

DECO2013 ASSIGNMENT 3 – REPORT

Assignment 3 was focusing on the design of the User Interface for our Generative Design Systems. To illustrate my points I will be using a series of screenshots within this report, and I have a semi-working model of the system which could be looked at as well. The model can be found here <http://web.arch.usyd.edu.au/~sriz8189/DECO2013/index.html> (works best in Firefox) it doesn't go through the whole process, just the first few steps, and every step only has one possible answer. This is just to get an idea of how it would work. The rest of the steps would work in a very similar method to this one.

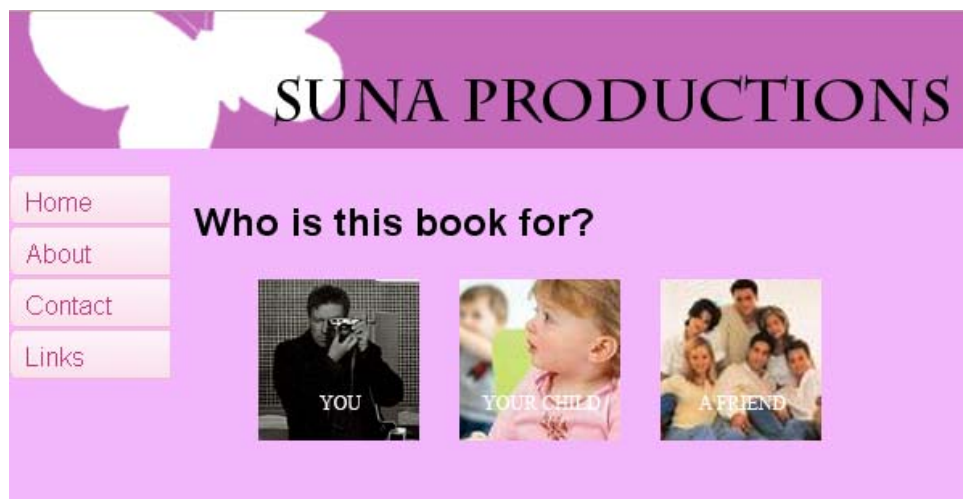
The idea: The idea behind this was to have a system that was much more graphical. The way, I finally figured it out to be the most efficient way of this, was to eliminate the whole click and drag design system I had going on before and work with only still images. This would be easier to navigate, and you wouldn't have the 'miss' issue. With games like that, kids tend not to be able to centre the images they are working with so you get a funny looking person that looks like they've had clothes pasted to them rather than they are supposed to be wearing them. (Thanks to my little cousin for making me realize this when I got her to dress a doll just to see if she would enjoy it).



So you get something that looks a bit like the picture above, and when you are spending money on personalized books, you will want it to look a little better than that. So, that idea was abandoned and I opted for a simpler and more manageable method.

Other things that I have adapted in this model are included in part two of my second report. I went through and explained my changes and plans in that, and many of them still apply.

The main thing I was going after in this was personalization.



So, I begin by asking the user who the book is being designed for. After this, the rest of the prompts will change depending on their answer. For example, my model will let you select the first option, the next screen will show:



The questions become personal to the user. If 'child' was selected at the beginning, then the question would read 'Is your child a boy or a girl?' And then the sex would also be specified in further questions, such as the 'choose your own adventure' bit. (This will be discussed further later on in the report.) The same thing applies to if the friend option was chosen. This just makes the experience of using the tools as personal as what the product is supposed to be. I believe it leads to a better user experience.

Then you begin the personalization. My model shows just a few of the steps that I plan to use to customize the users pictures. There will be a lot more options available, which I didn't include in model because the method of choosing them will be in the same graphical style. The traits that you would be able to personalize include:

- Sex
- Skin Tone
- Body shape
- Hair colour
- Hair Style
- Eye colour
- Shape of eyes
- Clothing styles
- Clothing colours

These would all be represented graphically and the images would build on each other as each choice was made so that you could see the progress as it is being made. For, example, I will just refer back to my model.



The system is asking you to specify skin tone that is to be used in the illustrations. When you select the skin tone that is appropriate to you, the next screen will offer all its options in that particular skin tone. So, if we select the first one the next screen will look like this:



So, all the options are built upon the first thing that you chose, if you had chosen any of the other options, the next options would incorporate that into their design. So you have a visual representation of how you are building your character rather than blindly selecting and moving on.

So from this the next option is style, so if we select the black hair, all our styles will present themselves in the shade of black.



Then again, the next scene would build on this by showing you the skin tone, hair colour and hair style all together in the next scene again and this will continue in this progressive manner until you have completed your character. In my model I have given only three options for every step, but there would be a lot more in the actual finished version of this prototype. There would be many options available for tones and styles to increase the personalization potential, but my artistic skills and lack of time means I could only show a limited amount in my model.

This is all that I have allowed to be personalized as far as illustrations go. The picture will depend on choices that you will make in the select your own adventure bit, but they will be set pictures with just the picture of the child changing to the one that you designed. Originally, I had put much more emphasis on personalizing the pictures with my idea in the last assignment that you could alter them and add things to it, but this is faced with the same problem as having the click and drag for the character design. It has the potential to look very unprofessional and messy and customers are not likely to be satisfied. As well as this, when other people look at your product, they may be put off purchasing one for themselves because of the poor design skills that the user may have had.

Therefore, I am back down to a limited selection when it comes to personalizing the images; however this is still a very important theme in my idea since many of the examples I looked at for book personalization did not offer this at all, or were very limited in their offers. I believe this method of personalizing the images is a good compromise that will offer personalization with no risk or producing unsatisfactory designs.

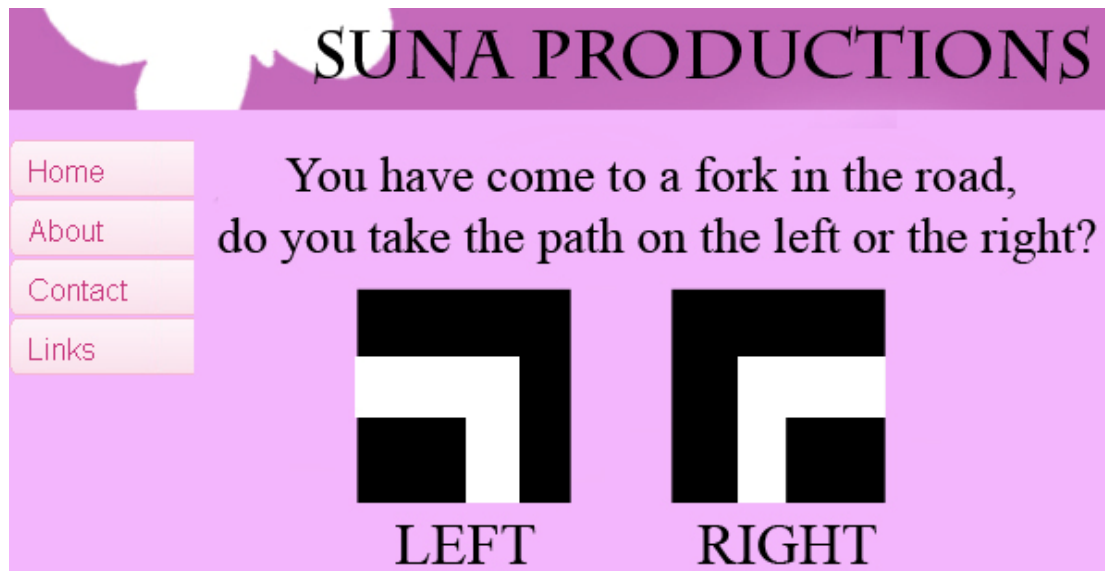
The next step is to choose how your story will pan out. If you had noticed the very first step in the process is to choose your story. This is because some of the options that are available to you will change depending on the story that you chose, for example if you choose a story that is set at the beach, clothing options will include swimwear and if you choose one that is set in winter your options will include jackets and jumpers etc.

So after your character is designed accordingly you get to finish your story. I want this option to be graphical as well, to compliment the rest of the system however more words will be involved in this option for explaining things. The whole story that is going to be published will not be offered in these options just the main bits that you can change the reasons for this is:

- 1, You do not want to ruin the ending of the book
2. No one will buy a story to read when it is available for free in this system.

So, the options will read something like 'You have come to a fork in the road, do you take the path on the left or the right?'

And the page would look something like this:



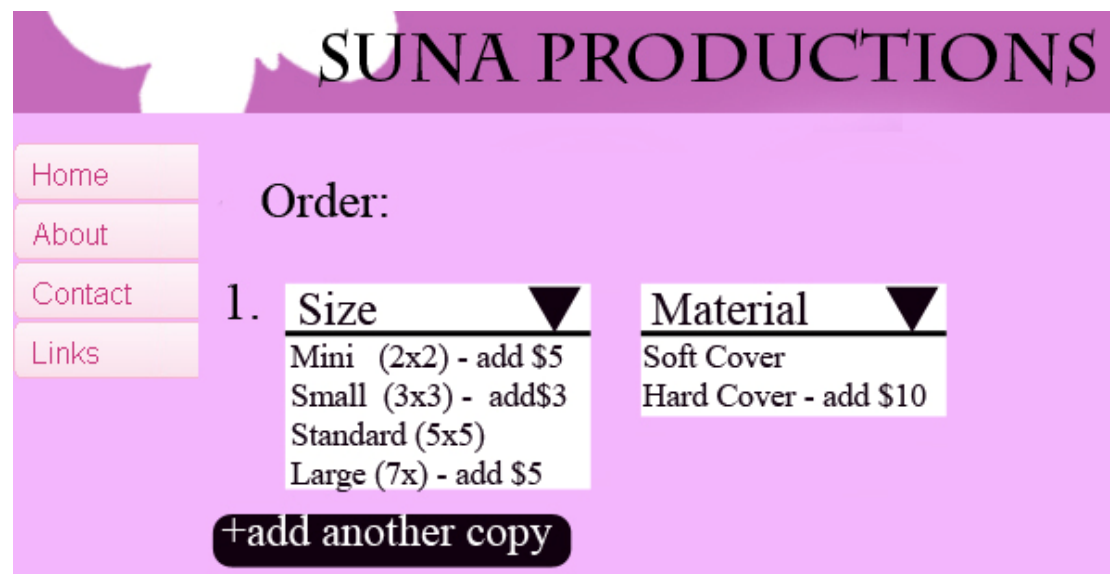
So, it is in the same graphical style as other questions and it does not give away too much about the story. Often, however, the options may involve more wording depending on the scenario and the answers you have to choose, however, the information given will be limited and the choice will be made by you (often with some forewarning) such as instead of having the question as blunt as the one above, it may point out that left leads to a teddy bear factory and right leads into the wilderness, and you can decide in that way which road to take, and the illustrations will show what will be in your selected choice to make the decision making a little bit easier.

This is also a very important step in my customization, because this was not available in any of the personalized books that I researched and I think that if you are going as far as personalizing a book you might as well personalize the story a little as well, there is not point in having a personal story that has exact same plot as someone else's. This increases the uniqueness of the book you are creating and makes the process of personalizing your own book a little more fun as well.

After all of this is done, You move on to payment and the rest of the steps become boring as you fill in name, address and payment details into a form. The system will also show you an example of a page from your story and ask you if you are sure you want to proceed. Once the payment is completed your book is on your way.

The books will come in a standard printing size however at extra cost, there will be an option to change the size of the book from mini to large and also the material so you can have soft/hard cover according to your taste.

You can also choose to order more than one copy of the book. The screen may look like this: (Note I know nothing about sizes, that's just an idea of what it would look like with the actual measurements there.)



Now that the personalization is out of the way, I will explain the navigation of the system.

The menu you see on the left hand side of the protocol is functional so you can click on it to see what they are about but basically. Home – Will return you to the start. To the home page of the site. About – Will give you information about the system and its creators, in this case I have written about myself and the course. Contact – will show you who and how to contact if you have any questions or feed back and finally links will lead to partner sites and sponsors etc.

If any of these are selected your progress will be lost unless you have saved it. So a prompt will come up to make sure you want to navigate away

from the pages. (We have all seen enough of those so I didn't bother to create an example.)

The only other bit of navigation, which I did not show in my examples, is a 'previous' and 'save' buttons that I will illustrate now:



The previous button allows you to retrace your steps one step at a time, you cannot jump multiple steps or go forward since every step is reliant on the one before it and therefore must be completed in the correct order. There is no need for a 'next' button because clicking on your choice will make you proceed to the next step.

The save button will save your progress (you will need to create an account) so that you may continue it at a different time, when you come back to it, you will begin your design at whichever step you left off on.

And the final thing that I need to comment on is the step counter in the bottom right hand side there. I went into quite a bit of detail in my last report about why I think this is an important feature of my system. But I will run through it again.

The step counter is an indicator of how much of the process you are through and how much longer you have left to go. The main reason I think it is

important is that it increases the users patience if they know what they are in for. However if they are involved in this long process that just seems to have no end, they begin to get frustrated and may not want to complete using it. The indication will let them know how long it will take and with the save option available to them they may choose to continue at a later time if they have to leave or do something else.

That is my idea for my generative design system with special focus on personalization of children's books. The system will be a simple rule based one and the navigation will be kept simple and user friendly. I think that my design on this system is a lot simpler and more personalized then all of the examples that I have researched and think that the personalization of books should take a step into this direction rather than the one in which it is currently heading.