

CINEMA AS CULTURE INTERFACE

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AUTHOR: LEV MANOVICH

- **Lev manovich was born in Moscow where he studied fine arts, architecture, animation, and programming.**
- **His work with computer media began in 1984 with many of his projects being shown in key international exhibitions.**



- **He is associate professor in the Visual Art department of the University of California where he teaches courses in new media art and theory.**
- **His lectures and research in this field have won him vast awards including the mellon and guggenhiem fellowships in 2002/2003 respectively.**

- **These fellowships are awarded for dissertation research in humanities subjects with the maximum award being \$20,000.**

- **He has recently completed a new book entitled INFO-AESTHETICS, which looks at how a computer is an engine of economy AND the main tool for modern representation. The project reflects this duality focusing in the information society.**

- **He is also involved in a five year project entitled 'SOFT CINEMA' which studies the crossover of software culture, cinema, and architecture.**

TEXT SOURCE: THE LANGUAGE OF NEW MEDIA

- **Published in 2001**
- **This book offers Manovich's theories on New Media and its cultural implications. As an example, it explains how new media relies on old media conventions such as the rectangular frame.**

- **It is seen as the book to go for relevant theories about the new media revolution and it's relevance in modern society.**



- **It also documents it's links with similar media revolutions of the past.**



Cinema as Cultural Interface

- **During cinema's emergence, interviews with the audiences; a systematic account of the narrative strategies, scenography and camera positions as they developed year by year; an analysis of the connections between the emerging language of cinema and different forms of popular entertainment which coexisted with it, would have been invaluable.**

- **Today we are living in the midst of an emerging new medium - the metamedium of the digital computer. All information becomes encoded in one code; all cultural objects become computer programs, something which is not only seen, heard or read, but first of all stored and transmitted, compiled and executed. In contrast to a hundred years ago, when cinema was coming into being, we are fully aware of the significance of this new media revolution.**

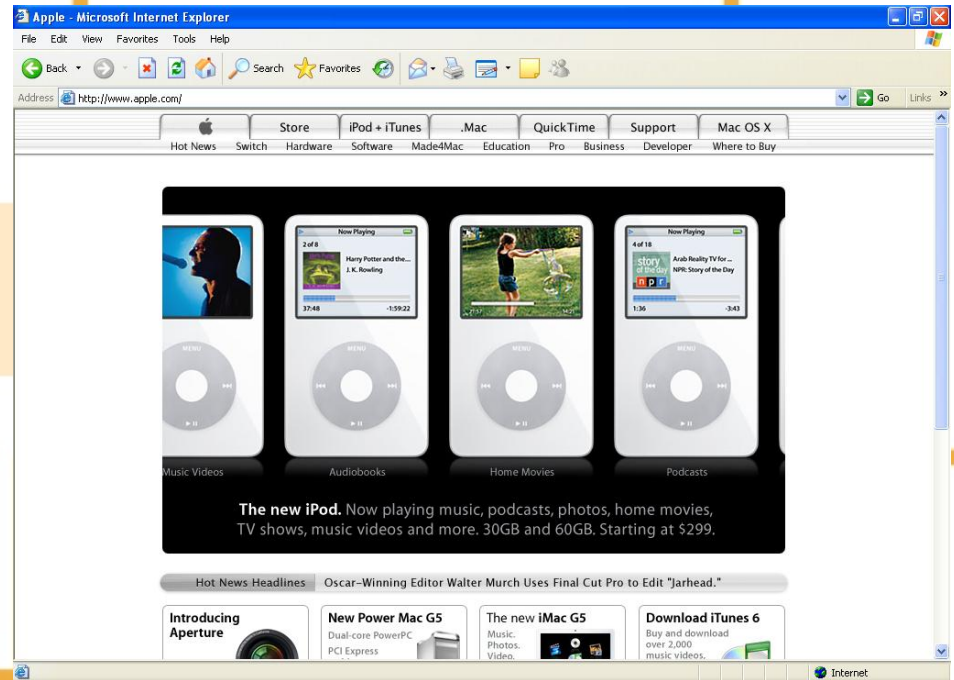
- **“The following is an attempt at both a record and a theory -- of the present. Just as film historians traced the development of film language during cinema's first decades, I want to describe and understand the logic driving the development of the language of computer media.”**

- **Cultural Interfaces**

- **“During the 1990s, the cultural role of a digital computer has changed from a tool to a medium. In the beginning of the decade, a computer was still largely thought of as a simulation of a typewriter, a paintbrush or a drafting ruler -- in other words, as a tool used to produce cultural content which, once created, will be stored and distributed in its appropriate media: printed page, film, photographic print, electronic recording. By the end of the decade, the computer's public image has begun to shift to one of a universal machine, used not only to author, but also to store, distribute and access all media.”**

- **The term human-computer interface (HCI) describes the ways in which the user interacts with a computer. HCI includes physical input and output devices such a monitor, a keyboard, and a mouse. It also consists of metaphors used to conceptualize the organization of computer data.**

- You are likely to see something which graphically resembles a magazine layout from the same decade. The page is dominated by text: headlines, hyperlinks, blocks of copy. Within this text are few media elements: graphics, photographs, perhaps a QuickTime movie and a VRML scene.



- An image from the computer game *Myst*:
- For another example of a prototypical cultural interface of the 1990s, you may load (assuming it would still run on your computer) the most well-known CD-ROM of the 1990s - *Myst* (Broderbund, 1993).



Data representation as presented in the opening sequences of Myst

- **Cinema**
- **The Printed Word**
- **Human-Computer Interface (HCI)**

••• This illustrates that's in 1997 contrary to popular belief Cinema is not dead but is fast becoming the new form of Human-Computer Interface

Thanks to these three representations the physical storage of data has evolved.

Information can now be 'Liberated'; digital designers can manipulate pages and virtual cameras, table of contents and screens, bookmarks and points of view.

And now because of the rapidly increasing availability of these strategies, our culture is being changed by anyone.

- Printed Word

- In the 1980's, text became the first cultural media to be subjected to digitization. However researchers had, however, envisaged this concept some two and a half decades before in the 60's. They saw text being made available online.
- Text is a meta-language of other media types meaning all other media can be represented using it. Eg. 3D co-ordinates, pixel values, and HTML pages. It is also the primary means of communication between a computer and a user.

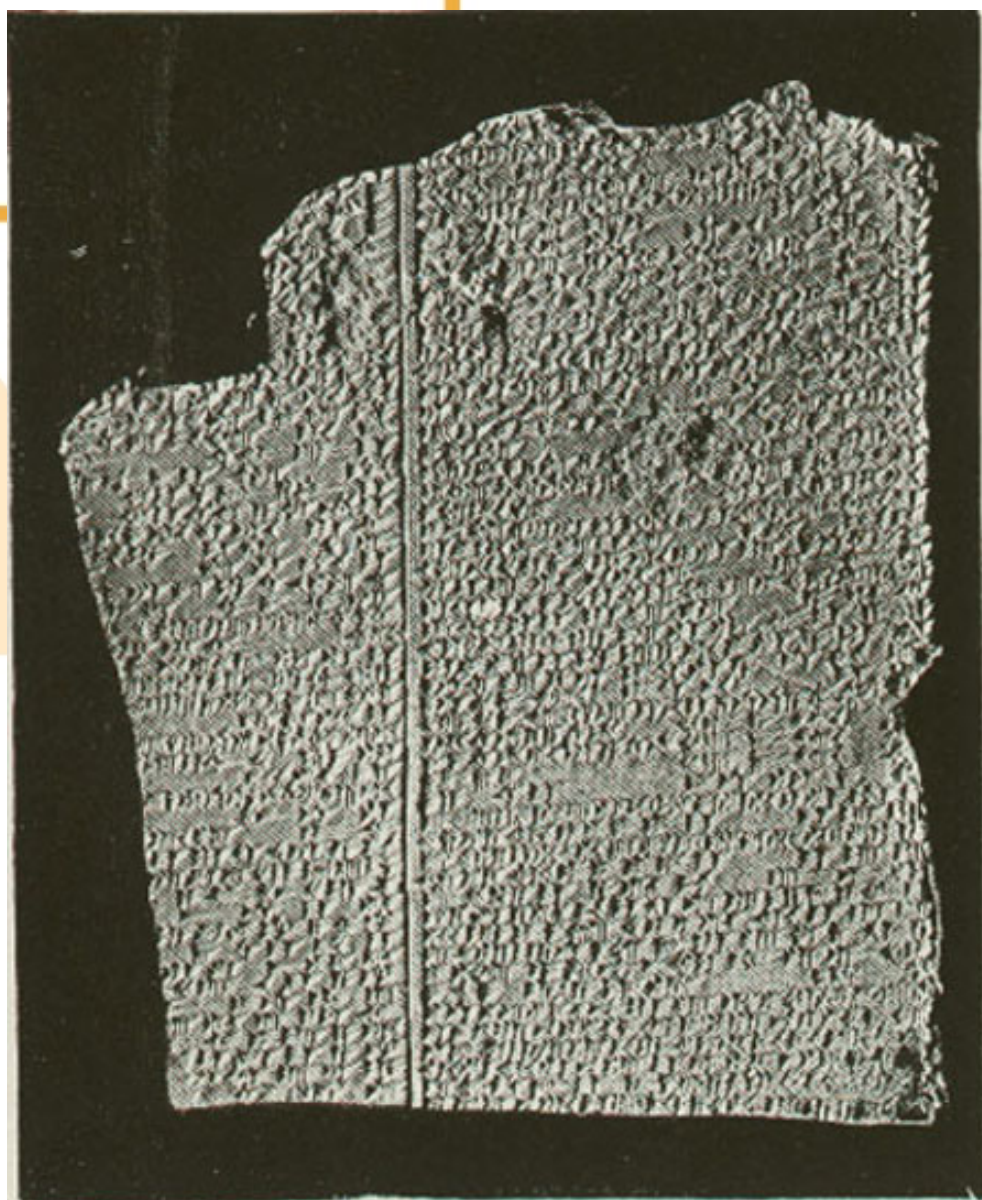
- **Manovich suggests that the computer text interface is similar to that of the text organisation developed over centuries by human civilization, like the old christian clay tablets or the egyptian papyrus rolls.**
- **A computer simply takes our familiarity of these interfaces and stretches new concepts onto them like linking pages to other pages and adding multimedia to them, like digital video or sound.**

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FYFZ
49Y



W4P LOY
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FYKY





- **So in summary, just like clay tablets were replaced by ink on paper, this, in turn, was replaced by bits of computer memory.**
- **Manovich also uses the term 'spatialization' to describe the use of text on the net. He suggests that Random access storage replaces sequential storage and flattened hypertext replaces hierarchical organisation. He compares the hypertext reader to robinson crusoe, walking through the sand picking up various objects al the while leaving imprints in the sand which, like hyperlinks, follow on object to another.**

Cinema

- **While printed word initially dominated the language of cultural interfaces it is slowly becoming less important. Cinematic elements are becoming more and more stronger. Manovich links this to a consistent trend in modern society towards presenting information using time based audio-visual moving image rather than text. This is due to the fact that computer designers are growing up in a media environment dominated by television.**

- **Cinematic ways of seeing the world are becoming ways in which computer users access and interact with all cultural data. Cinema simply allows the user to understand (watch) cinematic language. Computer users can actually speak (make films) the language of the interface so a person can perform tasks like sending e-mail for example.**

- **Cultural interfaces are widely used and easily learned. Eg. A piece of software designed by a small group of people can be immediately understood by millions of computer users. Manovich suggests that this is due to users that acquire new cultural languages based on previous cultural forms like printed word and cinema.**
- **Like printed word derives from tablets so does cinema originate from theatre and magic lantern shows and other forms of nineteenth century public entertainment.**

Summary

- **Manovich Suggested that Computer concepts and applications have been around for a long time before the advent of computers themselves**
- **Most forms of modern media are simply old media viewed through a monitor**
- **In order to develop more forms of new media we must create something unfamiliar**

Any Questions?

