

The Open Video Digital Library: Balancing Theory and Practice

Gary Marchionini

School of Information and Library Science
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA
<http://www.ils.unc.edu/~march/>
march@ils.unc.edu

Over the past five years we have been building a digital library of video content (<http://www.open-video.org/>) that is open to the education and research community. Part of our motivation was to build a test collection for digital video researchers and a useful collection of video materials for teachers and students at all levels.

These practical goals have been met by the development and operation of the DL that now contains approximately 2000 video segments that are accessed by more than 5000 unique visitors each month. We mainly provide segments rather than full programs (although these can be assembled easily into full programs) to facilitate access and reuse. We have been acquiring non-copyrighted government documentaries, ephemeral films made available for free public use by filmmakers or copyright holders (e.g., the Prelinger archives), and videos made by universities and other NGOs that wish to see their work made publicly available.

The theoretical motivation was to create and test novel user interfaces for digital video. We aim to understand how people search for and make sense of surrogates for video before downloading the full files. This theoretical goal has been met by a series of prototypes and user studies on how people make sense of video with these interfaces. We have created slide show, storyboard, and fast forward surrogates and conducted a variety of user studies in a usability laboratory, including eye tracking data on where people look when they receive thumbnails and text titles in results sets.

The production system has been recently revised to incorporate the successful interface concepts. In this talk, I will focus on how the theoretical goals interact with the practical problems of building a digital video library.