

Ends December 2003

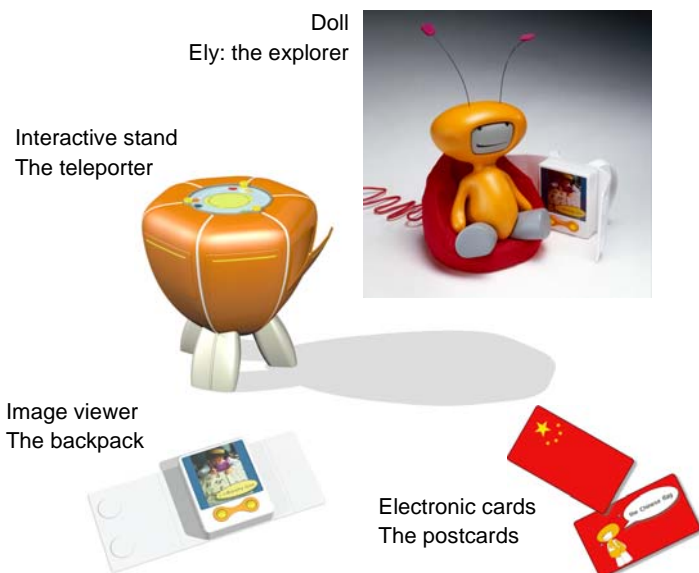
This project originated as a 20 week Master's thesis in Interaction Design.



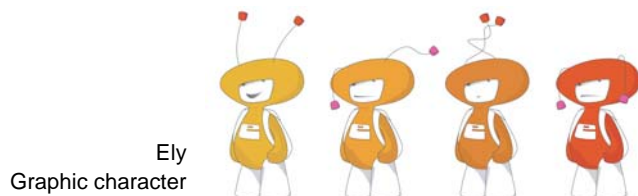
UCIT

Ely: the Explorer Interactive Play system

This project explores the potential of interactive play systems as tools for collaborative learning, combining **tangible** and **virtual** interaction techniques in the search for more **intuitive** user-interfaces, appropriate for young children.



Ely: the explorer is an interactive educational play system targeted at children about six and seven years of age. The design intention of the project is to create a play system which combines virtual and physical interfaces into a unit that allows both social interaction and independent exploration. The play system *Ely: the explorer* is proposed as an accessible and robust multi-user unit which allows children to play freely without the intervention of adults. However, the play system can also be used as a teaching aid within an elementary school curriculum.



The Character

Ely: the explorer travels around the world bringing back memories of other countries. From every destination it visits, *Ely* sends postcards, takes pictures and records music and video clips that the children can view and collect. The journeys of *Ely* trigger a variety of physical and on-screen activities with which children gain knowledge about different cultural expressions and geographical implications. *Ely* is both a soft-toy and an on-screen 'agent' that helps the players accomplish various tasks during the play.

This project also aims at developing an interactive play system that encourages children to explore cultural diversity. Together with *Ely* children can explore socio-cultural differences among peoples around the world.

Usage Scenario



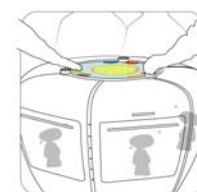
Up to six children can play at a time. Every player has a doll.



All the dolls are placed inside the stands' compartments. The dolls are locked away and the children interact with the system on-screen.



The identification system recognises each doll and represents it on-screen. The players are introduced to a new interactive journey.



The players explore the software via a touch screen and rotary knobs. Through a Bluetooth connection, data is transferred from the stand's PC to the image viewer on each doll.



During the play session, postcards (RF tagged cards) are printed from the printer in the stand.



After the play session with the stand, the players remove the dolls and use the electronic postcards to retrieve data from the image viewer (at school or home).



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Sponsors/partners: EU Mål 1



Interaction Design Lab

