Tony

Robotic Toys for Enriching Media Experience in Home Theaters

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Project context:
ICE-CREAM (IST-2000-28298)
Philips, De Pinxi, NOB Cross Media Facilities, Imperial College London, Tomorrow Focus AG, Fraunhofer Fokus, Bitmanagement, Symah Vision, Euskaltel S.A.

NexTV (IST-1999-11288)
Philips, Imperial College London, Fraunhofer FOKUS, Optibase, TILAB, Sony, KPN, SUN, ETRI, NOB Innovation, France Telecom R&D

This robot, called Tony, was part of a demonstrator in the research field of distributed media presentation in ambient intelligent environments. Smiling when happy and pulling a long face when annoyed, Tony was one of the actors in an interactive children’s show (TOONS, a NexTV demonstration), where everyday objects in the room played a role.

Everyday objects, multiple displays, surrounding audio systems, ambient lighting facilities and yet many others to be designed, can be connected to, or in other word, involved in interactive media presentations, blurring the boundary of the real and the virtual, immersing the users with compelling experiences. This concept was further developed in the ICE-CREAM project, where another robotic toy, a toy submarine was introduced as a physical counterpart to control the virtual submarine in a 3D movie, a Deep Sea Adventure.

Tony is rebuilt for an interactive movie, The Interview. This movie is designed for investigating the relation between the distribution of media content and the user’s entertainment experience. This time, Tony watches the movie together with the user as a companion. The preliminary study shows that users with different culture background (Dutch and Chinese) tend to think differently about the robotic interaction and about the media distribution.

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