

CSCI 181 : Computer Animation Design I : Fall 2006

Final Project: Attenuated Sternutation

Due: Tuesday, December 12

Expelling intruders or irritants can be accomplished in many ways. Animals will scare off predators by inflating themselves, making themselves look larger or acting aggressively through hissing or snarls. Societies use armies to invade, physically removing leaders that we find irritating. Our body generally uses a more direct route, one of the most common is the sternutation. More commonly known as the sneeze, we simply blow out of our body what our body believes is irritating.

In this assignment, we are going to examine the sneeze and create an animation of a person, thing or object in the process of sneezing. Through the use of classic animation techniques such as anticipation, action and reaction you are to create a short animation that thoroughly explores the possibilities of drama, timing and staging that is inherent in the act of a person about to sneeze.

The process of creating our animation will roughly follow this timeline:

9/26-10/3 develop concept and idea for character
10/3 – 10/10 create storyboard, flesh out idea
10/17 – Finalize storyboard, timing, begin modeling
10/31 –record and edit sound track
11/7 – finish modeling, texturing, lighting
11/14 – rough animation (check length, timing)
12/12 – Final animations presented in class

You will have the option to make the scene simple or complex depending on your experience with Maya, but the final animation will be evaluated in terms of concept and motion. I would rather see an extremely well animated “sphere” that makes me believe it is a living being going through the motions of a sneeze than a highly detailed realistic figure that does not move naturally.

Conceptually I am interested in seeing that you have created an interesting situation, we don't just sneeze. We *avoid* sneezing, we *hold in* our sneeze. In certain situations a sneeze can be: *embarrassing, disastrous, gross, etc.* Time can be an element by using anticipation or repetition. The environment can be important, a sneeze in outer space has different implications than a sneeze in a nitro glycerin factory. Sneezes can be different in different societies and cultural situations.

Motion is how we make inanimate objects come alive. By careful observation, tweaking and re-tweaking the animation curves you will be able to breathe life into your character, even if it's only a soccer ball.

As you are developing your character there are two main strategies to take: simple character within an environment or a complex character with little or no background. Each has it's advantages but as a single animator you need to pick one direction or the other in order to complete this on time.

Project Requirements :

- Length: 30 secs. to 1 minute
- Size: Standard NTSC format – 720 pixels X 486 pixels
- Must show example of “anticipation” in terms of motion action vs. reaction
- Character must have one example of “secondary animation” as part of the character design and animation
- One particle effect
- At least two light sources
- Complexity either in character design or in motion
- A CD or DVD with the animation playable as a quicktime .mov file

Considerations :

Where do your interest lie technically, emotionally as a story teller? Our class is small enough that I will be able to guide you in whatever direction you wish to go in, if you are interested in a complex organic model I could demonstrate techniques to create facial expression animation. If you tend to like physical comedy or movement, a simpler object is best with time spent using animation curves to create timing. If your aesthetic is not comedy, but more serious can you think of an interesting cultural take on the act of sneezing? Can a sneeze be dangerous?

Consider using text, video or sound to further your concept. Shoot video of yourself or others in the act of sneezing, you can use both the sound and the video itself as reference.

Animation is very time-consuming, bear in mind that it's better to complete one scene very well than trying to create an epic of Cecil B. DeMille proportions. Therefore, try to focus on what you personally are most excited about and spend your time in that one area.

Limitations:

Look at the textbook for the type of animation that is possible within this semester. We will not have time to fully rig an organic human skeleton with fingers that move and feet that don't interpenetrate the floor. Try to design an interesting character that has simple limbs or crop your shots to avoid seeing feet on the floor. Avoid having your character pick up objects, to do it right, that can get complicated very quickly.

If you want to get really detailed, stick to a facial shot- we would have time to create "morph targets" so that you can animate changing a detailed head from one expression to another. Dynamic cloth and hair are not possible to animate within our time frame.

Links:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sneezing/>

<http://www.comet-cartoons.com/3ddocs/charanim/>