

Chapter 3

Creating Characters for Various Interfaces

Anna Ursyn

University of Northern Colorado, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter is focused on the theme of creating characters for visual storytelling discussed in practical, theoretical, and historical terms. The description includes a discussion of artistic forms acting as characters for telling stories, various meanings conveyed by characters in semiotic terms, the creating of characters by drawing, and then a set of learning projects follows, on creating characters for various interfaces.

INTRODUCTION

Both traditionally drawn and computer drawn characters are a great part of our everyday experience including communication, learning, productive work, and artistic activities. Many types of traditionally created characters have found their continuation in computing-based media, especially when accomplished in a digital, interactive, and shared environment. Interaction techniques for digital transfer from the old resources to a currently demanded destination start from the old cut, copy, and paste operations, often without any concern about the copyright issues.

Drawings can have strong storytelling properties. By adding characters as visual storytelling to traditional drawing, character makers become immersed in a fourth dimension, wandering across time and space. Storytelling by drawing characters is about delivering emotions: visceral, emphatic, or voyeuristic. When we paint colors on a computer screen we evoke emotional responses from the audience. Animation in storytelling allows us to slice through the time dimension to enhance dramatic actions, show suspenseful obstacles, and build tension before resolving a conflict. Figures and characters offer flexibility in communication path through transformations or by inducing interactivity.

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Storytelling by drawing characters can act as a crucial interface between the visual and the verbal. We might see this capacity in sketches that serve as a starting point to create manga, blogs, and even products and architectural schemes. Characters may evoke personal experience in the mind of the viewer through received and perceived information. Thus, the viewer becomes the co-creator of the art. Digital storytelling can coexist with other techniques such as video, performance with physical and virtual interaction, visual surveillance, motion tracking, and artificial intelligence.

ARTISTIC FORMS ACTING AS CHARACTERS FOR TELLING A STORY

Creating characters may serve as a way to communicate within many literary and not only literary forms, including:

- Illustration
- Portrait
- Comics, Comic book
- Graphic novel
- Doodling
- Cartoon
- Manga
- Data visualization
- Timeline
- Infographics
- Sequential art
- Joke, Cartoon
- Web tree, Web cloud
- Storyboard
- Architectural drawing
- Abstract graphics
- Mathematical equations
- Chemical molecules
- Physical laws – visual description
- Electrical circuit
- Road signs
- Signage
- Marketing
- Advertisement
- Clipart
- Music notation
- Calligraphy
- Realistic drawing versus the essence of the object – among many other options.

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