

OttoAndIris.com is a playful theme park filled with fun activities in a 3D world. The core elements of the park are two interactive characters, Otto and Iris. These characters are constructed using animation, believable agent, and interactive drama technology developed by Zoesis Studios, a spin-off from Carnegie Mellon University's Oz project, which has focused on these research areas since 1987.

Many commentators have speculated about combining Silicon Valley and Hollywood. We believe the most powerful form of this combination will be true interactive stories, where viewers can enter into a world, be substantially free to do whatever they want, and still experience *the* powerful dramatic story that the author intended. We believe this new art form will be extremely popular and will have a full range of forms, from mass market entertainment to conceptual art.

The two core elements of this new art form are interactive characters that seem truly real and story technology that can subtly guide the experience to fulfill the author's intent. OttoAndIris.com was designed to advance the first of these: the art and technology of interactive characters. In the course of its development, advances were also made in interactive story guidance and interactive music.

Participants enter the world using the display and mouse. The display shows a first-person view of the world from the user's current location, and the mouse moves the person's virtual hand in the 3D world. Users also hear music, sound effects, and character voices. As they explore OttoAndIris.com, they can play tag with Otto and Iris, help Otto sing some operas, create costumes with Iris, or participate in several other activities with the characters.

Each character responds immediately to the user's virtual hand, the user beyond the screen, and the other character. This response is appropriate for the character's current situation, limited perception, resource-bounded reasoning, current goals, and current emotions. Every moment-to-moment reaction and self-motivated action is also specific to the personality and individuality of the character as created by their authors.

In the Magic Snowball scene of OttoAndIris.com, a drama management system provides subtle guidance to create a dramatic arc of intensity, while at the same time maximizing how much of Otto's personality is seen by the user during the interaction. An interactive music system in this scene adjusts the music according to the emotions of the characters and position in the dramatic arc.

OttoAndIris.com is deliverable over the Web to machines that were purchased during Christmas 1997 or later. It requires no special software, plugins, or high-speed connections. Using normal modems and Web browsers, participants can simply go to the OttoAndIris.com URL, and start to play.

*Contact*  
BRYAN LOYALL  
Zoesis Studios  
246 Walnut Street, Suite 301  
Newton, Massachusetts  
02460 USA  
+1.617.969.5700  
+1.617.969.4472 fax  
bryan@zoesis.com

*Collaborators*  
STANTON WOOD  
G. ZACHARIAH WHITE  
PETER WEYHRAUCH  
OLIVER STRIMPEL  
MIKE SHAPIRO  
LIZ SCHAEFER  
PAOLO PISELLI  
W. SCOTT NEAL REILLY  
MARY MCCANN  
BRYAN LOYALL  
MARK LEONE  
RUSSELL LEES  
JULIE CARTER  
EVAN BERNSTEIN  
JOSEPH BATES  
Zoesis Studios



Helping Otto sing an opera.



Playing tag with with Otto and Iris.