

NUS School of Computing

AY 2012/13 Semester 2

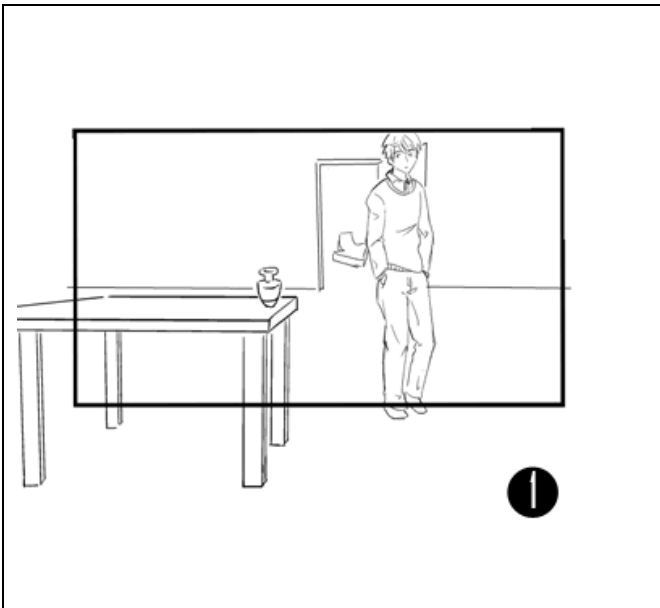
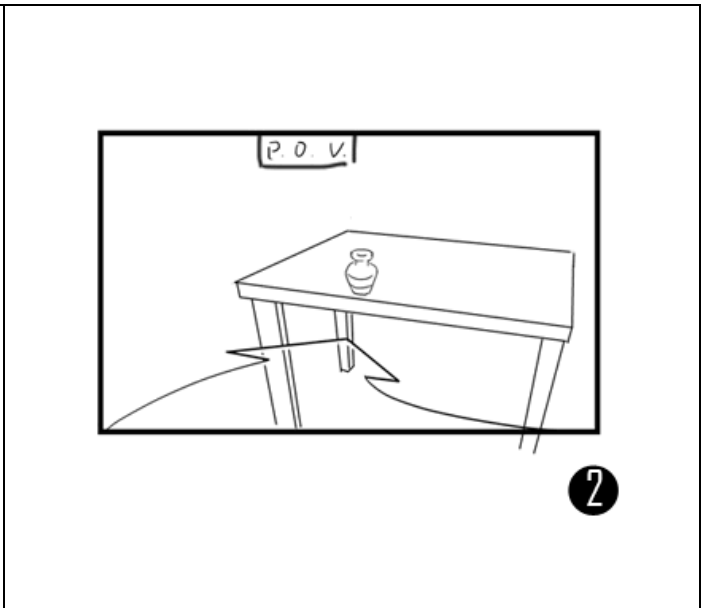
CS4340 Digital Special Effects: Final Project

Like the previous year, the Final Project in this semester will be more focused, and yet still allow for creativity. Please read through this document, and plan ahead with your teammates. Use the IVLE Forum to ask questions (so that other students will benefit; they are likely to have the same questions as you), or to give suggestions.

In this Final Project, you are to produce a video containing the visual effects as depicted in the storyboard below. The main effect is that of a CG bottle inserted into real footage, and the protagonist, whom we will call Curious, drinking from the bottle. Your video should begin with a title page showing your group's name, and the words "CS4340 Digital Special Effects". Display this title page for a few seconds, then immediately cut to Panel 1 of the storyboard. No further preamble is required or necessary. The focus of this Final Project lies in the visual effects, not in the plot of the story. There is therefore no need to situate the VFX in a coherent and logical storyline.

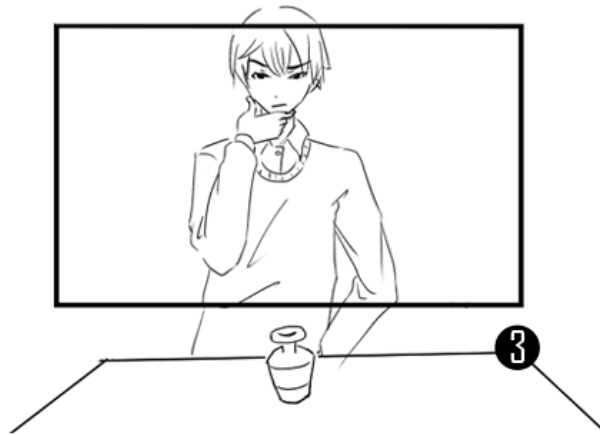
Your video should depict all the key characters, actions, and effects in the storyboard, including camera shots and moves. Panels 1 through 6 should occupy at least 20 seconds in your video. After Panel 6, you may further extend the video for at least another 10 seconds, but not more than 30 seconds, with additional actions and visual effects as your creativity guides you. For instance, you may show Curious acquiring other super powers and testing these powers (eg lifting a piano with one hand). Alternatively, Curious may shrink small enough and hitch a ride on a passing ant. Let your imagination fly here, as you will be awarded marks for your creativity.

Storyboard

 <p>A line drawing of a character with glasses and a backpack walking into a room. A table with a glowing bottle on it is in the foreground. A doorway is visible in the background.</p>	 <p>A line drawing of a table with a glowing bottle on it. A camera path is shown with arrows, indicating a dolly in and around the bottle. A box labeled 'P.O.V.' is above the table.</p>
<p>1. This shot begins with Curious walking into a room and noticing the special glowing bottle sitting on the table. The bottle starts to move</p>	<p>2. POV shot as Curious walks closer to the bottle. The camera should dolly in and around the bottle,</p>

(eg. jump or shake or emit smoke) to attract Curious's attention.

because Curious is examining the bottle from side to side.



3. Mid shot showing Curious contemplating what to do. The bottle continues to move (jump, shake or emit smoke) as if to beckon Curious to drink from it.



4. Curious picks up the bottle and drinks from it. Camera zooms or dollies in for a close up shot showing the drinking action.



5. Suddenly, Curious drops the bottle, which smashes to the floor. Close-up shot of Curious grasping his throat in agony. Camera wiggles to show the struggle.

[Panel intentionally left blank]

6. Curious starts to grow large OR to shrink. You decide which. Draw in this panel to show this happening. Choose your own camera shot/angle/movement to best convey this effect. The bottle should briefly appear in your shot, lying on the floor with some liquid spilled from it.

7. Continue the story for another 10 to 30 seconds. Use your creativity to create additional visual effects.

Tasks

- Shoot the raw footages as a group. You need to act out the characters Curious and adhere to the camera views and movements shown in Panels 1 to 5 as much as possible. Dialogue, if used, should be kept to a minimum.
- Individually, each member of the group will create the CG bottle and animate it (jump, shake or emit smoke). The model of the CG bottle will be provided to you; you are required to use this model, and no other. That is, each individual will be assessed on his/her creation of the VFX depicted in the storyboard.
- Now choose one of these individual effects video and extend it as a group project. Continue the story as your group decides.
- Submit a Project Proposal for your video extension, ie. what happens from Panel 6 onwards. This Proposal should contain the following:

- Your group’s name, members’ names, and matric numbers.
- A one-line description of the effect to be achieved, e.g. “Human riding an ant”, if you decide to let Curious ride an ant.
- A synopsis: in one paragraph, elaborate on the effect. Describe its novelty. It is best to do one major effect rather than many small ones.
- Production notes: describe the visual elements needed to achieve the effect; describe how to create the visual elements, and how these are combined together to achieve the effect.
- Roles of each group member: distribute the tasks evenly among all members of your group, and say who is to do what.
- Production schedule: using a table or timeline, describe the tasks in pre-production (e.g. making or acquiring a miniature, or other props), production (where and when to shoot the raw footages, including footage for the “Making of” video), and post-production (e.g. compositing, CG modeling and animation).
- Submit a Progress Update. This is a concise summary of the work done to date, the problems encountered and how you intend to overcome them. Also include a schedule for the remaining work to be done. If your effects deviated significantly from the original one stated in your Proposal, then submit a new storyboard and synopsis as well. Along with this, submit any raw footages you have captured, or partially edited videos, to demonstrate your progress.
- Also produce a “Making of” video (no more than 3 minutes long) that explains the key steps in creating your video extension. You could narrate the steps, or use subtitles, or both. But at least one of these must be present. If you show screen recordings of how you used, say, After Effects, to create your effect, please speed up these screen shots lest it gets boring to watch. With careful planning, you can overlap your shooting of raw footages for both the effects and “Making of” video during production so as to save time.

May’s and May-not’s

May’s	May-not’s
You may dress Curious any way you like; there’s no need to dress him as shown in the Storyboard.	You may not substitute Curious with a CG character or miniature or puppet. Curious must be a real human actor.
You may situate the entire scene outdoors or indoors. If outdoor, then find a table to place the bottle.	You may not replace the model of the CG bottle given to you. You must use the model provided.
In Panel 4, you may show the liquid pouring out of the bottle into Curious’ mouth. Or you may omit showing the liquid.	The table must be real, not CG. And the bottle must be CG, not real.
It is ok to have the clothes that Curious is wearing shrink/grow along with Curious. However, if you want the clothes to remain unchanged, like the effect in Alice in Wonderland (2010), you may do so.	In Panel 6, Curious must either grow large, or shrink small. There must be an obvious size change, relative to the other objects in the scene.
Audio is optional, but adding it will likely impress the judges during the competition.	Don’t depict excessive violence, or blood and gore in your video. Avoid sexual

Having, or not having, audio will not affect your grade.	content or themes, racist, vulgar or other objectionable material. Don't use your video to make political or religious statements.
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Grading Criteria and Competition

Your project will be judged according to these criteria:

- Realism in the visual effects, including secondary effects, such as shadows cast by the bottle on the table.
- Creativity: Camera work (shot types, camera movements), Novelty
- Technical difficulty in creating the effects.

All group videos will automatically be entered into a competition for the Best VFX Award. A panel of judges will decide using their own criteria (unfortunately, these criteria are not known in advance). A prize will be given to the winning group. However, this competition has no bearing on your academic grade.

Submission and Deadlines

	Item	Deadline	Remarks
Each group	Project Proposal	Sunday, 10 Mar., 23:59 hrs	Name your file <group_name>-proposal.pdf. Use only PDF format.
Each group	Progress Update	Sunday, 31 Mar., 23:59 hrs	Name your file <group_name>-update.zip. In this zip file, include a PDF file describing your progress, as well as any videos to demonstrate your progress.
Each individual	Effects video for Panels 1 to 6 of the storyboard.	Sunday, 14 Apr., 23:59 hrs	Name your file <your_name>.mpg.
Each group	Effects video containing Panels 1 to 6, plus your continuation of the story.	Sunday, 14 Apr., 23:59 hrs	Name your file <group_name>-effects.mpg.
Each group	"Making of" video	Sunday, 21 Apr., 23:59 hrs	Name your file <group_name>-making-of.mpg.

Remarks:

- a. Submit your files via IVLE into the appropriate Workbin folder.
- b. Please use ONLY these file formats: MPEG2, MPEG4, DIVX, Apple QuickTime MOV. Do not use AVI format, as these tend to be too large.
- c. IVLE limits each file to 200Mb. If you really can't keep to this limit, then put your video in Dropbox and provide the link.
- d. Use a consistent aspect ratio throughout your video capture, editing, and final comp to avoid distorting the scene or characters.
- e. Try to use high definition, e.g. 720p. The lowest acceptable resolution is VGA: 640x480.

ENJOY!