

Document of Critical Reflection

1 Introduction

This document is a response to my original document of intent, where I compare my roles and how I think I performed.

2 Supervisory Roles

2.1 Environment modelling and supervision

I created the building and most of the external environment. I worked on updating the various locations within the environment that other people had worked on.

2.2 Lighting Supervision

I didn't need to supervise the lighting as I was the only one who had created any lights.

2.3 File Document Supervisor

Overall, I think the use of the SharePoint group has been a great success for the group. I also introduced the Y drive, which we all used successfully and it cut down a lot of problems we may have had with reference files and transferring animation between people.

We spoke a bit more about the procedures for the referencing of the files in the main animation. We decided to try and put the reference files and the sourceimages for those scenes into a subfolder in the main project. That way texturing and rigging should remain intact when animating.

2.4 Camera Supervisor

I had minimal contact with other over the camera work. Most of the shots remained the same as the ones I had setup in the Previz 2.0.

3 Primary Roles

3.1 Shop Environment

General Modelling

I created some extra parts for the internal building environment such as the lifts and stairs. I also worked on

I have some ideas of materials/textures for the wall and floor, which will break up the large flat areas, including signs, images and pictures for the walls.

We are in discussions about where to put visible hanging lights and signs.

Electrical Area

I am responsible for the modelling, UVing and texturing of the Electrical area. I have drawn up some possible plans for the area along with the items to populate it. I have created a set of TVs with images of our previous work. I have done some design sketches of other items I intend to create, such as toasters, mobile phones and tablets. I will setup a better stand for the fans Rachel created, including price tickets. I will also look to texture the fans in conjunction with Rachel.

Café

I sat down with Zihan and talked to her about the café and suggested a gazebo style bit above the café area. In our discussion we thought it could be made into a tea place with a combination of Western and Chinese styles.

I saw Zihan's work in progress of her Café, which looked really good but I realised we will have to decide on how we want to texture the models and environment.

3.2 Exterior Environment

I managed to do some further modelling of the external environment. I also managed to get some textures sorted for the pavement and the roads.

3.3 Child Character

I actually did a lot of work on the characters, I took them from low quality UVs and textures to higher

3.4 Lighting

I setup all the lights that were used in the scenes.

3.5 Compositing

I did all the compositing of the Previz and the final animation. On the morning of the presentation I directed the others towards the comp, but it wasn't used to create the final animation, as a new comp was created instead.

3.6 Animating

I managed to do some animating within the Previz 2.0, where I setup all the shots and created a few new ones from scratch. I also did a brief bit of character animating when I worked on the shot of the Deer throwing the fan.

3.7 Rendering

I managed to get some test renders sorted and, in some cases, ably supported by Beck who was on a machine within the university, running and monitoring a render test for me.

I helped Beck, remotely, download the various files on to the classroom computers ready for rendering the main animation.

When it came to rendering the main animation I managed to render a few different scenes on my machine. Along with scenes rendered by the others on the classroom or personal machines, we managed to render about half of the total number of scenes.

4 Secondary or Support Roles

4.1 *Technical support*

I spent a lot of time providing technical support to the others, often to the detriment of my tasks. I had to weigh up whether to let a team member struggle and spend a lot of time trying to figure something out for themselves against the time lost to the group if I could either complete the task more quickly myself or help them to complete the task.

4.2 *Production Manager*

I continued to support Rachel in this role on a regular basis. I provided her with some useful procedural documents, although they were never finalised and presented to the group.

4.3 *Music Liaison Officer*

I was in contact with my friend on a regular basis. He submitted a nice tune on time, which we added to the animation. I did have to work on the conversion of the Midi file and was only partially successful at finding suitable samples to get it to sound correct. In the end I think everyone was happy with the music even though it wasn't a finished version.

4.4 *Texture testing*

I found a lot of textures that we could have used in the project. I added any I thought we were likely to use to a folder within the SharePoint group, so everyone could use them.

While creating textures for the characters, I did experiment with a lot of options and successfully used layered textures on several occasions. I also created a nice glowing effect using the Emission node in the aistandardsurface material.

4.5 *Crowd testing*

We continued to use only the Fuse and Mixamo characters. I had hoped to get into Daz3D and find other software to create children for the ball pit sequence. The only thing I was involved in for this aspect of the project was finding a plugin for creating a rig control for these characters and a tutorial video. I searched for these on behalf of Zihan who had created some characters and wanted to use them in the animation.

4.6 *Plant testing*

Unfortunately, I didn't manage to do much more experimenting in this area. I did manage to do some basic research on various programs that we could have used for creating plants, as I never got as far as having any of them up and running.

5 Standby Roles

5.1 *Production Manager Cover*

Rachel was on holiday for a week, so I didn't have to offer any cover for that long. During her absence I spoke to the Beck and Zihan and checked they were okay with their tasks. I gave Rachel a verbal update on the work when she returned.

6 Mentoring

This was not a role I wanted to do but naturally, as the oldest and most experienced it fell upon me to help the others whenever I could. I think I offered a lot of support to the group, but I was often side tracked with trying to fix others' problems. This did cause some issues for me as I would often take longer to complete my tasks than I wanted to. Made especially more difficult when a different member of the group was waiting on me to complete something before they could work on it.

I also helped Beck with the UVing of the Deer, just giving him some pointers on the new tools in Maya 2018.

7 Group Work

We had several meetings throughout the project timeframe and during those meetings I would regularly talk to the others about ideas for the project, future work requirements and processes we could implement.

I would ask everyone to come up with ideas for the scenes, particularly the ones with the potential to be improved in some way.

I spoke to the group about the order of the shots, including adding and removing ones. We opened the shot list up in Excel and worked through it as a group. I suggested we include columns in our shot list for type of shot, elements in shot and any sound i.e. music, FX, vocal. Up until then the shot list only had shot numbers, times and a brief description, which were also based on the original previz version. This would now make sure it included a lot more relevant information for each shot. Rachel added these during the meeting.

Following the meeting I checked the shot list and made sure the new columns were working properly, including the updated shot numbers column. I updated the Excel file so the new columns would continue working automatically with the timings column, which calculated the timings of the shots based off the shot length.

We also spoke about adding and removing shots, so we setup a new numbering system in the Excel file to accommodate the changes.

Discussed having the witch jump over the trolley and grabbing something in the middle of the jump.

We finally managed to finish going through the scenes. We also discussed the potential for a credit sequence. I also wrote down some suggested possible names for our production. In relation to that I showed the group an interesting logo idea I could create. We had a look at the logos and attempted to refine the ideas further. Before the meeting finished I asked if everyone could think about possible production names themselves, so we can all find something interesting to all of us. I think we are going to go with a combination of Welsh and Chinese. I suggested the logo could be a yin and yang symbol with a Welsh dragon on one side and a Chinese dragon on the other side.

I have suggested to Rachel that we could add the instancing options to Tuesday's session, so I can show everyone what I am talking about. This will help a lot with Zihan's café and Beck's rotisserie, where there are multiple versions of the same object. I have already done this with the store shelves and tills. I need to do it with the rest of the shop building. 13/07

I created a set of particle videos for the others to check out tomorrow. One render had a lot of balls in it and took over 6 hours to render. I realised it had to calculate each frame before rendering, so if I had checked the save cache option, it would have been a lot quicker.

I spoke to the group about instancing objects, and what the benefits are of doing it. We continued working on the shot list, trying to add in more relevant information.

Part way through the session Zihan showed us some hair she created for the shopkeeper. We must decide whether we want to do this for all the characters or not. We don't know how well it will work or how it will affect the rendering times. It may be okay on the shopkeeper and the child but not on the witch and deer. More investigation of this is required.

Zihan asked if she could do the texturing of the characters. I said I would add texture materials to the group documents for her to use.

I spent part of the day locating texture materials for Zihan to add to the characters. Some may only be accessible via Substance painter, so if that is working within the uni then I can help Zihan get started with it.

8 Summary

I tried to make sure the story make sense and actions along the way were logical and fit the story. I wanted to make sure the flow of the story worked, which was why I pushed for changes to the order of the scenes from the original previz version. We also added scenes in to try and add some more humour into the story. I came up with a couple of running gags that I thought might be funny, if done properly. First one was having a trolley being gently pushed away magically by the witch in a scene, which keeps rolling in the next scene and then pops up at the end and is still rolling. The other one was having a box moving around and finding the baby underneath it, although the first moving box is picked up by the shopkeeper to reveal the baby. In a later scene another box is moving in the background, so we can assume the baby has found another box to crawl around in. We did discuss maybe having the baby in the box in the trolley at the end. So part way through the credits, the trolley rolls past outside the shop.

I think we needed to have procedures in place for each set of things we worked on. I did present these to Rachel on a few occasions, but nothing was implemented.

I may have held up the production on one or two occasions by a day or two while trying to finish certain things that I felt were required to complete. A lot of the time I was trying to sort things out to avoid problems later on.

Biggest problem I had was trusting the others to do a good enough job and not cut corners. Some things were not up to a standard that I know they were capable of working too. I spent time fixing things that I don't think the others even knew there were problems with. I don't

know how much the others spent trying to figure any issues out that they encountered. Most of the time, rather than try and understand a problem and work out a solution, they would either ask me how to fix it or they would just ignore it or try and remove it. An example of this was the problem with working in the files that were slow. They didn't have the capability to work out why the files were slow, instead they just removed object until it worked.