

# Jonathan Gladden

Graduate Thesis Project  
Presentation of Concepts  
for Design 787  
Spring Quarter 2000

## Presentation Overview

**Project Title:** Visualization of Academic Website Structure through the use of 3-D Computer Graphics & Animation Techniques for the Purpose of Site Planning, Development, and Navigation in the Design of Websites for Arts Related Academic Organizations.

Advisor(s):  
Susan Roth, David Bull

### *Presentation Contents Overview:*

#### **Hypothesis:**

The use of 3-D computer graphics & animation techniques for visualizing website structure can be beneficial in the development and planning stages of design for arts related academic organization websites, by allowing the designer to better understand user paths of interaction within the site, and to conceptualize channels of information directed at specific categories of users.

#### **Abstract:**

Website cartography or the visualization of website structure is critical in the development of academic websites which effectively communicate to their users. 3-D computer graphics & animation techniques are useful tools in this structure visualization process, and offer advantages over standard indexing and tables of contents. The mapping of an academic websites can be compared to maps of transportation systems. The sitemap can assist in visualizing the routes or channels of information a user may take, and their relationship with the rest of the information system. 3-D techniques can be used to map user paths of interaction within a site, and therefore help the designer understand the needs of the user, and how best to improve the dissemination of information to that user and similar users in the same category or channel. An example of this is researching the surfing and browsing habits of students in the Ohio State College of the Arts website and trying to improve their experience with the site by developing a specific 'students' channel of information. 3-D mapping techniques could be used to compare the designer's intended routes of navigation through the site with those interaction paths taken by actual users. This user interaction information would come from questionnaires, interviews, surveys, and focus groups with the College of the Arts user groups that include students, faculty, staff, alumni, and research partners. By visualizing the designers intended routes of interaction with those of actual user scenarios the 3-D sitemap can be used as an effective tool for improving the structure of the site, planning new additions. The practical aspect of this project to support the hypothesis would be the development of a three-dimensional sitemap for the college of the arts and its departments comparing different user paths of interaction with those of intended navigation

- Designers intended routes of interaction in the site  
VS.
- Paths of interaction from actual user scenarios