chapters I documented my proceedings during the development of the aforementioned system. Chapter 2 gives background information about the fields of study which are included in my work. Thus, there is a brief outline about the progression of technologies employed by museums, users behavior around public interfaces and with tangibles. In addition, a brief overview of virtual reality-techniques is given.

Afterwards, I describe my goals for the development of this system. Before I come to explain the schematics and evaluation of my implementations, I give a short review of my partnering process. Thus, Chapter 3 deals with finding a suitable museum for a collaboration.

Chapter 4 explains the whole development-process of the system's schematics and functionality. It begins with possible system designs and explains their possibilities and constraints. In the end of Chapter 4, the final concept is shown along with necessary obligations such as an Functional Specification Document (FSD) and the contract be-

² RFID-transponders or -tags do not require any batteries, are cheap and robust. In addition, their range is very limited, which allows several tags on one tangible.

tween me, the university and the museum.

Chapter 6 addresses the implementation of the system's functionality. Therefore, all libraries and softwares are explained in more detail.

Experimental lab-installations and the final museum-installation are described in Chapter 5. Therefore, measurements, hardware specifications, and other influential criteria are presented in detail.

The final installation is evaluated in Chapter 7, where visitors were observed and interviewed before and after alterations by the system. Chapter 8 then deals with the discussion of the evaluation's findings.

In the end, I thought about future work, which could improve, extend, and follow my system. In Chapter 9, I would also like to mention reactions and suggestions I encountered along my work.

2 Background and Motivation

Over time, public places became more and more enriched with all kinds of technology. Nowadays, on nearly every corner something is beeping or blinking and buttons, leavers and knobs make us - their potential users - interact with our environment. This trend does not spare anyone or anything. Even traditionally calm and sophisticated places open up to the possibilities of contemporary technologies.

2.1 Museums

Museums, much like libraries, are foremost seen as a place of knowledge and its preservation. Hence, visitors behave in a very reserved manner. Whilst applying for libraries, museums are willing to involve people instead of merely providing information. Many museums therefore employ guides, who give tours and tell visitors about the exhibits. In addition to their factual knowledge, they also provide interesting anecdotes and other exciting information needed to bond with a certain topic. Apart of instructive and teaching staff, museums have tried many other ways to involve their visitors. One of those is utilizing technology. With time technology evolved, and so did technological augmentations in museums.

The name "museum" comes from the ancient greek's "Museion". It refers to a sanctified place in honor of a muse [Mus14a]. Basically, museums are collections of arts and science or at least parts of them on display. In modern history, those collections were of an artistic nature and mostly private. Later, scientific and otherwise cultural museums were established for the general public [ibid.].

One of the first high-tech installation of the modern age was the *Diorama*. In 1821,

Louis Jacque Mandé Daguerre³ and the painter Charles Marie Bouton partnered up to develop this spectacle. It is an elaborate combination of painting and lighting [Woo93]. Through ingenious lighting, the paintings became vivid. This way, a diorama could simulate the moods of a whole day within minutes. Thus, it is seen as an early predecessor of the cinema. Even today, although in much smaller size, dioramas are still of certain interest [Sch14].

The first interactive displays appeared at the *Urania* in Berlin around 1889, when they introduces visitor-activated models and a scientific theater. In 1907 the *Deutsches Museum* in Munich also began experimenting with film and mechanical models, which were operated by visitors [McL93]. Later, other museums all over the world followed. Since then the

"[...] wider museological community's understanding of nature and purpose of interactiveness" [Wit08]

has taken shape.

"This understanding almost invariably involves:

- 1. The presence of some technological medium.*
- 2. A physical exhibit which is added to the main display.*
- 3. A device which the visitor can operate, involving physical activity."* [Wit08]

As electronics and microchips evolved, computers became popular and affordable. The technological equipment of museums grew with what was available and new kinds of devices and installations appeared. Today, nearly every museum has a certain guide system such as an audio guide. It either leads visitors through the museum on a predefined course or a visitor can choose the track according to a given code for each included exhibit. In 2004, Chou et al. compared different museum guide systems in various categories, which were considered necessary to provide a user-friendly and informative experience. Expositors, tape machines, CD-players and a PDA were judged. The PDA was most versatile and easy to use system [CWH⁺04] (*see Figure*). The described system had the portability of an audio guide, but due to position recognition the PDA would

³ Daguerre is a scene painter and stage designer by trade. He also is the inventor of the first photographic process called daguerreotypy

always present the current exhibit. The system could replace common audio guides and immobile information terminals all together. In addition, it still was able to give predefined tours depending on the user's interests.

Yet another chapter was opened, when the internet and wireless communication were introduced. Museums began to also maintain websites. Burgard et al. went a step further, included robotics and build an autonomous tour-guide robot called *RHINO*. It was able to navigate through the museum freely and without bumping into visitors. On demand, RHINO worked as an information terminal for present visitors and it could be used as a tour-guide as well, because it had a simple build-in web interface. Thus, the museum's contents were simultaneously used by the website and the robotic tour-guide. RHINO was deployed at the *Deutsches Museum Bonn* in 1998.

In 2002, a group from the *University of Limerick* made a survey in *Hunt Museum*. The museum is owned and run by the Hunt-family. Its tradition is to involve the visitors since its early days. Therefore, they had so-called *cabinets of curiosity* [Cio02], special compartments within the exhibition, where additional exhibits were hidden. For example, a curious visitor had to open drawers in order to find a collection of plates. Via this exploration, the visitors became involved. Inspired by their observations, Ciolfi et al. implemented a completely new and interactive part of the exhibition in 2005 [Cio05]. Two new rooms were introduced. First, there was the *study room* with three interactive devices for getting further information about certain exhibits. They were disguised as a chest, a painting and a desk. The second room, the *room of opinion*, was plain white with plinths, on which visitors could record their interpretations of the intended function of certain exhibits. In order to manage all the data, a third and hidden room was used to host all the data-servers.

The *medien.welten*-exhibition at *Technisches Museum Wien* was not only showcasing technical devices from all eras and genres of modern media, it also invited visitors to make use of some. As Hornecker et al. described, throughout the exhibition users were given opportunities to produce their own medial content. The interfaces ranged from an abacus over a telegraph to a whole rebuild of a news-studio from an Austrian TV-channel. Visitors could not only use the devices, but store some of their produced contents in a *digital backpack* [Hor06]. This way, visitors did not only have an exciting experience, but also something to remember it by later.

2.2 Interfaces and Interaction

People visiting a museum come from different backgrounds and in various numbers. There can be large groups like a school class on a field trip or a single person strolling around. Their technical and physical abilities might also vary. Hence, an installation's ease of use, especially in a museological context, is of great importance. Because the interface is the only connection between users and the system, it has to be as intuitive and easy to use as possible. It dictates the way of interaction and, therefore, whether the whole system works or not. A ground breaking system is worth nothing without proper interaction between its operator and it. This presents the need for suitable kinds of input and feedback. Thus, Ben Shneiderman once introduced his *eight golden rules of interface design*:

1. *"Strive for consistency.*
2. *Enable frequent users to use shortcuts.*
3. *Offer informative feedback.*
4. *Design dialogs to yield closure.*
5. *Offer error prevention and simple error handling.*
6. *Permit easy reversal of actions.*
7. *Support internal locus of control.*
8. *Reduce short-term memory load."* [Shn98]

Following this guideline should yield a well operable interface. However, there still might be particular difficulties for specialized or novel systems. Especially public user-interfaces bring new factors, which are not explicitly included in Shneiderman's rules. How should an interface behave,

- in order to invite users?
- on a user's first encounter?
- if there are multiple users?

The ideal interface should be as intuitive and naturally to use as possible. This requirement was already addressed in 1980 by Richard A. Bolt. He described the *Media Room* at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as an office with a chair, a wall-sized screen and other analogue or electronic installations. The room's equipment allowed the user to navigate through the *Spacial Data-Management System (SDMS)* called *Dataland*. The user would sit down and had several input-devices at its disposal. One of them was a small device that could measure its position and orientation in space. The device was used to calculate where on the big screen the user was pointing. In combination with simple voice-commands the user was able to create and manipulate geometrical primitives [Bol80].

Since then, this seemingly futuristic furnishing could not be established as a common way of interaction. Keyboard and Mouse are still the most widely used input-devices. Meanwhile, touchscreens and voice-recognition are closing the gap though. The principle of "What you see is what you get" (WYSIWYG)⁴ became of ever greater importance. Many interfaces are designed with Shneiderman's rules and usability in mind. Developments in Human Computer-Interaction (HCI) seem promising. More intuitive devices and interfaces are developed and tested thoroughly.

There are basically two types of interfaces. A Single-User Interface (SUI) is designed to be operated by only one user, whereas a Multi-User Interface (MUI) can be operated by a group of users at once. However, there is no strict distinction between the two. People might look over a SUI's user's shoulder and give instructions, or a lone person could operate a MUI on its own. Another factor that influences how people use an interface is the occasion. Public interfaces, such as a kiosk system at a cinema or for photo-developing provide a GUI on a touchscreen. Those systems are intended to be used by a single user, but might also be confronted with groups. Azad et al. investigated how groups behave around such kiosks. Most groups approached the interface asynchronously. Meaning, one member is interacting with the system, while the others watch. As time passes, the rest of the group might get more active due to *intra-group communication*. They further observed, that

⁴ WYSIWYG first came up in the 1970s, when the first office-programs appeared. Due to different resolution-densities of displays and printers, it was necessary to show correct relations of letters and page. Later on, the term was synonymously used for Graphical User Interface (GUI)-elements.

"there is a semantic, profound difference between pointing and touching. Users who point are communicating ideas within a social group and may not want the technology to treat it as input." [ARHL11]

Moreover, inter-group communication is also of great importance. Shyness or frustration may inhibit an individual or group from interacting with a system. Strangers can ease the use, when they act as an example or explain their actions to those shy or frustrated [HF14].

Interfaces can not only be categorized by their intended demographics. Input- and output-devices dictate the kind of interaction. As mentioned earlier, keyboard and mouse are being replaced with novel technologies. Touchscreens and voice recognition have become established means of input as well. Moreover, novel approaches towards interaction are made and influenced by novel possibilities in technology. Museums in particular strive for innovative interfaces to involve visitors and, therefore, tend to explore many fields of interactive possibilities.

"Interactive exhibitions are thriving, encouraged by a new approach to museology developed in response to current social demand and a much more participatory philosophy involving a redefinition of the concept of the museum in general and of the science museum in particular. [...] The classic concept of observation has been replaced by that of participation." [FB00]

A Tangible User Interface (TUI) is a very natural approach. Here, a tangible object represents a digital entity. This could be a virtual object or something more abstract like an operation or property. Those tangibles can be used to interact with a system or even each other. In [UIJ05], Ullmer et al. described the principle of *token and constraint*, which played an influential role during the conception and is revisited in Chapter 4.2. Two name-giving types of tangibles are involved, tokens and constraints. They have two phases of interaction. At first, tangibles can be associated, which means that their physical shape dictates, whether tokens will or will not work with a particular constraint. After that, the constraint's properties dictate the further way of interaction as shown in *Figure 4a,b,c* [UIJ05]. In comparison to ordinary interfaces a TUI offers more haptic perception. This could increase a user's attention to the interface and as a consequence their involvement with a possibly related exhibit.

Apperceptive and playful interfaces might raise visitors' involvement. Groups of visitors

tend to spend more time with an interactive exhibit, because the majority wants to make the experience for itself [FB00].

Virtual Reality (VR) provides a less tangible approach. Contemporary VR-systems offer a way to display and manipulate three-dimensional (3D) data in real-time. Users can be immersed into vast, 3D environments, which are projected on huge stereoscopic displays or shown by a head-mounted display (HMD)⁵. Those systems require a special kind of interaction to either navigate through or select objects in the virtual environment. Therefore, special interaction metaphors were developed. Proper navigation can be realized via any input-device capable of six degrees of freedom (DOF)⁶ and is rather familiar. But, since navigating to each object in order to select and manipulate it is inconvenient, a separate metaphor for interacting with objects had to be developed as well. Thus, a pointing device was introduced. In order to calculate its correct position and direction it has reflective markers in a unique pattern, which are then tracked by a system of infrared cameras (*see Figure 1c*) [AKKF10]. A virtual ray into the scene is calculated accordingly. Basically, objects can be selected by pointing at them and triggering selection in some way. *A survey of 3D object selection techniques for virtual environments* showed that 29 of 31 reviewed techniques were based on ray-interaction. The remaining two used a hand avatar like in *Figure 1a*. Both of them track a user's hand and one also applies ray-based leverage to extend reach [AA13].

As mentioned earlier, keyboard and mouse are established means of input, though there are more natural ways of input though. Humans have been communicating with gestures for ages. With this in mind, *gestural interaction* arose as a concept in HCI. In [KS05] five basic categories of gesture styles are defined. All those gestures can be applied to two- and three-dimensional interfaces. *Deictic* gestures are defining a location and include all varieties of pointing gestures. They range from the cursor on a desktop PC to the VR-pointing devices mentioned above. *Manipulative* gestures are used for translation, rotation, and scaling. Here, the "pinch to zoom"-gesture for many touch-based devices is probably the most commonly known. More abstract gestures are *semaphoric* and

⁵ Recent, distinct examples are *Occulus Rift* and *Google Glasses*. While Occulus Rift provides a completely closed solution for 3D VR-environments, the Google Glasses are an Augmented Reality (AR)-approach. Here, additional information is displayed on top of perceived reality.

⁶ One DOF is either translation along or rotation around one spacial axis. Hence, there are six possible movements in 3D space.

language gestures. They consist of designated signs or movements and can be static or dynamic. The best example for static gestures is sign language. Air traffic controllers use flag waving to guide planes into parking positions by semaphoric gestures. The last category is *gesticulation*. In contrast to semaphoric gestures, gesticulation is purely natural and does not have to be learned. Gestures often appear in combination with speech, why they are also called *coverbial* gestures.

Since gestures are naturally motivated, gesture-based interfaces should be intuitive to interact with. With the introduction of smart phones and tablet computers touch-based interaction and gesture-based Interfaces are getting more and more relevant. In 2003, the *EyeToy for PlayStation2* began to show the possibilities of *free-hand gestures*. A few years later, Microsoft began selling the *Kinect for Xbox 360*. Independent drivers and software for it were developed almost immediately, which enabled developers and researchers to utilize the system's capabilities on regular computers. The official Software Development Kit (SDK) and *Kinect for Windows* followed about half a year later. Other devices like *ASUS' Xtion PRO* followed working with the identical internal hardware. The more detailed hardware specifications will be explained in Chapter 4. This development introduced a low cost solution for user-tracking, whilst the aforementioned tracking systems for VR are very expensive. Several interfaces were developed making use of the hardware's potential. Thus, its performance and suitability for VR-tasks was examined. Ren and O'Neill stated that

"More and more information and other content is visualized and manipulated in 3D, bringing a corresponding increase in the importance of effective and usable 2D user interfaces." [RO13]

They conducted two kinds of test. First, they looked into two-dimensional (2D) interaction techniques such as touchscreens and *freehand 3D* interaction and described similarities and differences. Accordingly, both techniques' WYSIWYG-approach makes them spontaneous and direct. This natural *walk-up-and-use* interaction style decreases the interaction cost for any possible user. Further, users are able to move freely, because there are no extra devices to pick up and operate [RO13]. In the second test, the low cost solution was evaluated for common 3D interaction techniques for VR-environments and came up with a *design guideline for 3D freehand interaction* [RO13].

- Avoid single actions with either high accuracy or keeping the hand up for long.

- Use goal crossing [AZ02] as a trigger.
- Map complex 3D-movements on 2D interaction.
- Use the extra dimension as a trigger.
- Avoid uncomfortable hand or arm positions.

In the end, Ren and O'Neill concluded:

"Freehand gestural selection enabled by a single low cost camera is a potentially valuable technique enabling flexible, low configuration interaction in 3D environments, without any requirement for dedicated devices to be worn on or carried by the user. With appropriate designs, freehand 3D interaction can share the appealing fluidity and immediacy of currently popular multi-touch surfaces, [...] enabling walk-up-and-use access to services, holding the promise of wide applications for ordinary users in everyday life." [RO13]

2.3 Goal of this Work

After having gathered experiences with several of the aforementioned interaction techniques, I intended to combine those experiences into a unique interface. Especially the intuitive motivation behind tangibles, touch-based interfaces and the immersive nature of VR-environments are interesting fields.

"Unfortunately, current user interfaces often lack adequate support for 3D interactions: 2D desktop systems are limited in cases where natural interaction with 3D content is required, and 3D user interfaces consisting of stereoscopic projections and tracked input devices are rarely adopted by ordinary users. The success, both in research and commercial applications, of recent touch-based interfaces raise an interesting possibility. Can the immediacy, control, and expressiveness of recent touch-based natural interfaces be applied to 3D problems?" [SKK⁺13]

I wanted to answer this question. But before that, several issues had to be dealt with. First, a suitable cooperation partner had to be found. As described earlier, a museum in Weimar was ideal. I needed access to an unbiased audience and topical expertise. Second,

we would have to agree on a feasible concept and clarify responsibilities. Subsequently, the system would have to be developed and implemented before the final installation could be evaluated in its real-world environment. Finally, some small adjustments could be made and larger improvements or augmentations should be discussed.

A museum was found, concepts were made and a touch-based or TUI for 3D interaction was needed. The *SMSlingshot* already combines this to some extent. It is a tangible device, which enables a user to splat short messages onto a facade [FHZ13]. The device's affordance is clear, since most people are aware of the functionality of both a phone-sized keypad and a slingshot. Nevertheless, the device can only be used by one user at a time. This is where *Shared Encounters* come into play. There are different types of interrelated spaces, which offer different grades of interaction between a user and either the interface or others [FH12]. In course of my work, those two key concepts will reappear in more detail.

In the end, my answer was using the most intuitive device there is: a user's body itself.

My focus lied more on the presentation than on the administration software, because it will be used most of the time. Nevertheless, I implemented the whole system to be as versatile as possible. It is not a customized solution for this one installation.

3 Partnering process

The very first step after having the idea of introducing a new way for information to be retrieved in public places, was to find a partner to realize it with. In order to find the most promising and possible cooperation, decision properties would have to be defined and considered for each institution before partnering with any of them. Afterward, a suitable exhibit, and an agreement on a design for the installation would be found.

3.1 Requirement analysis

To determine the ideal partner for a cooperation, a mutual beneficial system of needs and demand had to be established. Therefor, each party's needs and offerings were identified. As Table 3.1 shows, three major criteria were determined. Possible cooperations would be composed on those criteria. In addition, special characteristics would be considered as well.

	Museum	Me
Needs	Improvement / Innovation	Access to a public space with exhibits and visitors
	New group of visitors	Authentic content
	Publicity / Awareness	Potential test subjects
Offerings	A public space	Technological expertise
	Factual expertise	Development and testing
	Resources	Motivation

Table 3.1: Needs and Demand.

Museums want to get people interested in their respective topics. Thus, reaching more people and raising awareness is one of their main interests. A good way to attract new groups of visitors is to offer something unique and innovative. Although there are

companies offering services like guide- or information-systems, they are either cosmetic, expensive or high-maintenance. On the other hand, a museum has valuable offerings. Usually, they have a budget for renovation and improvements. The staff is highly skilled and experienced concerning the exhibits and visitors' behavior around them. Finally, a museum offers a public space, where a system can be tested under natural conditions. The Bauhaus-Universität or rather its chair of HCI and I wanted the final system to work in a real-life environment, but not as a lab-study alone. Hence, we needed access to a public place in order to reach a broad variety of people. Those would be unbiased toward the nature of interaction and content as well. Meanwhile, we could provide our knowledge of interaction design and the suitability of contemplable technologies. And lastly, I was highly motivated to develop a working system.

After finding a cooperation partner, a FSD would be made, which includes the system's properties ordered by necessity. In addition, a contract between all parties would be drawn up to register each party's contributions and obligations.

3.2 Potential partner museums

According to Museumsverband Thüringen (MVT) [Mus14b], there are a lot of museums in and around Weimar. More than 50 are listed within a distance of a few kilometers. Table 3.2 only shows museums registered at the MVT and the three towns with the most of them. Other towns have between one and six registered museums. Further, it is most likely that there are more museums than those in this list. It provides a good point to start from, though.

Town	Museums
Weimar	26
Erfurt	12
Jena	12

Table 3.2: Museums in and around Weimar.

Regarding the high amount of museums in Weimar alone, it seemed logical to start looking for a suitable cooperation partner right here. Since 26 museums are too many to investigate thoroughly, a preselection had to be made. In the first step, the focus

was on flexibility. This meant, only a small administrative apparatus could guarantee fast decisions and less organizational meetings with boards and other decision makers. Hence, all the *Klassikstiftung*'s museums were crossed of the list, narrowing it down to only 10 remaining candidates. Next, and after some further research, museums with less interesting topics or inconvenient concepts were withdrawn. This included the tiny *umbrella museum* and *Weimar Haus*, a place glutted with animatronics. Afterward, the list of candidates was down to five (see Table 3.3). A personal visit to each of these museums was indispensable now.

Museum

Deutsches Bienenmuseum
 Kirms-Krakow-Haus
 Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte Thüringens
 Palais Schradt
 Pavillon Presse

Table 3.3: Remaining cooperation candidates.

Gathering impressions in person was a process of three stages. In the first stage, I would visit a museum and note its technical and pedagogical equipment, directly followed by the next stage. The first, informal introduction to some of the staff was more or less a chat about my ambitions and the respective persons' attitude towards them. The final stage was a formal introduction-meeting between my professor, me and the administrative staff of each museum, that had expressed serious interest. This serious interest wasn't shown by the Kirms-Krakow-Haus and the Pavillon Presse. Hence, the aforementioned meeting only took place at the Deutsche Bienenmuseum, Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte Thüringens and Palais Schardt. We introduced ourselves at each venue, because a discussion about what might be done was more efficient directly on site.

3.3 Decision for a partner museum

A formal introduction-meeting went as follows. First, I explained some of my previous projects, related installations in other museums and the general intent of the professor's chair. Next, the staff explained their museum's concept and which subject area they

would like to emphasize. After that, we discussed potential concepts. Those ranged from augmentations of existing exhibits to completely new installations.

Deutsches Bienenmuseum The museum is run by the beekeepers association of Thuringia. The staff we encountered were very skilled with the craft of beekeeping, but less professional concerning museum education and design. They listened to my remarks and we had an inspiring discussion about potential topics and their feasibility. Unfortunately, the association's chairman and us could not agree on a specific project. Also, because bees hibernate, visitor attendances are seasonal and also fluctuant. Hence, the Deutsche Bienenmuseum was out of the picture.

Palais Schardt This venue is owned by a family, which exhibits multiple collections of art and crafts as well as the building itself. In addition, they operate a cafe and use the adjacent hall for events. The husband is a restorer by trade and gives talks about the building and its historic significance, while his wife handles planning and the cafe. Events are regular and the cafe supplies casual customers and visitors. Both were very interested in a cooperation and had some ideas for installations. But the monument protection of the building and minor financial issues complicated feasibility. Therefore, Palais Schardt also had to go.

Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte Thüringens Since the state office for preservation of historical monuments and archeology of Thuringia is the bearer of the museum, all personnel is very competent at their field of work. In addition, the museum employs special staff, that maintains the exhibition, gives tours and is present for arising topical questions during opening hours. Classes of 5th and 6th grade visit regularly for field trips as well as visitors from all age groups. The exhibition was already altered by several media installations. Moreover, the director was very ambitious from the first meeting and had several ideas, of which exhibits to emphasize.

Summarizing, the Deutsche Bienenmuseum and Palais Schardt were deemed less interesting and lacking feasibility. The Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte was chosen as the cooperation partner, because it checked the most boxes of the previous Requirement

Analysis (see Chapter 3.1), while the others lagged at least once in the *Needs-* or *Offerings-*category. It was the most professional and ambitious candidate with promising resources and conditions.

4 Conception

After the *Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte Thürigens* was chosen as a partner, all previous ideas had to be analyzed more thoroughly with feasibility in mind. Thus, impractical, and too complex or too simple ideas were eliminated in two rounds of review. At first, vague ideas were either improved or discarded. Hence, a screen displaying only information about a fossilized fireplace was eliminated. The idea of a system for digitizing stone carvings was considered too complex to realize and therefore discarded as well. Afterwards, some of the museum's staff and I looked at the contents, that could be provided for the remaining candidates. This left us with two remaining possibilities, that were promising enough from an educational as well as a technical standpoint. The first one was the reproduction of the *Fürstengrab von Haßleben*, which contains replicas and original artifacts from a 1700 year old grave of a teutonic princess. A close second was a workshop, which should have shown how archeologists and restorers work behind the scenes of a museum. Here, the latter consisted of too many single parts and a lot of questions remained unanswered.

According to the aforementioned review, the *Fürstengrab von Haßleben* was most promising and therefore chosen in the end. It contains many special relics from ordinary, teutonic pottery to rare, roman coins and jewelry as shown in Figure ??a,b and c. This apparent eclecticism is, what makes the grave so special though. It is a sublime showcase for thriving trade and cultural exchange between Teutons and Romans as far east as Thuringia. Further, it proves how Teutons began adapting roman traditions, such as burials. In order to emphasize this insight, an interactive system was to be developed. Unfortunately, the showcase is located on the second floor. Thus, it does not get the attention it deserves. People are often tired after having visited the first floor. Hence, the museum's staff asked for an installation that would reactivate the visitors' attention.

4.1 System Preconditions

The system was to be developed and tested by me, and the museum-staff will be responsible for its future maintenance. The range of visitors' backgrounds can not be foreseen. Some visitors might not have the proper technical experiences to operate contemporary interfaces. Consequently, it was crucial to design the system with that in mind. It had to be operable by absolute lay persons, who have no prior experience concerning information technologies. Hence, the interface had to be as intuitive and natural as possible. Four major points had to be considered.

First, established and abstract input devices, such as keyboard and mouse, had to be replaced by something more natural. In order to be intuitive, the interaction was designed to capture and use the natural behavior of visitors. Outputs, on the other hand, had to be as discreet and as conservative as possible to not disturb or interfere with the exhibition. Thus, invasive technologies such as speakers and animatronics were excluded by the museum from the beginning. This consideration only left visual and haptic channels for output. The third point was, that daily operations at the museum were not to be compromised. So, it was not possible to develop the prototype inside the Haßleben-showcase itself and a full-size mockup had to be build somewhere else. Furthermore, the showcase had to be protected from any possible decay and was not to be rearranged. Thus, I measured the showcase and acquired a room in which a mockup could be placed for the prototype's implementation and testing⁷. Finally, the system's components, in- and output devices, had to be robust enough to cope with daily use. Moreover, they should also stay in their intended place. This meant attaching them to the showcase in some way of form.

In summary, the requirements for the final system were narrowing down the possibilities right from the beginning. Hence, we came up with more than on idea and followed up on them, until one promised to be the most feasible.

⁷ For a further description of the lab-setup see Chapter ??

4.2 Concept Development

Developing the system, we followed two initial approaches. They should lead us to an intuitive, easy to use interface, which would be very naturally operable. The first concept featured the development of tangibles. Interactive objects would be placed outside the showcase and visitors would be able to interact with them. Haptic feedback would enable visitors to experience the exhibits in an unusual way. By touching replicas of otherwise locked up exhibits a deeper involvement is granted. Meanwhile, the other concept was based on gestural interaction. Here, visitors should be enabled to interact with the showcase by pointing. This approach was based on visitors natural behavior. Like the previous approach an uncommon experience should raise visitors involvement and attention.

Tangibles The early idea behind this work was to work with MS Gadgeteer to develop a tangible interface for and with a museum. Thus, we first thought about how to include those Gadgeteer-modules. Therefore, I build the demo device shown in Figure ??, which was based on a *FEZ Spider Starter Kit* [GHI14b]. In addition, it utilized an RFID-reader [GHI14d] and a potentiometer [GHI14c]. The RFID-transponders were attached to an old 2,5" Hard Disk Drive (HDD) and a wireless mouse. When the RFID-tags were recognized, an image of the object was displayed on the screen. By turning the potentiometer's knob the angle of view changed accordingly. This gave an impression of the possibilities of the hardware. Unfortunately, we only had two RFID-tags that had the size of a credit card. After some research though, I found some tags for the correct frequency band and in sizes from a grain of rice over credit cards to key chains [IK14]. Hence, including RFID-tags in tangibles was feasible.

The shape and size of the tangibles were still up for debate. Another point was, whether the hardware would be placed inside or outside the tangibles. This decision dictates the shape and size of the tangibles and therefore the interaction. If it would be placed inside, the tangibles would have to be big. They would have turned out at approximately the size of a box of milk. Such an *active tangible* would be handy and a whole system could be concentrated in one device. On the other hand, they would be prone to damage and maybe even theft. Hence, the tangibles would have to be tough and in some way attached to the showcase. In addition, batteries would have to be either charged or

changed. This would take a certain amount of maintenance.

With the Hardware outside the tangibles and hidden in a pedestal in front of the showcase, the tangibles could be smaller. Moreover, *passive tangibles* grant more flexibility concerning the shape as well. As described earlier (see Chapter 2.2 in [ULJ05], the tangibles could feature different properties depending on certain properties. In this case, several RFID-tags could be placed in each tangible. Depending to their *constrained* collocation on the RFID-reader, different reactions of the system could be triggered. In contrast to Ullmer et al. though, this affordance would be hidden and thus less obvious. The tangibles would have to be attached to the pedestal as well, although they would be less expensive to replace.

Both approaches had their advantages and disadvantages and none of them was concrete enough to make a decision. Thus, we continued to specify the concepts depending on their strengths and weaknesses. We did this, by anticipating probable relations between the exhibits inside and the behavior of visitors outside the showcase. There are several things visitors tend to do, if they are interested in an exhibit. They would like to inspect it up close. First, this means they would like to touch an exhibit and feel it. Second, they want to see it in more detail and from different angles. Next and induced by restrictions, visitors talk about an exhibit or request further information. This could be anything from its age to where and how it was found.

An active tangible could provide nearly all of those qualities in one package. It could - like the demo device - be fitted with a display and an RFID-reader. The corresponding RFID-tags could then be placed close to the device in order to trigger a particular output. Those outputs could be saved either on the device itself or provided by a server. The question of how to trigger different reactions was to be answered next. The device could either be placed on a pedestal equipped with RFID-tags or the tags had to be brought to the reader in any other way. As mentioned earlier, an active tangible would be sizable and it would have to be related to the showcase's topic as well. Hence, it would be reasonable to combine those two criteria and fabricate enlarged reproductions of exhibits from the showcase. In order to fit the whole hardware, an active tangible would have to have a simple shape. This unfortunately excluded several of the more interesting exhibits, such as coins, a golden ring and other jewelry. Some options remained though. There was a skull, pottery and the metal remains of two jewelry boxes.

The passive tangibles did not appear to cause this much consideration. Any exhibit

could have been 3D scanned⁸, turned into a digital model, appropriately altered to fit an RFID-tag and then printed or milled out. The printed or milled reproduction could be used as a positive to produce casting molds, afterwards. Thus, replacing damaged or otherwise lost tangibles would be more cost-efficient. In addition, it could be done by the museum-staff themselves. One or more RFID-readers could be placed in a pedestal in front of the showcase. Depending on the RFID-reader and a tangible's tag, the system would display the corresponding output.

During those considerations, a third possibility came up. A hybrid approach that combined both principles was possible as well. The reproduction of a jewelry box could be turned into an active tangible and passive tangibles could be put inside to trigger an output. The RFID-reader would be placed underneath the box's floor and the display in the lid. In order to provide different types of content, we thought about also producing two different types boxes. A more or less *authentic reconstruction* made of wood and metal fittings could provide authentic information about a passive tangible's cultural background. Meanwhile, the other box could be constructed of transparent material, which would allow the user to see the hardware. This *futuristic reconstruction* could provide statistical content for the same passive tangible.

However, the main problem remained with all approaches. Some kind of pedestal would have to be build and placed outside the showcase to hold the active and/or passive tangibles. Although passive tangibles would have been more cost-efficient to replace than active ones, maintenance was rated too high. Furthermore, if the pedestal was not to obscure the showcase, it would have been too low⁹ to grant satisfactory access for any visitor.

Pointing The alternate concept took a completely different approach. It was more related to VR and the interaction in 3D environments, where users are pointing at an object to select it [AA13]. The underlying idea was to develop an information system that would use pointing-based interaction. A user points at an exhibit inside the showcase, the system recognizes the gesture, calculates the intended object and displays the

⁸ The scans could have been done in the labs of the chair of Computer Vision and Engineering at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.

⁹ The height of the showcase floor is about 65cm. For more details see Chapter 5.

corresponding information.

Since the display should not interfere with the exhibits or occlude them, we had to make decisions about the position, size and type of the display. In order to not occlude exhibits the display should not be placed in front or above the exhibits. Directly behind the glass panel would also have been problematical. It should have been placed along the visitors' viewing direction as they already would be looking into the showcase. This way, it would still imply coherence through visual proximity. A monitor on the one hand, and a projector on the other were two possible technologies to choose from. Both came with their own challenges. While a projector would have been easier to conceal than a monitor, a monitor would produce less heat and noise. Because most of the visitors approach the showcase from the long side and tend to stay there for most of the time, the display should be visible from this direction. This meant placing the projection plane or display on the opposing wall. Another solution for a projector came up during this consideration. A Polymer Dispersed Liquid Crystal (PDLC) switchable film [IRI14] could have been placed on the glass panel. Whenever the system was activated, the film and projector could have been activated as well¹⁰. Unfortunately, this solution would have been too expensive and difficult to install. A projection in the other direction was also disregarded, because the cost and heat issues caused by a projector were considered to high. Therefore, we decided to install an LED-screen. It should be placed inside the showcase close to the exhibits.

Object selection in VR-environments [AA13] and the *SMSlingshot* [FHZ13], nearly always use a *pointing device* of some sort. With such a device, a potential user could directly point at the original exhibits within the showcase and trigger the corresponding reaction of the system - displaying corresponding information. As described in detail in Chapter 7.1, I observed interactions between visitors and the showcase as well as between each other. During the pre-study, it turned out that visitors often pointed at the particular exhibits they were talking about. The interface could be designed to emulate this natural interaction between visitors and incorporate of the natural behavior.

The first intention was to rebuild the SMSlingshot with Gadgeteer-hardware. The tangible was equipped with a microcontroller, a small display, a keyboard, a green laser, a

¹⁰ A PDLC switchable film can be switched between a transparent and an opaque state. In its opaque state, it can be very well be used as a projection surface [IRI14].

wireless transmitter and of course batteries. A PC was used to put all the information together and render the output. Therefore, it had a camera to track the point a user was aiming at and a corresponding transmitter to receive the fired messages [FHZ13]. All those modules could be provided by Gadgeteer except the laser. A laser could have been controlled with a *Breakout module* [GHI14a] and a relay. However, shooting a laser into the showcase was a delicate issue. Hence, this solution had to be revisited, because for safety reasons it was not feasible. There could have been injuries of visitors' eyes or some of the precious exhibits might have reacted to the laser's energy in a corrosive way. We did not want to take those risks, but we were very keen on the idea of pointing interaction. Thus, I looked for other tracking methods. We could have used a tracking system similar to the aforementioned ones used in VR. Those systems are expensive to install and maintain though. Moreover, a proper compatibility with Gadgeteer was doubtful. So, I started looking for alternatives to Gadgeteer, too. Two established systems immediately came to mind. First, the *Nintendo Wii*, which uses a wireless device with pointing capabilities and additional inputs. Second, the *MS Kinect*, which is able to recognize free-hand gestures and might not require any device. Both are comparably inexpensive to acquire, have experienced support and communities and use less dangerous infra-red (IR) light.

The decision between the two was made according to the same criteria as mentioned above. Pointing with no device should be a more intuitive way to interact with the exhibition and other visitors than any handheld device. Furthermore, the restraint to use the system should be reduced. No tangible or pedestal would have to be created and attached to the showcase, which decreased cost for maintenance. Hence, the MS Kinect was chosen.

There is a Kinect for MS Windows along with a special SDK for MS Visual Studio. As it turned out, the hardware inside the MS Kinect was developed by *PrimeSense* and is also used by the *ASUS Xtion PRO*. This 3D-sensor is less expensive and smaller, which allows to be less intrusive inside the showcase. Besides, we already had some of them at the faculty, which meant that I could start developing right away. Another change was the decision for an open source SDK called *OpenNI*¹¹, which in combination with its add-on *NiTE* would enable me to use *skeleton tracking*. This was critical for my

¹¹ OpenNI was co-founded by PrimeSense, a hardware developer that produces 3D sensing hardware. In November 2013 PrimeSense was bought by Apple, whereupon OpenNI was shut down.

approach, because I needed to have a 3D vector in order to be able to calculate where a user was pointing. Skeleton tracking would deliver the joints of a tracked person. Hence, I should get the directions a limb is oriented in. If this vector was extended, I could calculate its possible intersection with an exhibit. More about used software and the exact calculations can be found in the next chapter.

The last topic that needed addressing was *feedback*. Since there would be no haptic or acoustic feedback, and no *glowing dot* produced by a laser either, future users would need another visual feedback in order to be able to see where they were pointing and determine how to correct that. Once more, Gadgeteer could have provided a solution. Our first idea was to simulate the glowing dot by a spotlight. The system would calculate the position a user was pointing at and transmit it to a Gadgeteer-system. It would then move a special highlight to this position within the showcase. Only two actuators would be sufficient. The maintenance of this kind of installation could become very complicated though, because the system would have to be installed on the ceiling of the showcase. Actuators need to be calibrated regularly and mechanical gearing will wear out. Hence, this realization concept was dismissed. Nevertheless, the principle should remain the same. Thus, the aforementioned position would now be shown on an overview of the showcase on the display.

4.3 Final Concept

The final system would consist of a *depth sensor*, a *PC* and a *display*. All of the hardware would be placed inside the showcase. In addition, an active tangible to remotely activate and deactivate the system should be developed as well. It is only intended to be a feasibility study, which determines if and how active tangibles might be incorporated into the system, later. Suitable components would be recommended by me and provided by the museum after to mutual agreement.

Two softwares would be needed. The first software would be of an administrative nature. Museum-staff would define and maintain the whole exhibition with it. The second software is presenting the exhibition to the visitors. Previously defined exhibits would be selectable.

The exhibition could be defined by museum-staff themselves. Therefore, an exhibition

plane would have to be defined and validated as well as the exhibits' positions on it. Those positions can be defined in the same way users would later interact with the system, by pointing. To exclude a certain inaccuracy, to define a position it would have to be defined from different angles and validated afterwards. The whole process will be described in Chapter 5 and the technical execution in Chapter 5.1. Furthermore, the staff would provide the corresponding contents such as explanatory texts and detailed images. Contents and positions could be changed, removed from or reloaded into the exhibition.

When one or more visitors enter the area in front of the showcase the system would recognize them and react in an inviting fashion. An interaction zone would be declared from where one user would be able to interact with the system by pointing at an exhibit. No devices outside the showcase would be needed.

Functional Specification Document (FSD) The final concept all parties agreed on was written down by me in an FSD and responsibilities were covered by a contract. The document states, which features of the final system must, should and must not be implemented and working.

The necessary features or *must-criteria* where that the the system would have to have separate modes for administration and presentation of an exhibition. The visual feedback of the interaction would be provided by the display. Visitors would be automatically recognized by the system, but only one user at a time would be able interact with it. The whole system would be maintainable by the museum's staff and will start and shut down automatically.

Preferable features *should* be realized, but would not be mandatory. Thus, the should be a system's manual. Further, it should be possible to switch the system into a 'blind' mode for guided tours. Extensive exhibits should have a slide show. The system should be operable with either the left or right hand. In addition, statistics about the system's use should be logged for later analysis.

There were also criteria that were not requested, and therefore *should not* be implemented. Any free-hand gestures other than pointing should not be recognized by the system. Further, the lighting inside the showcase should not be controlled or influenced by the installation. Feedback should only be visual and not auditive or haptic. Hence, no speakers or tagibles should come to use.

Furthermore, the FSD describes system requirements concerning hard- and firmwares, data formats and other organizational parameters.

In addition to the FSD, a contract was drawn up by the university's layer's office. It sorted responsibilities and was later signed by the museum's director, my professor and me. Both documents can be found in the appendix.

5 Processes and Setups

In this chapter I will describe the system in detail. This involves the *interaction paradigm*, the *interface designs* and the *technical principles* behind the system.

Interaction In a typical *presentation software*'s scenario, one or more visitors can be involved. At the moment they enter the room of the showcase, the system recognizes them and changes its appearance. The screen will display a short and explanatory text about how the system should be used. In addition, an ideogram visualizes the description by showing a figure pointing at a plane in front of it. This view can be seen in Figure ???. If there are no visitors present, the screen will disguise itself by displaying an image of the showcases background. Because the system can only be used by one person at a time, there are footsteps on the floor (see Figure ??) to distinguish the user from other visitors.

In [FH12], Fischer et al. describe a variety of spaces around large, public, and interactive installations. I used an adapted approach to initiate interaction between visitors and our installation. Hence, the area in front of the showcase could be interpreted as an *activation* or *potential interaction space*, because at least the system will react to the visitors' presence and shows itself. This is the initialization of a possible interaction. Here, the *interaction space* is predefined and thus there is no *potential interaction space* [FH12]. Other spaces, such as *gap* and *social space* are also available (see Figure ??).

Once a user enters the interaction space, the system reacts again. This time, the screen will show the outlines of the exhibits inside the showcase. The position of each selectable exhibit is semi-transparently displayed over the outlines. Now, the user can point at exhibits of interest. The system will track the user's movements, and will calculate the position he or she is pointing at. This position is also overlaid on the outlines as shown in Figure ???. To be distinguishable, exhibits' positions are highlighted in blue, while the current pointing position is red. Users can utilize this visual feedback to correct their

gesture in order to 'hit' their intended target.

An exhibit gets selected, after the user constantly pointed at it for over half a second. This *dweltime* prevents unintended selections. Otherwise, any exhibit would be immediately selected, whenever a user's pointing position strokes over an exhibit. After selecting an exhibit, a corresponding description will be displayed alongside detailed images of the exhibit (see Figure ??). While the text will stay, the images will be displayed as a slide show. Afterwards, the system will go back to the exhibition's overview again. The user does not have to end a slide show and can wait until it is over or select a new exhibit while it is still running - without visual feedback though.

If a user is done or others want to try the interface out for themselves, users can change any time. They only have to switch places on the footsteps. The same applies for ending the session. – Visitors can leave at any point during the interaction. As soon as the system does not recognize any visitors around the showcase anymore, it will go back into its disguised appearance again. Again, no additional input devices are needed except people's natural behavior.

The *administration software* is more traditional and requires a keyboard and a mouse. Nevertheless, it also makes use of pointing gestures. This software can be used by one experienced user alone. But the ones that are less advanced might need a second person's assistance. The administration software can be used to create and edit IMI-exhibitions. Therefore, all necessary data can be defined with it. This data is saved in *configuration files* of XML-format. Those files are used by the presentation software and can be reloaded for editing by the administration software. Expert users can make changes with a text editor as well.

An exhibition consists of two main components. They are the *exhibition plane* and the *exhibits*. Both are defined by pointing. Upon the application's start, an existing exhibition can be loaded or a new one can be created by naming it. In case of a new exhibition, the first thing to be defined is the exhibition plane. Therefore, the administrative user again has the choice to either load an existing plane or define a new one. Should the user decide to define an exhibition plane, the procedure will be explained in a short instruction, before the calibration begins. It tells the user, to point at three of the planes corners from three different positions. Further, the user is told to follow the instructions during the process. In addition, ideograms like Figure ?? depicting the positions to go to and the corners to point at are shown during the process. Once the

process is started it will guide the user from position to position and corner to corner in fixed intervals between three and five seconds. After having pointed at the corners once, a second run is needed to validate the corners' positions. This is necessary, because a position could be defined wrong. If the validation is successful, the exhibition and its plane are saved. The second main component are the exhibits. They can only be defined or loaded, if a raw exhibition with a valid exhibition plane is available. The definition of an exhibit is similar to that of the exhibition plane. The user points at the respective exhibit on the earlier defined exhibition plane from three different positions. Afterwards, the position is validated.

One more necessary setting is the prospective *user position*. It is one of the exhibition's settings and can be set by simply choosing it from the drop-down menu and confirming with a button press. Subsequently, the administrative user gets the instruction to stand where future users are supposed to stand to be in the interaction space. After confirming and a short wait to get in position, the software will save the position. Only visitors standing close to this spot will be able to use the system. When defining the user position, there should only be one person in the scope of the camera.

The remaining parameters of both exhibition and exhibits have default values, which can be edited later. There are specially labeled buttons, which lead to the corresponding drop-down menus. Only the exhibition plane can not be changed this way.

Interfaces The presentation software has a minimal User Interface (UI). There are no control elements like buttons or menus. It only has the four different states shown in Figure ??.

The first one is the *standby state*. It is active, if no person in front of the showcase is recognized. The corresponding view's task is to mask the system. Therefore, the screen will only show an image of the showcase's background in order to disguise itself against it.

The next state gets activated, if visitors are present and none of them is inside the dedicated interaction space. This *introduction state*'s task is to make visitors aware of the systems presence and invite one of them to interact with the installation. As shown in Figure ??b, only a short introduction and an ideogram are needed to explain how the system has to be used. In Order to seamlessly integrate into the general style of the museum, the font was chosen to be the museum's corporate font. Further, the

background color was chosen to fit with the ambient color of the showcase, and to reduce the contrast between text and background. Moreover, the font size was increased to ensure readability. The associated calculations can be found in the next chapter.

The system gets into its third state as soon as a user inside the dedicated interaction space. It can be described as an *overview state*. Figure ??c shows the selectable exhibits' positions on top of all exhibits' outlines as blue ellipse and the user's pointing position as a red dot. While the exhibits' positions are always marked, the red *feedback position* only appears, if a user is really pointing at that particular spot of the exhibition plane. Otherwise, the red dot will not be shown.

The fourth state is the actual *presentation state*. It is similar to the introduction, but here the text and images depend on which exhibit had been selected. The corresponding texts are limited to approximately 300 characters, so visitors do not have to read extensively long descriptions. Meanwhile, detailed images of the chosen exhibits are displayed on the right half of the screen (see Figure ??d). They change every four seconds. This time an image shown for can be adjusted either by the administration software or by hand. After all images have been shown, the system will go back to any of the previous states. Where it goes depends on the visitors behavior. If a user is present in the interaction space, the system will go to the overview. If there are visitors present, but no one qualifies as a user, the introduction will be displayed. If everybody left during the presentation, the system will stand by and hide again.

The administration software is used to manage all data of an IMI-exhibition. Hence, the interface has to be more complex than that of the presentation software. It is more conventional, too. The amount of different views is low though.

Because it has to be usable by lay persons, similar tasks share a *view pattern*. For instance, Settings of an exhibition and an exhibit have identical controls in an identical layout. Only the views' header and the contents of the drop-down menus vary as can be seen in Figure ??. The same principle applies for any definition of positions (see Figure ??). No matter if the corners of an exhibition plane, the position of an exhibit or even the user position are defined, the view is always the same.

The interface is designed for task-driven use. This means, that an administrative user probably will have a particular reason to use this software. Such a task includes changing a particular property. Hence, the GUI offers the user to navigate to this property step by step. Therefore, a hierarchical structure is used, which results in less control elements in

one view and thus more clarity. There is less choice but a little more actions. Given the example, an exhibit should get an additional image. As shown in Figures ??a through d, a user loads the exhibition, chooses the exhibit from the drop-down menu, chooses "New Image" from the drop-down menu and copies with a button press. After that, a dialog opens and the user can choose the image to be added. Finally, the image appears in the images' drop-down menu. From this view, all other properties of the exhibit can be set. By pressing "Back", the GUI goes back to the exhibition's view and the next task can be attended.

Every time anything is changed, it is immediately saved. There are no undo- or redo-buttons. They are not necessary, because the GUI always shows the current state of all parameters and they can be changed with no more effort than using such a button. Moreover, more control elements could cause confusion. This is why only controls that are required at a particular stage are visible. Nevertheless, there is always the option to go back to the higher level menu.

5.1 Technical Principles

There are certain technical principles, which the systems performance relies on. They range from operations necessary for fundamental calculations to background knowledge involving a proper interface design.

Pointing Challenges Visitors can walk up to the showcase and point at exhibits. These exhibits are lying on an exhibition plane. A plane, although usually flat and only 2-dimensional, can be defined by three Points in 3D space. Thus, to define three corners of the exhibition plane, a way to define a point in 3D space was needed. Therefore, I chose the same type of input visitors would later have to use as well. Each exhibition plane's corner is defined by pointing at it from various positions. To calculate where a person is pointing at, the system needs a vector. A vector can be determined by two points in 3D space. One defines the start and the other the direction.

After observing how people point, the elbow was chosen to be the start of the pointing

vector. The pointing direction would be determined by the hand¹² as Figure ?? depicts. In order to define a point in 3D space, one vector was not sufficient. But, if two or more vectors would target the same point from different angles, their intersection should yield the targeted point. Figure ?? shows this thought. Hence, a the point of their intersection could be calculated by equating both vectors. However, this is a 3-dimensional problem. The possibility of vectors intersecting in 3D space is very low. They are mostly skew, and only their projections on a 2D plane do actually intersect. Nevertheless, there is a solution. Vectors may not intersect, but there is an area where they are closest to each other. Consequently, there is one point that is closest to both vectors. This quasi-intersection is called *pedal point*. It lies in the middle of the shortest line that is perpendicular to both vectors. In case both vectors do meet, pedal point and intersection are equal. Figures ??a and b illustrate how the projected intersection and pedal point can vary.

The final point in 3D space gets set by the average of all pedal points. A minimum of two vectors is needed to compute a pedal point. This is prone to error, because one bad vector is enough to corrupt the calculation. Hence, a multitude of pedal points can compensate for such a bad vector. How many vectors yield satisfactory points had to be tested (see Chapter 5.2).

Users are pointing at exhibits on a flat, horizontal surface. The distance between users and exhibits can vary and so does the accuracy. The further a target is away the bigger the *angular error* gets. This principle can be seen in Figure ??. For targets that are further away, α gets more and more acute. Hence, small variations during the pointing process have a much bigger influence with increasing distance to the target. It is an exponential problem and can be described by the *law of tangents*.

A realistic sample calculation shows how big the angular error gets. The scale is an adult user whose shoulder is constantly $a = 70\text{cm}$ above the plane. Further, the user stands an arm's length away from the plane and the target is 1.3m away from the edge. This results in a horizontal distance of $b_{\text{target}} = 2\text{m}$ between user and target¹³.

¹² NiTE's skeleton tracking provides both of these joints, but does not support the tracking of fingers. More details about the implementation can be found in Chapter 6

¹³ Here, the shoulder is taken as the rotational joint for illustrative reasons. However, the principle remains the same. Further, this configuration will reappear in Chapter ??

$$\tan \alpha_{target} = \frac{b_{target}}{a} \rightarrow \tan \alpha_{target} = \frac{700mm}{2000mm} \rightarrow \alpha_{target} \approx 19.3^\circ$$

The target's pointing angle α_{target} is approximately 19° . Due to human error, a user's arm will move. Given this movement can alternate one degree in each direction, the pointing under- or overshoots. How much this angular error influences the precision can be seen in the sample calculation.

$$\begin{aligned} \tan \alpha_{point} &= \frac{b_{point}}{a} \rightarrow b_{point} = \frac{a}{\tan \alpha_{point}} \\ b_{short} &= \frac{a}{\tan \alpha_{short}} \rightarrow b_{short} = \frac{700mm}{\tan(18.3^\circ)} \approx 1892mm \\ b_{long} &= \frac{a}{\tan \alpha_{long}} \rightarrow b_{long} = \frac{700mm}{\tan(20.3^\circ)} \approx 2116mm \\ \Rightarrow \delta_{short} &\approx 108mm \text{ and } \delta_{long} \approx 116mm \end{aligned}$$

This sample calculation shows that a variation of $\pm 1^\circ$ can cause an error of nearly 120mm in pointing direction. This led me to the conclusion that, if a person can not point with pin point accuracy, the system does not have to be calibrated to this accuracy. We would need to define a *sufficient accuracy* though. The angular error would be bigger for shorter users, such as children. It would additionally increase for targets further away. Nevertheless, a target would have to have the majority of sample positions within a radius of 100mm. This sufficient accuracy is about the size of a football, with the intended point in its center.

Yet another conclusion was to not calibrate each position to its correct position in relation to the sensor and measure if users come close to them. It is counter-intuitive to force a user to re-adjust to hit those positions. Instead, I chose to use the corresponding positions that were defined by users themselves. To hit a target, users do not need its accurate position in relation to the camera, they need the accurate position of where everybody else is pointing at. Hence, all positions are *virtual representations* of the real positions. Relations do not have to be correct, as long as the majority of users hit their designated target.

Readability Any user should be able to read the instructional and explanatory texts displayed by the installation. Therefore, the font size and the time a text is shown had to be taken in consideration.

The minimal visual angle at maximum contrast is one minute of angle or 0.017° [WKL12]. This only describes the ability to differentiate between a white and black dot. Readability involves whole letters and therefore needs a bigger visual angle. For people with normal or vision this angle is at five minutes of angle of 0.083° [ibid.]. This value only applies for people with normal vision, which means they are able to recognize a single letter 20 feet away (see Figure ??). People with normal eyesight have 20/20 vision, because, they can archive that. If people have 20/10 vision, they need to be 10 feet away to recognize the particular letter. A vision of 20/15 is more realistic for an average population [ibid.]. This principle can be applied to the Haßleben-installation as well. Given a distance from eye to letter of $b_{20/20} = 2.8\text{m}$ and the visual angle $\alpha_{20/20} = 0.083^\circ$, the height of a recognizable letter would be $a_{20/20}$ and calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \tan \alpha_{20/20} &= \frac{a_{20/20}}{b} \quad \rightarrow \quad a_{20/20} = b \cdot \tan \alpha_{20/20} \\ a_{20/20} &= 2800\text{mm} \cdot \tan (0.083^\circ) \approx 4.1\text{mm} \end{aligned}$$

Those 4mm are equivalent to a font size of 25^{14} . A text of this size is unreadable for the majority of the population though. Hence, I considered people could have bad eyesight or no glasses at hand and recalculated the font size for 20/10 and 20/5 vision. Since the tangent is not linear, the corresponding visual angles $\alpha_{20/10}$ and $\alpha_{20/5}$ could not be doubled or quadrupled. They had to be calculated according to the definition mentioned above.

with $b_{20/10} = 2800\text{mm} \div 2 = 1200\text{mm}$ and $b_{20/5} = 2800\text{mm} \div 4 = 600\text{mm}$

$$\begin{aligned} \tan \alpha_{20/10} &= \frac{a_{20/20}}{b_{20/10}} \quad \rightarrow \quad \tan \alpha_{20/10} = \frac{4.1\text{mm}}{1200\text{mm}} \quad \rightarrow \quad \alpha_{20/10} \approx 0.171^\circ \\ \tan \alpha_{20/5} &= \frac{a_{20/20}}{b_{20/5}} \quad \rightarrow \quad \tan \alpha_{20/5} = \frac{4.1\text{mm}}{600\text{mm}} \quad \rightarrow \quad \alpha_{20/5} \approx 0.343^\circ \end{aligned}$$

14 The system's display has a resolution of 159dpi. Thus, $\text{font size}[\text{pt}] := a_i \div (\frac{24.5\text{mm}}{159\text{dpi}})$

Those visual angles can be used to calculate the correct sizes of letters under 20/10 and 20/5 conditions.

$$a_{20/10} = 2800mm \cdot \tan(0.171^\circ) \approx 8.3mm$$

$$a_{20/5} = 2800mm \cdot \tan(0.343^\circ) \approx 16.8mm$$

The corresponding font sizes are 51 and 105. Unfortunately, neither of the calculated font sizes satisfied our requirements. Texts with a font size of 51 was not well enough readable, but with a font size of 105 there was insufficient room for a proper instructional or descriptive text. We compromised on a font size of 70, which allows for 300 characters and is still well readable.

Another factor influencing the readability of texts is the timespan for which they are displayed. If a text is shown for too long, visitors will get impatient, but if it is displayed too short they will get frustrated, because they could not finish reading. Hence, average reading speed should dictate for how long a text is shown. The average reading speed for German texts is 250 words per minute (wpm) [MR11]. With an average length of 5.7 characters per word in the German language [Dud14], this results in 1425 characters per minute (cpm). With a maximum of 300 characters per description, an exhibit's presentation should take no longer than 13 seconds. Not every exhibit is described by a text with exactly 300 characters. In case of a shorter text, the presentation should be shortened accordingly.

However, there are also images in an exhibit's presentation. To observe an image, we estimated a default timespan of four seconds. Unfortunately, the system does not know, whether a user reads the text or looks at the images. Hence, there is no way of knowing when to change an image during the slide show. Consequently, the time to inspect those images should be added to the time to read the description. In this case, extensive exhibit presentations would take a long time, what could make visitors impatient. Therefore, an exhibit's presentation takes the maximum time of either the reading task or the slide show. A user can select the exhibit again, if there still is interest in the exhibit.

5.2 Iterative Development

Before anything could be installed or evaluated, the aforementioned principles had to be implemented and their reliability tested. Therefore, I researched suitable environments for an extensible system. Because most SDKs for PrimeSense's hardware are implemented in C++ or C# and Gadgeteer uses Microsoft's .NET framework and C#, the final system should be implemented in C#. However, an SDK written in C# was to be found. After having tried several open source frameworks, the Full Body Interaction Framework (FUBI) developed at Universität Augsburg proved to fit our needs best. FUBI came with a C#-wrapper, which incorporated all functionality of OpenNI and NiTE that was necessary to achieve our goals. Moreover, its leading developer, *Dipl.-Inf. Felix Kistler*, kindly explained how to incorporate FUBI to our new system. FUBI provides a mechanism to access the coordinates of every tracked persons joints. NiTE tracks and calculates the positions of 25 joints for each person. Further, those joints can be separately updated in real time. Hence, it is possible to only get the positions of necessary joints. This reduces requests and consequently saves performance. Details about the implementation of updating joint positions and further use can be found in Chapters 6.2 and 6.3.

First Test The first test was designed as a proof of concept. The basic feasibility of the aforementioned principle of pointing gestures and the gestures' accuracy were tested. Therefore, a subject had to define a point in 3D space.

The setup that was used for the first round of testing can be seen in Figure ??¹⁵. The sensor was positioned at about the same position it would later be inside the Haßleben-showcase. Centered in front of it, a turquoise whiteboard magnet was attached to the white surface of the *lab setup*. It has a diameter of approximately 2cm. 18 subjects, who ranged from 160cm and 188cm in height, took part. All of them are either students or researchers of the faculty of media at Bauhaus-Universität Weimar.

The definition of a point in 3D space was tested with each subject. Only one independent variable (IV) was changed throughout a session. It was the amount of positions from where the point had to be defined. Subjects did five rounds for both three and five

¹⁵ The exact specifications are described in the next section of this chapter.

positions. They were shown the magnet and told to point at it from three and later five positions. Those positions were marked by metal braces along the surface's edge opposite the sensor. Subjects were not given any visual aid, but an audible countdown in form of beeps was provided instead. At its end a subject either had to point at the target or move to the next position.

As expected, the principle worked...

- Test of pointing accuracy
 1. One centered Point I
 - Only Pointing
 - *Images and sketches*
 - *Data and Statistics*
 - results and conclusion
 - See appendix
 2. One centered Point II
 - Pointing, Aiming and Combined
 - *Images and sketches*
 - *Data and Statistics*
 - results and conclusion
 - See appendix
 3. Four Points on each corner of the plane
 - Classification of combined values
 - *Images and sketches*
 - *Data and Statistics*
 - results and conclusion
 - See appendix

- Development of algorithms for eye-hand mismatch (elbow/hand + head/hand)
 - Description of Eye-Hand Mismatch [ref]
 - *Sketches of classification*
- Test of algorithm's accuracy
 - Target = '90 percent of all values within a 10cm radius of mean value'
 - Differentiation between real and virtual point
 - Necessity of 1:1-mapping of real and virtual point

5.3 Development Setups

Three installations were build. One lab-setup for development, one makeshift setup was placed in the faculties lobby, and the final one was installed inside the showcase in Museum für Ur- und Frühgeschichte Thüringens. The various setups differed more or less in dimensions and were run with different hardwares. Early tests were conducted with the lab-setup. The lobby-setup was used for a stress-test during an open door-event at the faculty, whereas the final evaluation took place in the museum. Then, only the presentation-software was tested.

Lab Setup A special lab had to be found and equipped with all necessary Hardware. The Hardware was lend to me by multiple sources of the faculty, while the museum's carpenter made a pedestal consisting of a surface and feet. The surface is made out of four 9mm-press boards. The feet seemed to unstable and thus were replaced with one desk rack for each board.

Lobby Setup After some technical difficulties with the museum-setup, the first test under aggravated conditions was conducted during *Summæry*¹⁶. Therefore, I build a

¹⁶ Summæry is an open door-event at the faculty of media, where all chairs present their work throughout the faculty-buildings.

makeshift setup in the facultie's lobby. It consisted of three tables forming the exhibition plane and a bar table, on which the computer and a tripod with the sensor on top were positioned. There were three targets - a candy bar, a stack of coins, and a stack of fliers - lying on the plane (*see Figure*).

5.4 Museum Setup

- Automatic boot at 8:30am [Bios]
- Runnnging
- Logfiles for each *Session-Event*
 - Start Session: User in interaction zone ($\text{Exhibition.UserPosition} \pm \text{Threshold from SessionHandler} := 250\text{mm}$)
 - New Target: User pointing at a target
 - Target Selected: Dwelltime ($\text{Exhibition.SelectionTime} := 700\text{ms}$) starts slide show for selected target
 - End Session: User leaves interaction zone
- Automatic shutdown at 4:45pm [Software]

6 Implementation – Interactive Museum Installation

The IMI-system consists of two main parts. First, the hardware part involves the physical tracking and computing of its data in the background. Second, the software part, which includes the IMI-libraries and -softwares utilizing them.

6.1 Libraries

Annotations

- 'What are the libraries?'
 - Overview
 - Structure of Exhibition and Exhibits
- 'What does each one do?'
 - Modularity
 - Config-files (XML)
 - Particular methods (Lotfußpunkte, Ebenenschnittpunkt, DataLogger etc.)

6.2 Administration-software

Annotations

- 'What is the administration-software?'

- Define and edit exhibitions
 - * ExhibitionPlane
 - * Define, load and remove Exhibits
 - * Define and change UserPosition
 - * Edit dwelltimes
 - * Load Background(s)
- Define and edit exhibits
 - * Define and change Position
 - * Load and remove Images
 - * Write and load Description (up to 310 characters)
- 'What does it do?'
 - *Sequences*
 - Paper-mockup
 - Create (re-)loadable Config-files

6.3 Presentation-software

Annotations

- 'What is the presentation-software?'
 - Display information of previously defined interactive exhibits
 - Overview-map of ExhibitionPlane
 - Feedback of exhibits' positions and pointing position
 - Description (Readability, Sehwinkel) and Images as slide show
- 'What does it do?'

- Check for Exhibition
- Pre-calculate Lookup for exhibit-selection (saves processing power)
- Recognize visitors
- Identify user by predefined UserPosition

6.4 Presentation-remote

Annotations

- 'What is the presentation-remote?'
 - Microsoft Gadgeteer-Device
 - Bluetooth / WiFi-connection to PC
 - For lecturers in order to explain exhibits themselves
- 'What does it do?'
 - Automatically connect to Presentation-software
 - Toggle Presentation-software's blindness

6.5 Statistics-tool

Annotations

- 'What is the statistics-tool and what does it do?'
 - Small tool to evaluate logged user-data
 - Statistics, such as average length of stay/session, exhibits chosen and how many transitions

7 Evaluation

7.1 Pre-Study

7.2 Post-Study

Annotations

- Pre- and postcondition of exhibition
- Survey of visitors' behavior prior to system's installation and afterwards
 - Interaction between visitors
 - Interaction with display
 - **LOS! (LOS!)**
 - Interviews
 - Evaluation-Forms

8 Discussuion

Annotations

- Conclusions
 - Comparison to Conception
 - Comparison to 'Pflichtenheft' see *Ref: Appendix*
- Anecdotes
 - Very short short-time memory → Instruction-sticker
 - Misconception of screen an a simple video and no interaction
 - Inhibitional factors (shyness, frustration, being watched)

9 Future Work

Annotations

- My work in relation to situation described in chapters 1 and ??
- Outlook of possible further developments or optimizations of the system
 - Multi-user
 - Mobile devices
 - Audio
 - 3-dimensional positioning of objects and users
 - different possibilities of feedback

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