Abstract

Storytelling is essential for communicating ideas. When they are well told, stories help us make sense of information, appreciate cultural or societal differences, and imagine living in entirely different worlds. Audio/visual stories in the form of radio programs, books-on-tape, podcasts, television, movies and animations, are especially powerful because they provide a rich multisensory experience. Technological advances have made it easy to capture stories using the microphones and cameras that are readily available in our mobile devices, but, the raw media rarely tells a compelling story.

The best storytellers carefully compose, filter, edit and highlight the raw media to produce an engaging piece. Yet, the software tools they use to create and manipulate the raw audio/video media (e.g. Pro Tools, Photoshop, Premiere, Final Cut Pro, Maya etc.) force storytellers to work at a tediously low-level – selecting, filtering and layering pixels or cutting and transitioning between audio/video frames. While these tools provide flexible and precise control over the look and sound of the final result, they are notoriously difficult to learn and accessible primarily to experts. In this talk I’ll present a number of recent projects that aim to significantly reduce the effort required to edit and produce high-quality audio/visual stories.

Biography:

Maneesh Agrawala is an Associate Professor in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at the University of California, Berkeley where he works on problems in visualization, computer graphics and human computer interaction.

His focus is on investigating how cognitive design principles can be used to improve the effectiveness of visual displays. He received the SIGGRAPH Significant New Researcher award in 2008 and a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 2009.