

Introduction

I have been working on a project an Information Architect at the BBC started in his 10% time. The vision is to develop something that could be considered a true 'web adaptation' of a story, something that just like a film adaptation, a book adaptation, etc., can tell the same core story in a manner that best uses the opportunities and idiosyncrasies of that medium. We think an essential step towards this is to start exposing the BBC's programming at a more granular level than those programmes themselves. To make an analogy, at the moment programmes tend to be viewed akin to discrete web pages, perhaps with a few tags at the bottom. We're interested in the in-line links you would work into the prose itself. As you watch a programme, it references events, characters are involved, interpretations are told... we want to be able to mark this up, to put this clip of that programme into a navigable world of such references, links and media. If a family drama such as Doctor Who has an episode set in the Battle of Britain, and the BBC has decades worth of output that touches on the Battle of Britain, that wealth of content should be there for that families' worth of follow-up interest. To follow that webpage analogy, currently the nearest equivalent we have it 'losing yourself' in a journey through wikipedia.

The immediate goal is then to produce a way of modelling the content of programmes, and that is what this evaluation is about. You're going to watch a section of a Doctor Who programme, summarise the story, and then work out the key things needed to represent or model that summary.

If you reply to the email you got this in, you'll find section headers for your responses to the tasks. And for the second part of the first task, a scribble on a napkin taken with a camera-phone is fine! Whatever is easiest for you on that one.

Once you've done the three tasks, it would be great if you would indicate whether you'd be interested in a follow-up conversation. There's a space in the email for that.

Task 1 - Watch and summarise

Please watch the supplied section of the Doctor Who TV programme. We're interested in how you the viewer perceives the story, and somehow translating that media into an description of the story has to be the first step of modelling that story. So don't worry about 'getting this right', just do what feels appropriate to you. That's especially so with the diagram: its just a way of you exploring your thinking, however you do it and what it looks like on the page doesn't matter.

1.1 Please write out a text summary.

1.2 Please sketch some form of plot diagram.

Task 2 - Tailoring for the Mythology Engine

As it happens, there has already been a prototype made within the BBC to explore and demonstrate what this kind of direction could look like for a BBC property online. Please read the BBC Internet Blog post about it, and watch the three minute video embedded there.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/researchanddevelopment/2010/03/the-mythology-engine-represent.shtml>

In light of that, this task is to take your summaries and identify the key things that would need to be modelled. Again, there is no right answer, we're interested in how you interpret the source media and our goals.

2. Please list and classify the things that are referenced in your summary, ie. "The Doctor", a character.

Task 3 - A question of Events

We decided that events are at the core of our modelling. They are what cause change in our worlds, and relative change is easier to represent than absolute state. Events are then collected and interpreted into Stories, and are linked together by references to people, places and so on. But how do we decide what an event should encompass? This task is for you to answer that question, by process of listing what you see as the events required to tell that story, to represent your original summary.

3. Please name and list a sequence of events sufficient to represent the story as you see it.