CYBERSPACE HERALD
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Email correspondence from various sources.

From the Programming Team

Is there a single image that could encapsulate the mythic aspects of the Cyberspace project, and serve as good PR as well?

I imagine a rendering of our original helmet in Openplan with a logo in the corner.

"Cyberspace (TM)"

in a pleasing font along the bottom. Maybe a glove; maybe genlocked video overlay of a human in cyberspace garb.

I'm not sure of the precise form of this image (I write code, not art). But I am sure we need such a thing: other researchers have both asked for such a slide to be used in conference talks. There are sure to be other prominent seekers.

We could generate a color postscript transparency and include it in our press kit.

Support (designer)

Great idea. A herald would make a nice a clothing patch too, for shoulders, pockets, and so on. I'm not sure exactly how we'd express the essence of cyberspace in mythic terms, or if that's even possible at this early stage, but it's sure worth a try. Maybe we could come at it from the other direction: that is, search more or less systematically for heralds and mythic or archetypal symbols that express qualities we can relate to cyberspace. I wouldn't be at all surprised to find that "cyberspace", or at least the fundamental notion of it, has been with us from antiquity. Jung and Campbell immediately spring to mind, but there must be a large literature on the subject. I'll start paying attention, now that you've mentioned it.

P.S. Of course, if the content of the herald is to be true and powerful magic, it really ought to come to one of us in a dream (or, better yet, to all of us simultaneously).

From William

When I was a fraternity pledge, we were given heraldic pins, made of brass, with PhiSigmaUpsilon embrazened in Greek. We were to wear those pins with pride, keeping them constantly shiny. Conscientious pledges noticed that concerted polishing with Brasso would lower the height of the letters. Maniac pledges soon discovered that six hours a day of polishing would totally remove the letters after several weeks.

This is the true origin of the Void herald.

More support (programmer)

Indeed, I think something should be done. Mythic aspect you say?

Digitized images are no problem, what with the amazing Canon Camera. But would a Gloved/Visored human really communicate cyber space?

How about a "take off" of the early Gemini space walk photos but instead of space gear, the human is visored/gloved and floating in space, his desk (the earth) at his feet, the cables (umbilical cord) trail off to a desktop PC (Gemini capsule).

Too corny? Perhaps not if subtle enough as to look like the original Gemini photo. People will see the initial image, think it to be the space walk photo (note they should immediately think of space) and upon closer examination they'll observe it is a man and a pc. It could be in a circular frame with the appropriate words of wisdom. (I'll leave that to ya'll)

Is this the right direction you would like to go?

Discussion (william)

>> But would a Gloved/Visored human really communicate cyber space?

Absolutely not!!

It's important not to confuse the mechanism with the medium. Reading is not about paper, binding, printing presses, or typesetting. Imagine if the inventor of writing had said, "One day millions of people will spend billions of hours sitting quietly staring at little stacks of paper covered with funny marks". How silly. The point of reading isn't how it works, it's the vicarious experiences and information that it imparts, whatever the physical means of delivery.

So it is with cyberspace. Cyberspace seems "silly" precisely because people

can't imagine putting on weird Buck Rogers helmets or PowerGloves to use
their computers. But they will (or at least they will when better, less
intrusive equipment becomes available), because doing so lets them have an
experience they value.

Ten years ago serious people were saying that executives would never use
desktop computers because to use a keyboard was demeaning. Well, all those
executives have fallen victim to natural selection because they disdained a
tool that would have increased their productivity. Cyberspace won't seem
"silly" any more when all of your competitors are using it.

Making a symbol for cyberspace based on the current hardware is like all the
radio companies that had clever symbols based on tubes. But radio had
nothing to do with tubes....

How about something more subtle and abstract? Say, a wire-frame person
looking through a computer screen to a real (or fantasy) world inside.

     Through the looking glass....

      (PICTURE)

      CYBERSPACE tm
   Reality isn't enough any more.

Re: cyberspace heraldry (designer)

I fear the point of my original posting has been lost. I was hoping to
encourage someone with the talent and time to make up an image that we could
distribute real soon now to the people who wanted an overhead transparency to
use in their talks at the point they would say something like:

"And the CAD industry leader is doing cyberspace...".

I like the idea of the wire frame human looking at the shaded world, perhaps
with a logo in the corner of the slide.

More discussion (CAD developer)

I guess you have a point here. But why even a computer screen. After all,
cyberspace implies that we will be getting away from this type of technology.

There was no such thing as a computer screen in Alice and Wonderland, and
look what she was able to do.

Time for a little more creative thinking about this one.

Query (management)

Doing Cyberspace without a computer...?

And reply (designer)

I think it is a good point. The desktop CRT isn't even being used by current technology (let alone the future).

The looking glass theme is nice but I just don't feel it communicates anything about cyberspace >at first glance<. Yes, CyberSpace is a Wonderland and this could be made to work.

Another good point is we have an art dept that could produce the final product. I understand the time issue and suspect we will have to go with the "beta" image (what ever it ends up being) until they can create the "professional" quality stuff.

Theory (programmer)

Doing cyberspace with out the conventional CRT. The computer should be transparent to the user.

Caution (William)

--transparent is way different than non-existent; careful wording needed here!

Re-iteration (programmer)

I didn't mean non-existent. The definition of transparent in the context of a "transparent" of a human's head with goodies inside seems very appropriate.

Agreement (designer)

Yes, the more I think that over (little objects moving in my mind...), the better I like it! Neat.

Current hardware (programmer)

I couldn't agree with you more (about the silliness of a cyberspace symbol involving current hardware). I've been saying for some time now that

cyberspace has nothing to do with computers, any more than, say, television has to do with vacuum tubes.

Trying to find or invent a symbol is a great exercise, as it leads us to consider what really is essential about the medium, but I wonder if it isn't still too early to grok it. After all, no one, here or elsewhere, has any substantial experience in cyberspace. We can imagine what it will be like, by analogy to other media, but the truth is that at this juncture none of us has it "in our bones." For that we all need to log lots of hours in cyberspace, and of course that's what we'll be doing, soon, as we complete more demos and experiments. My gut feeling is that the "right" cyberspace symbol won't be anything we'll have to reason or argue about. After we get more experience, we'll instantly recognize the right symbol when we see it, or when it automagically comes to one of us.

On the other hand, I certainly don't want to be negative about the search for a symbol. While I'm certain that the medium will "reveal" its own symbol, I have no doubt that a quintessential symbol, if we can manage to conjure it up, will promote rapid evolution of the medium.