

International Augmented Med

Multimedia and interactive technologies for the promotion of cultural and natural heritage

I AM newsletter

Issue 2, November 2013

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THE PROJECT

Join us in exploring the world of Augmented Reality

Since our project started in October 2012, we have moved ahead with our **project activities** to demonstrate that Augmented Reality and interactive multimedia technologies are a great tool to enhance and promote cultural and natural heritage sites. The enthusiasm for these technologies is evident in the partnership and we are keen to spread the word. In the coming six months, and beyond, we will be contacting the owners of heritage sites in our countries, be it municipalities, museums or foundations etc., to brief them on technical possibilities and to provide guidance on creative, financial, organisational aspects. On the other hand we will be approaching people that are able to develop the creative and touristic content and capable of carrying out

the technical implementation of Augmented Reality applications. Some of them we may have trained ourselves in our workshops, but we will also contact and invite others who are out there doing their thing in this fascinating field of work. Instruments will be developed to allow these experts to stay in touch with us and with each other, exchange expertise, propose joint projects for heritage applications and get in touch with the authorities that wish to see them developed.

*Are you the **manager** of a cultural or natural heritage site in need of some extra attention ?*

or

*a **technical expert** in multimedia technologies, interested in putting your expertise and creativity to good use ?*

Meet the mascot

On the occasion of the first project festival, in the spirit of creativity and passion for multimedia technologies, to symbolize the innovative ways of building bridges between Mediterranean cultures and economies, Alghero's technical experts created a project mascot. The little seahorse has been named Blue and represents the Mediterranean Sea, that big pond of water that divides us, yet bonds us together.



PROJECT EVENTS

The first training workshop

The first workshop was held from 3-6 June in Alexandria, Egypt. Five days filled with courses on various software and practical video-mapping issues. Workshop materials (programme, presentations and video) will be available on the [project website](#).

I AM festival

The first festival took place in Jbeil, Lebanon from 25-27 July. It was held in the same period as the existing Byblos International Festival organised annually by the city (www.byblosfestival.org).



Workshop 1.1 – architectural videomapping

The festival consisted of three types of activities. Exhibitions and demos of Augmented Reality applications could be seen at the Cultural Centre in Jbeil where a booth was present for each pilot territory and its multimedia application(s). In the Outouch theater shows and presentations were given for those interested in more technical detail and background. The most attention-grabbing element of the festival was certainly the outdoor video-mapping at Byblos old port, which was financed by the city of Jbeil-Byblos through one of the project's subgrants.

Watch the Jbeil video-mapping on YouTube!

JBEIL in 3D
 26 and 27 of July 2013
 A 10 min video mapping 3D projection about the history of the city of Jbeil (will be repeated every 30 min).
 From 8:30 p.m till midnight at Byblos Port

Free entrance

Other IAM activities about cultural heritage and augmented reality:
 25 of July 2:00 till 7:00pm. Cultural center in Jbeil: Exhibitions&Demos
 26 of July 5:00 till 7:00pm. Outouch Theater: Shows&Presentations

www.iam-project.eu

International Augmented Media
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I AM workshop – second edition

A second workshop took place in Nabeul, Tunisia, between 22-25 October. People from the tourism industry joined technical experts and students in training in the multimedia field for lectures on heritage management and valorisation (including a study visit to Chatt Ezouhour) and courses on mobile Augmented Reality applications and 3D scanning techniques.

SAVE THE DATE

The next workshops will be held in **February/March 2014**, in Barcelona, Spain and in Birzeit, Palestine (precise date to be announced).

The next festivals will be held on **21-22 September 2014** in Taybeh, Palestine and **1-3 October 2014** in Girona/Empuries, Spain.

FOCUS ON ...

the project's first video-mappings,
in *Lebanon* and *Egypt*

Lebanon. The Byblos projection mapping show on 26, 27 and 28 July was a free public event celebrating the history of Byblos-Jbeil, a Unesco world heritage city known to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities of the world.

Minus5 Architects and Studio Mr.White were awarded the project's first subgrant after a transparent selection process based on criteria such as content creativity, potential for positive impact on tourism and technical innovation.

The subgrant winners had to identify the best heritage site in Byblos for the video mapping event. Though it would be the most challenging site, they chose the

medieval citadel in the center of the old port for its floating situation offering for the projected visuals potential rich reflections over the surface of the water.

The citadel's proximity to the premises of the Byblos Internation I Festival would also heighten the summer celebration experience for Byblos visitors and local festival goers.

Each historical period of the city was depicted in a creative way capturing visually the essence of that time. A flow of sequences was carefully designed to take the audience into a series of unexpected visual cliffhangers keeping their interest peaking throughout the whole 6min show.



Jbeil videomapping – see the film on YouTube

The projection event ran successfully for two days with overwhelming positive feedback from the audience and media, which led the event to be extended for a third day.

Egypt. Egypt is expected to be the second to demonstrate a video-mapping in the framework of the I AM project. The Library of Alexandria team is aiming to complete their pilot application in time for it to be shown in April 2014.



The Library will use its own building as the location for a video-mapping performance. The building of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, inaugurated in 2002, is a modern monument representing tangible and intangible heritage. Both these heritage aspects will be reflected in the contents of a 3D video projection performance which is currently under development for the facades of its conference center.

NEXT FOCUS

The next issue of our newsletter, in **April 2014**, will give you more details on the video-mapping of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. It will also focus on the Tunisian region of Cap Bon and the virtual museum being developed here.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

from the world of Augmented Reality and Interactive Design

by Enzo Gentile – Interaction Designer and technical expert for the I AM Lead Partner, City of Alghero.

The new Kinect 2 is coming...

If you are a computer game enthusiast, you are probably familiar with the Kinect, a dedicated device to interact with your game in a natural way. Interaction designers use it instead as a cheap device for "motion tracking", body, face and voice recognition. It opens up an exciting world of opportunities for performers and artists, enabling them to directly interact with computers, devices, lights and sounds.

The Kinect is able to detect the movement of the human body without any additional equipment or sensors on the body. Skeletal Tracking (25 points) allows it to "recognize" people and their gestures. It has a high-definition camera, infrared sensors to determine depth as well as a sophisticated system of microphones to detect and calibrate the surrounding environment so as to recognize voice commands correctly. With specific drivers, the Kinect can be used on PC, Mac as well as Linux platforms.

The use of video cameras, motion tracking sensors and sound reactive equipment is not new for performers and artists. Such systems were however always limited by their accuracy and by delays in response time, caused by environmental interference (surrounding light and noise).

The complexity of connections (radio, infrared or cable) often made the situation worse.

OPPORTUNITIES

Calls for Proposals will be launched in the near future by project partners Generalitat de Catalunya, Spain, and RIWAQ, Palestine.

In these open calls augmented reality and multimedia experts may propose projects for a variety of applications that will be shown to a large audience at the international festivals held in these countries in September/October 2014.

Subgrants range from 5 to 10,000 euros. See the text of the Call for details (the full call text or link will be provided on the **I AM facebook page** and **website**).

The Kinect solves most of these problems.

Its main advantage, compared to a normal infrared camera, is the ability to discern depth, enabling high precision tracking. The infrared ignores what is projected and any surrounding lights, focusing exclusively on the person, independent from its context.

The device can track 3D objects as well as the entire scene. More specifically, it builds a virtual skeleton that reproduces the main movements of the person with a response time that is acceptable for any live performance.

I look forward to working with the new and improved Kinect, coming out in a few days, which has several improved characteristics such as an improved, full HD camera and an additional infrared sensor for low light situations. It is a fascinating technology that opens up endless possibilities in many fields.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

If you would like to share your insights and experiences in the world of Augmented Reality, multimedia and interactive design with a large audience, ranging from technical experts to public policy makers, museum directors and various professionals in the tourism industry, then please submit a short article for our next issue to manager@iam-project.eu.

The Project Partnership

Lead Partner: Municipality of Alghero, Italy
University of Genoa, Italy
Government of Catalonia, Ministry of Culture, Spain
i2Cat Foundation, Spain
KonicLab, Spain
Library of Alexandria, Egypt
Municipality of Jbeil, Lebanon
American University of Beirut, Lebanon
Department of Antiquities, Jordan
Jordan University of Science and Technologies, Jordan
Municipality of Al Taybeh, Palestine
RIWAQ Centre for Architectural Conservation, Palestine
Regional Commisariat for Tourism of Nabeul-Hammamet, Tunisia
Association for Geographic Research and Studies, Tunisia

For more information

If you would like to know more about the project, its activities or events, please contact one of the following people, in the language of your choice:

Giuseppe Calaresu (Italian)
g.calaresu@comune.alghero.ss.it

Lianne Ceelen-Montaleone (French or English)
lianne@eu-consultancy.com

Randa Ahmed (Arabic)
randa.ahmed@bibalex.org

For general information: manager@iam-project.eu

For technical information: engineer@iam-project.eu

The I AM project in brief

I AM is a Mediterranean cooperation project funded by the European Union's **ENPI CBC Med programme**. It will last 3 years, from 2012 to 2015, is led by the City of Alghero in Italy and involves 13 partners in 7 countries around the Mediterranean.

The project aims to bring together experts in two fields, IT/multimedia and tourism. This cross-sector cooperation system will develop innovative services for the enhancement of natural and cultural heritage sites. It focuses on the use of Augmented Reality (AR) and interactive multimedia techniques.

Activities include training workshops, Augmented Reality festivals and pilot AR applications for one heritage site in each of the 7 participating countries.



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