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OUT OF THIS WORLD

We are so close to replicating the magical world of Harry Potter. Well, not completely. While we still have to work out how to make objects levitate on command and set up underground, magical governments, we have developed a way to make our postcards come to life. With the magic of Artivive, you can watch as the physical and virtual world become one. While this may not be exactly like Harry Potter's very active newspaper, it is a step in the right direction. This project, I focused on bringing that fantasy to life through interactivity and augmentation.

My postcards are being sent to an alien living outside of Earth's atmosphere. Each postcard is meant to be sent at a different time. My first postcard is sent after Dean and our alien Bling Borgen have met in person. Bling had mentioned to Dean in passing that he was planning a huge, human extermination. This frightens Dean as he himself is a human. However, Bling never told him the date. So Dean decides to send him a postcard with the front reading "Greetings from Planet Earth". On the back, Dean writes out a message for Bling asking him when he's planning on exterminating the human race. On the same side, he also includes a "SCAN" sign, indicating that this is the augmented side of the postcard. Using the power of Artivive, Bling can watch Dean's message. My second postcard is sent several weeks later as Dean and Bling have come to a compromise. Bling makes Dean Global Supreme Leader of Earth but in return Dean has to babysit his kids. The front of the second postcard is a picture that reads "A message from Earth" as well as having the "SCAN" sign. Upon scanning the front of the postcard, the video comes to life and we see Dean again thanking Bling for

his new position. On the back of the postcard, we find the address to a daycare where Dean plans on sending Bling's offspring.

When it came to the direction of my postcards, I thought a lot about who might be an interesting recipient of my postcard. I wanted to explore something new and offbeat and an alien seemed appropriate. I also thought a lot about how I might execute two different postcards. At first I had planned on sending postcards to two different aliens, but settled on sending it to one but at two different points in time. For the front of my first postcard that reads "Greetings from Planet Earth", I looked at some traditional tourist-like postcards and liked the idea of Earth being a tourist destination. When I looked up a lot of postcard examples, I noticed that many of them had this candy cane-like pattern around the border and implemented that into the backs of my postcards. I wanted to make the postcards feel as real and identifiable as possible. For the front of my second postcard that reads "A message from Earth", Artivive has a feature where you can have the thumbnail of a video be the trigger for the augmentation. I liked the idea of having the front of the postcard seamlessly transition into the video and used the thumbnail feature to pull it off.

When it came to linking the physical and virtual content, I thought a lot about Milne's (2010) reading on privacy and postcards. Milne states that "Fears were regularly expressed that postal clerks or servants would spend their time reading the postcards that passed through their hands." (p.112). Taking this into account, I tried two different styles of postcards. For my first postcard, I created Milne's postcard. One that was completely exposed with a written letter and full addresses. For this one I included an augmented video of me reading the written letter out loud. So even without Artivive, the

messenger of the postcard could still easily figure out the intended message. For my second postcard, I tried my best to create a more private experience. For this one, I augmented the front and recorded myself sending another message. However, this time I didn't print the message on the card and on the back I included some text and an address. So for this postcard, it would be much more difficult to decipher without using Artivive. Something I also placed on my cards was the word "SCAN" with the Artivive logo as the letter "A". This made it a little easier to identify which side was the scannable side.

I decided to show my postcards to my sister to get her input on my project. When I first introduced them to her, she read them rather quickly and thought the experience was over. I got to watch the surprised look on her face when I opened Artivive and made my postcards come to life. She was immediately engaged and repeatedly watched Artivive recognize my trigger pictures. While watching her be mesmerized by the augmentation and interactivity, I realized how much potential there was in Artivive. Balmford and Davies (2019) describe how mobile minecraft brought upon new ways for people to interact and communicate and I think Artivive comes with the same. With the power of Artivive, anything from postcards to children's books now have the opportunity to create a more meaningful and engaging experience. However, do I see people throwing out all of their traditional postcards and immediately moving to Artivive. No. I think we see this with many innovative print-based technologies, an example being the e-book. Ballatore and Natale (2015) mention in their reading that "The emergence of e-books and e-readers did not follow a trajectory of incremental success, but rather a series of faltering starts and uneasy acceptances" and I think technology, like Artivive, is

on a similar course (p.2381). People won't be so quick to transition to this new medium, but I think that it could potentially grow exponentially as younger generations begin to adopt it. Regardless, I'm interested to watch the journey of this interactive and augmented technology.

References

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