

Random twist for storytelling

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UQ software engineer Chooi Guan Lim has created a computer storytelling program that gives children a random, educational experience.

The program called, Adaptive Digital Narrator, is text-based dispersed with pictures that tell changing stories as children read and interact with the plot.

Mr Lim said children interacted with the system by using the keyboard to choose a different path in the story.

He said the child could control the story by performing actions such as picking up objects, moving to different places and talking to friends.

“The number of story paths is not limited, but the endings are currently limited to only two endings, a good and a bad ending,” Mr Lim said.

“The objective is to talk to friends, find out the things they like and give these things to them.

“If you give enough of the things they like, the story has a good ending.

“If you give them enough things that they dislike, then the story ends badly.”

Mr Lim, who is in the final semester of his Honours degree in computer science, said his program could improve imagination and creativity and

encourage children to read.

“My program is low-tech if you compare it with the fancy 3D stuff that’s out there nowadays in a computer game.

“But that's not its purpose. The purpose is to provide educational value.

“Reading is an educational activity which is why text was chosen.”

He said his program was significant because many games and educational software lacked random storytelling.

“Research in computer games has indicated that these products are market driven, with little attention paid on the narrative aspect, which is one of the issues this project seeks to address.”

Source: University of Queensland

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