Case study
Jason Nelson

Details

What:

Jason Nelson exhibited two interactive digital poems at the *Chercher Le Texte* exhibition at the National Library of France in Paris. Jason's digital poetry uses multimedia, games, non-linear and dynamic elements to thematically explore poetics as they relate to consumerist culture.

This opportunity included up-skilling in coding for Jquery and HTML5, which Jason had identified as a vital next step to making his work accessible and compatible on touch interfaces such as mobile devices and tablets. Working with these new codes, Jason developed two original digital poetry works for the exhibition. Attending the launch of this exhibition in person allowed Jason to present an artist talk about his work to a large international audience at the National Library of France.

The focus of this opportunity was for Jason to develop new skills, create new works, promote his work to a wider international audience, increase his networks and international profile and seek inspiration for the development of future art works.

Jason believes the outcomes of this opportunity will become even more apparent in the years that follow, as the connections made and exposure gained continue to reap rewards.

When:

September 2013

Where:

Paris, France

Screen Shot of A Modern Harvest by Jason Nelson (http://gallery.dddl.eu/en/home/)

Arts Queensland contribution:

$4000 – Individuals Fund

Contact for further information:

Website: http://www.heliozoa.com

Links:

Conference and Exhibition website – National Library of Paris: http://chercherletexte.org/en/

Virtual Gallery, with a modified version of the work nothing you have done deserves such praise: http://gallery.dddl.eu/en/home/

The artwork A Modern Harvest: http://www.secrettechnology.com/harvest/

Outcomes

- Jason has been commissioned to create a new digital artwork for the National Library of France and is having two works translated into French by academics from the University of Paris 8. In addition, from connections made during this trip, Jason is exploring other opportunities for collaborations and commissions in France and elsewhere in Europe.

- The skills development component of this project was a major outcome for Jason. Learning new coding and then putting it into practice by creating new works such as *A Modern Harvest* was a critical first step towards exploring the artistic and literary possibilities of Jquery, Javascript and HTML5. In these codes, Jason's work will be accessible on mobile and tablet devices. *A Modern Harvest* was well received in Paris and will be exhibited next year in the US.

- The artist talk and performance that accompanied the exhibition was very well received, with positive reviews from the crowd of nearly 500. This exposure has led to numerous requests for Jason to do similar artist talks throughout the world, both in person and via virtual means. Without traveling to France, Jason would not have reached these audiences with the same effect.

Screen Shot of A Modern Harvest by Jason Nelson (http://www.secrettechnology.com/harvest/)
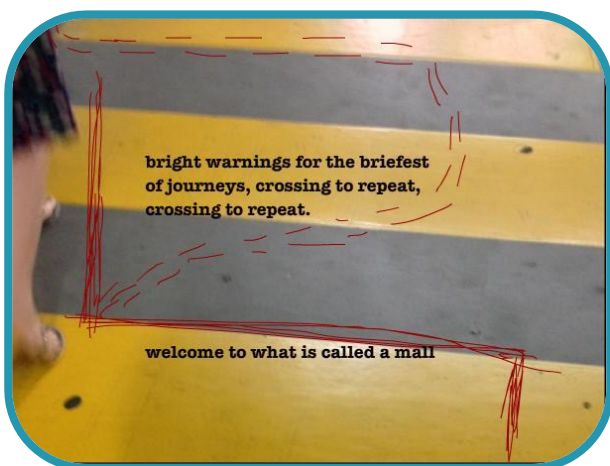
Learnings and reflections

A key learning for Jason was about the interrelationship between online and offline engagement with audiences. While digital platforms enable fast distribution of work worldwide, Jason recognised through this experience that the reach and impact of digital work can be significantly strengthened through face-to-face connections:

'Far too often I've touted that a major benefit of being a digital artist is my artwork and digital poetry can be exhibited anywhere in the world. And while this is true, being in Paris, France to share my work directly with audiences, experts and curators has changed my mind. Yes, I will continue to spread my odd brand of interactive digital art via virtual means, but it's critical to 'show up' when major institutions want to feature your work. Numerous universities, institutions and individuals who had known of my work previously, felt either more comfortable after meeting me or more compelled by our discussions to create connections for future collaborations and commissions. So I've learned that, at least once a year, I will attempt to reach out to a new area of the world, to spread my digital poetry and art in person. The dividends are significantly greater. And besides it's far more charming to see someone's face and eyes light up after exploring my work, rather than read a few words within an email.'

Both for himself and other artists doing similar work, Jason notes the importance of continuing to update technical skills and knowledge in a digital environment that is constantly changing:

'I would strongly suggest those interested in creating interactive digital art to forever explore new codes and programs and technical possibilities to keep your arts practice fresh and innovative. A few years ago, I was entirely out front with my curious art games. Now however I am slightly behind, as I haven't completely made the shift to apps and html5/Jquery etc. And then as soon as I master these new possibilities, something new will surface. So remain always curious and experimental when it comes to new technology.'