Sean Madrid

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Media Editing as I See it Now

Throughout this semester in Media Editing we have learned a lot about something that most people take for granted. I think that the majority of people are unaware of how much effort is put into almost everything we see and do. Every single object in a grocery store is designed and therefore edited to evoke a certain response from the shopper. The same goes for songs, movies, and anything on the internet. I think that any form of communication that is not deliberately edited is probably edited subconsciously or (in-effect) by circumstances.

I come from a graphic design background, so I was most comfortable during the first module of the semester, image editing. For the past three years I have been getting more familiar with the idea that nearly every man-made object I see has been (or should have been) designed/edited by a graphic designer (industrial, interior, architect, etc.). It is a strange process to appreciate something that I have taken for granted for a long time, and it is mind-opening as well.

The second module we explored was sound editing. I am somewhat familiar with this concept as I have played quite a few instruments, but editing sound on a computer requires quite a bit more deliberate thought than playing a physical instrument. Actually, they are probably very similar. When learning how to play an instrument you have to think about every finger you put down or breath you take, but as you become more accustomed to the sounds that result from different actions, they become more fluid and effortless. I think that using the editing software that we have used this semester was pretty painful in the amount of effort necessary to have an acceptable outcome, but that with more time learning the ins and outs of the software, that eventually editing images on a computer could feel

like drawing, or mixing tracks on Audacity could feel like playing some sort of digital musical instrument.

The next logical step was a combination of the two previous modules, sound and image together, creating video. During the video editing module we learned about the challenges of taking two forms of media and combining them to create one as seamlessly as possible. The importance and degree of the precision required to synchronize video with audio really amazed and intrigued me. I was inspired by the special effects in Michel Gondry's video for "Let Forever Be" and modeled my video after the idea of a changing sound meaning a changing image.

One of the most tedious (but also rewarding) modules this semester was the network editing module. Recording networks must be very difficult to do without the use of a computer because there are so many connections and layers. Networks are multidimensional and I think that one of the most useful concepts is the idea of a three dimensional representation of a network, because so much is lost or covered up when such a complex idea is reduced to only two dimensions. After seeing the amount of accuracy with which the Ego-net networking software had been able to map my personal relationships with the people around me I have become more interested in seeing how other networks translate into graphical representations and what you can find out about them.

Next we studied interfaces. Before this semester I would have defined an interface as the layout of button on a computer screen. After learning all about interfaces in class I now know how interfaces make a difference in our lives in many different ways. Today I ran into a real-life example of an interface that needs some improvement: the intersection pedestrian crossing system. Many of the pedestrian crossing buttons are different shapes and sizes which can be a little confusing, but the biggest problem I recognized was with the user feedback. While some newer models have a red light that

flashes when you press it, and some make a clicking noise, some don't do anything at all when you push them. I am becoming more and more aware of the different aspects of all kinds of interfaces now that I am aware of their existence and function.

The most unique module this semester is no doubt the life-experience module. We used custom software called Orison which plays on the Adobe AIR platform. Daragh Byrne, a colleague of our professor, has essentially worn a webcam around his neck, worn a handful of other sensors, and used twitter for eighteen months. All the data has been collected on a server and we've used the Orison software to sift through it to make sense of something within the mountains of data. I think that the more we know about what we do on a day-to-day basis, the better we can improve ourselves. My wristwatch has a chronograph that I use to time everything. I don't have the time to record how long everything takes, but I get a general sense of how long it takes to bike to school and work and how long it takes me to shower and cook breakfast in the morning. I really had no clue before, so I would always overestimate, and then start late because I knew that I was guessing too high. I would love to use some sort of life-experience data collection tools because the more you know about your past, the more accurately you can plan for the future!

Now that I have a pretty good idea of what media editing consists of, I am planning on delving deeper into each subject area and exploring it in my own personal context. There's no way not to, since media is everything.