

Spoiral: An online ad-lib mystery

Kazuyuki Okada
Keio University
Imgl/Inakage lab
ikki@imgl.sfc.keio.ac.jp

Interactive Research Group
Keio University
Imgl/Inakage lab
int@imgl.sfc.keio.ac.jp

Masa Inakage
Keio University
Imgl/Inakage lab
inakage@imgl.sfc.keio.ac.jp

1 Introduction

"Spoiral" is a multi-user online mystery game, which is implemented with web3D technology. (Fig1) Five players experience an ad-lib drama together, as if they are playing a role in a detective novel, in which the story proceeds in real time with real people.

"Spoiral" is a thrilling and intellectual game, which is epoch making in its multi-access style as a web 3D game.

2 Game design

The stage of the game is located in a small room shared by a little brother and sister. The world had been kept peaceful, but one day the toy robot was broken into pieces by another toy. "WHO DID IT?" - the suspect must be one of the inhabitants: the Japanese doll, the marionette, the stuffed rabbit, the baby doll or the cymbal striker. Each player operates one of these toy characters. One of the players is chosen randomly to play the suspect's role, and the rest play the detectives' roles.

The aim of the suspect is to break other toys. And the aim of the detectives is to find out who the suspect is, by collecting necessary information. But be careful, the suspect may be trying to break you! If you get broken, you lose the game and cannot keep on playing.

The detectives search the room and gather evidence of incidents. The room is divided into seven areas. The time line of the game is divided into phases that are two minutes long. Players can search only one area during one phase. When the phase ends, players can choose to move to an adjacent area or to stay in the same area. WHO and WHAT you see in WHICH PHASE and in WHICH AREA, is recorded and helps you to construct the case. Also communicating with the other characters will help you to supplement missing information.

A detective player can win when he or she reveals the truth. The suspect wins when he or she breaks all the other player characters.

All the art work and music have been designed in the "cute but scary" style called *kowaii* in Japanese.

The whole game is designed to last for approximately 30 minutes playing time.

Games with a life-risking suspense drama have just begun. We propose a new interactive content for a coming broadband era with web3D technology.

3 Communication and detection

To accuse the suspect, the detectives need to reveal WHO broke WHOM with WHICH WEAPON. Since the information you have got might not be enough to construct a case, getting information from other

characters is a good way to proceed. To get information from others, you go close to another character and tell him or her the AREA and the PHASE, about which you want to know (Fig.2).

When you have obtained plenty of information, you should know who had the chance to break the victim. But don't forget, the suspect is able to tell a lie about his own alibi!

This selective way of communication suggests that international playing would be easily realized.

4 Implementation

All the systems are programmed by Macromedia Director and the real-time 3D part is implemented with Shockwave 3D. This cost us less time and fewer human resources than implementing with c++ and DirectX. Also, it requires less hardware specification for the users and is OS independent because of the web 3D system.

A broadband connection and high performance 3D environment is strongly recommended to play "Spoiral".

<http://www.imgl.sfc.keio.ac.jp/interactive/spoiral/>



Fig1. Screen shot



Fig2. Communicating with others