A proposit of the center or of the direction fonctionnelle

Inria, the French national research institute for the digital sciences, promotes scientific excellence and technology transfer to maximise its impact. It employs 2,400 people. Its 200 agile project teams, generally with academic partners, involve more than 2,000 scientists in meeting the challenges of computer science and mathematics, often at the interface of other disciplines. Inria works with many companies and has assisted in the creation of over 160 startups. It strives to meet the challenges of the digital transformation of science, society and the economy.

Contexte et atouts du poste

This research fellow position is funded by the ANR JCJC Per² project (Perception-based Human Motion Personalisation), and the candidate will participate in the research conducted by the group working on Character Animation and Crowd Simulation.

Starting date: flexible, starting anytime from now
Duration: 18-month contract

Mission confiée

Context

The overall project targets the personalisation of virtual human motions, which have become a requisite to create always more lifelike virtual worlds for industries ranging from entertainment to training and education. Although the visual realism of virtual human motions has drastically improved over the last decades, current animation techniques still create a certain uniformity of motion across characters. For single individuals (e.g., a main character), displaying the same generic motions for all users can limit their engagement, as motions are not personalised for any user. Similarly, the absence of variation in large groups of individual also affects realism when they all move in the same manner. Tremendous amounts of manual artistic work can indeed create such variations, which undeniably improves overall realism (e.g., crowds in computer generated movies like Warcra++, Star Wars, The Hobbit), however it is still impossible to automatically create such levels of personalisation for interactive applications.

While this need for greater perceptual variety in virtual characters has been identified, existing approaches usually focus on variations of their visual aspect, i.e., appearance and shape ([MLD08,MLH09]). However, motions are extremely important for humans to perform actions and to express themselves, in particular in nonverbal communication. Therefore, this project aims at creating variety in human motions, in order to create a new generation of more realistic virtual characters. However, variety is not simply a reflection of random differences, but results from complex intra-individual (e.g., fatigue) and inter-individual (e.g., morphology, age, sex, emotions) differences, which are seldom taken into account today in virtual characters. As such differences can be difficult to quantify, this project focuses on how viewers perceive motion variations, to automatically produce natural motion personalisation accounting for inter-individual variations. In short, our goal is to automate the creation of motion variations to represent given individuals according to their own characteristics, and to produce natural variations that are perceived and identified as such by users.

Principales activités

Position

The candidate will therefore participate in the Per² project by exploring how virtual character motions can be personalised to meet the requirement of crowd animations. The main task of the candidate will be to explore how animation methods can be adapted to produce efficiently and realistically variations in the motions of large numbers of virtual characters, and to identify the best means of producing variations in such scenarios. In particular, one area to explore will be identifying through perceptual experiments how, when and where to add variations in the motions of groups of individuals. Then such insights will be used to design adaptive perception-based methods automatically providing the best trade-off between visual realism and computation load, as we demonstrated that introducing variety in crowd animations motions contribute to the overall naturalness of virtual scenes ([HOKP16]).

The candidate will be part of the local group working on Character Animation and Crowd Simulation, and will participate in the supervision of the PhD students and interns involved in the related projects (including ANR JCJC Per², EU H2020 ICT 25 CROWD4BOT, EU H2020 ICT 25 PRESENT, EU H2020 ITN CLIPRE).
The candidate will work in the MimeTIC team in the joined Inria / IRISA research centre located in Rennes. Inria (www.inria.fr) and IRISA (http://www.irisa.fr/) are amongst the leading research centres in Computer Sciences in France, and the MimeTIC team is internationally recognised in the fields of Computer Graphics and Virtual Human Simulation. Research activities in MimeTIC focus on simulating virtual humans that behave in a natural manner and act with natural motions.

Keywords and References
Virtual Characters, Human Motion, Crowd Animation, Perception


Compétences

Requirements for candidacy
The candidate must have a PhD degree in Computer Sciences, in the field of Computer Vision, Computer Graphics or Simulation. Beyond scientific excellence, we will consider candidates with excellent organization and communication skills.

Application
We are looking for motivated candidates, please send CV, a motivation letter, reference letters, and any relevant material to ludovic.hoyet@inria.fr, anne-helene.olivier@inria.fr and julien.petrre@inria.fr.

Avantages
- Subsidized meals
- Partial reimbursement of public transport costs

Rémunération
Monthly gross salary amounting to 2 653 euros