




Source: unknown

DESCRIPTION

This workshop is designed as an experiment in learning from past visions of the future. We will look at how the future of computation was imagined, conceived, designed, and marketed in the early days of desktop computing in order to speculate on (1) how contemporary computation either aligns or does not align with these visions and (2) how futures are constructed from different points of view. More specifically, we will explore the distinction between the design of early desktop CAD software/hardware interfaces and the promises made by their marketing.

In the late 1970s, computation was becoming more accessible and removed from militaristic associations as companies attempted to appeal to the general public. Computers became less overly threatening and perhaps even friendly, as they were sold as videogame systems (Atari) and home appliances (Commodore 64). By the mid-1980s desktop computing was a rapidly growing market, signaling a kind of arms race for accessible computation. To sell these desktop computers, companies developed different strategies from leaning into science fiction imagery to promoting lightning-speed efficiency. These images positioned computers as heroic gadgets that would lead us into the 21st Century.

In the CAD industry, desktop software would eventually revolutionize how objects and buildings are designed and built. But what is not often discussed are the processes by which these software became standardized, commodified parts of designers' everyday life. By examining the software, marketing materials, magazines, user manuals, and other attendant media, this workshop seeks to shed some light on how this occurred and creatively (through collage and image-making techniques) reflect on how these processes develop narratives of their own.

| OBJECTIVES | MATERIALS |
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| <p>The goals for this workshop are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → To introduce students to a few media archaeological methods such as software emulation and archival research. → To study the connection between image-making and narrative-production. → To reflect on the techno-social aspects of software and its audiences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laptop with internet access. • Photoshop or equivalent photo-editing software. • DOSBox (link below) for software emulation. |
| RESOURCES | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → https://www.dosbox.com/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ DOS emulation software for Mac and PC → https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/17K-Pv6w8mPIBmlacMk9e8XP33yyLM4AV?usp=sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Workshop DOS software. → https://bitsavers.trailing-edge.com/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Magazine and user manual archive → https://archive.org/details/bitsavers_computerdesign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bitsavers: Computer Design Magazine Archive → https://archive.org/details/electronicsmagazine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bitsavers: Electronics Magazine Collection → https://archive.org/details/byte-magazine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ BYTE Magazine archive → https://francoisegamma.cat/Link/link.html <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Media artist → https://www.are.na/fletcher-bach/computing-zines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Computing zines → https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-Jpl4egl2o <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Hockney painting with light doc | |
| METHODOLOGIES | |
|  | |

| RESEARCH | IMAGE-MAKING |
|---|--|
| <p>The first phase of the workshop is research intensive. Students are expected to browse through the resources (magazines, manuals, software) and identify interesting or significant imagery, keywords, designs that clearly show some way in which the media is selling or constructing a future.</p> <p>These images/screenshots should be collected in a folder. Students will explain why they chose certain images before moving onto the next phase.</p> <p>*software for emulation will be provided by the instructor</p> | <p>The second phase of the workshop is a short design exercise where they will collage together pieces of the research materials into new assemblages that either reinforce the existing narrative or put forth new narratives.</p> <p>Students will work in pairs to produce a series of 6 collages and will explain them to the class at the end of the workshop.</p> |
| SCHEDULE | |
| <p>DAY 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 10:00-11:00 / Introductory lecture (background) → 11:00-12:00 / Workshop introduction → 12:00-13:00 / Lunch break → 13:00-14:00 / DOSBox Tutorial → 14:00-16:00 / Research (part 1) → 16:00-17:00 / Research summaries (part 1) <p>DAY 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → 10:00-12:00 / Design iterations (part 2) → 12:00-13:00 / Lunch break → 13:00-15:00 / Final image-making (part 2) → 15:00-16:00 / Final presentations (part 2) | |
| FURTHER READING | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Lev Manovich, "Introduction" in <i>Software Takes Command</i> (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013) → Molly Wright Steenson. <i>Architectural Intelligence: How Designers and Architects Created the Digital Landscape</i>. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. 2017. → American Artist. Black Gooney Universe. Unbag No.2 (2018). http://unbag.net/issue-2-end/black-gooney-universe/ → | |