PROTOTYPING ASSIGNMENTS

Instructor: Michael Murtaugh

From the Master Media Design and Communication Masters at the Piet Zwart Institute, a center for graduate studies based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands

Module Title: Prototyping

Within our programme practice is fundamental to building on existing knowledge and skills and producing new knowledge. The Prototyping module is about conducting research through iterative stages of analysing and understanding technical processes and their histories, making prototypes that demonstrate these techniques, testing these techniques for the purpose of communicating your ideas, and critical reflection upon these processes. Prototyping asks you to combine the gathering of new practical technical knowledge with your own research either linked to the thematic seminars or your own individual work. It encourages you to make tests and prototype designs and projects that "work" not only technically, but also on a communicative and conceptual level.

Through prototyping, fundamental concepts of programming will be explored in the context of tools and methods familiar to those with a design background. Graphical interfaces will be contrasted with command-line interfaces as a means of going beyond traditional "iconic" and "user-friendly" ways of working   Get tools - toward the procedural and text-based. Effort will be placed at finding ways to bridge traditional top-down design tools with a code-oriented approach. You do not need to have a particular level of technical experience. What is expected of you is an active engagement with and willingness to explore networked digital media technology. Students of all levels and previous experience will be encouraged to stretch their ways of working and knowledge to hopefully explore previously unknown or uncomfortable territory and broaden their palette of tools. Free software and free software licenses play a central role to the course as: (1) a model for learning and sharing technical knowledge, (2) as a way to break open and question traditional "seamless design" and questions of authorship implicit in proprietary tools and platforms, (3) as a critical tool to investigate software and technology from a social, political, and historical perspective.

Prototyping works with a set of exercises and formal assignments. Exercises are small projects to be completed usually in class that allow you to explore specific course material in a hand-on fashion. Each trimester a series of assignments build upon the exercises and provide a means of formally assessing your work.

Assignment: Human Computation Exercise
http://pzwart3.wdka.hro.nl/wiki/Human_Computation
http://pzwart3.wdka.hro.nl/wiki/Human_Computation:_Adding_Machine

Tutor:

Michael Murtaugh teaches in the Master Media Design and Communication programme at the Piet Zwart Institute. He is a member of Constant, a Brussels based collective engaged in the fields of free and open source software, feminism, copyright alternatives, and collaborative networks. With Constant he is currently working on Active Archives, a platform for diverse material ranging from texts to images and video. Seeing the project as

both technical and cultural, the system facilitates, re-use of material while enriching content through metadata, vocabularies, and taxonomies. Next to these activities, Murtaugh did his Masters (1994-1996) in the Interactive Cinema Group at MIT, and is the founder of automatist.org, a new media design firm specialised in community databases, interactive documentary, and tools for new forms of reading and writing online.

website: http://automatist.org/