

## HOBNOB Research Project



Banff Centre for the Arts and surrounding area  
Alberta, Canada (August 2004)

### History of Project

The integration of digital technologies into live theatre has opened-up storytelling to new creative possibilities and uncharted narrative terrain. Consequently, traditional scripting techniques have been fundamentally altered by the specific demands imposed by a multimedia stage. The various visual and audio elements that comprise a show's visual text, along with new narrative options promote multiform storytelling, allowing for the inclusion of numerous points of view, complex visual data, and diverse plotlines within a single story. The creative possibilities are endless. At the same time, though, these innovations demand new methods for scripting and a system of communication that facilitates communication between the playwright, the director and the designers.

In August of 2004 Dan Zellner and Kathryn Farley participated in a residency in new media design and application at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta to confront the challenges of scripting in a multimedia-based production environment. The focus of the residency was on developing a script format that can accommodate the various phases of theatre's creative process and, at the same time, be utilized for diverse purposes within a multimedia-based theatre environment. The collaborative team is especially interested in discovering elements of existing scripting programs that could enhance the process of creating plays for multimedia presentation and improve communication between the stage director, playwright and designers in the realm of digital theatre.

The team looked at practical and procedural questions related to new media art production, including:

How does one write a play for a multimedia stage?

**What tools can be used when a director and playwright collaborate?**

**Which existing scripting programs and narrative tools/devices can be adopted for use within a digital stage environment?**

**What specific elements of existing digital narrative software might be applicable to literary adaptation and related modes of inquiry?**

**What uses beyond theatre would a new script format for theatre have?  
(examples: game environment, simulations, etc.)**



Getting goofy at Banff

Following the initial phase of development, Zellner and Farley, along with a group of multinational digital theatre practitioners/scholars, decided to unite forces and form a research group dedicated to exploring issues related to multimedia authorship. In June of 2005 the group assembled at the International Federation of Theatre Research annual conference (held at the University of Maryland that year) to map out a strategy of operation and decide upon a collaborative subject of investigation. The group decided on a name and mission statement, as revealed in this call for papers for the upcoming (2006) IFTR conference:



*Digital Technologies, Visualisation and New Media  
in Performance*

**IFTR/FIRT**

**Working Group for Global vs. Local World Congress**

**Helsinki, Finland**

**August 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> 2006**

**The program of research for Digital Technologies, Visualisation and New Media in Performance is as follows:**

- **To produce research into new media technologies for performance**
  - **To disseminate new practice in terms of the use of digital media**
- **To use installation and theoretical research to further the use of new media in theatre, performance and cultural studies**
- **To explore interdisciplinary landscapes necessary for the use of new media in performance**
  - **To explore technology in a performance landscape**
  - **To explore collaborative tools for distant communication**

**The working group is interested in any papers, which engage with the above topics and areas for academic debate and discussion for inclusion in panels for the 2006 International Federation of Theatre Research conference. The work is to be developed for publication.**

#### **Documentation**

**This section of the site will document HOBNOB-related research as the project develops.**