



Virtual Puppet Theatre

Early learning aspects

We carried out a series of video-taped studies to investigate children's aptitude for the functionality involved in PUPPET. For many of these we built low- and mid-tech prototypes to test our ideas

How realistic should characters be?



- Main Findings: children prefer**
- Clear facial features that are realistic and simple
 - Simple, dramatic animations
 - Dramatic, exaggerated movements work best



How do children create/read character expression?

Main Findings:

- Giving children a selection of 'types' of sounds encourages creativity and improvisation
- Even the youngest children (4 years old) read cues for internal thoughts from external behaviour
- Facial expression and verbal expression of emotion contribute differently to interpretation
- Actions that are 'interactive' promote character elaboration and involvement



Can young children make use of editing/authoring tools?



Main Findings:

- children don't spontaneously make use of editing tools - they need a context and scaffolding
- given support they can easily learn to use such tools using intuitive interfaces such as concept keyboard
- changing facial expressions is a significant means of effecting new directions in setting up scenarios
- altering body postures is intuitively understandable to the children in terms of changing a story line

