

# Project Interactieve Multimedia

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## Background

My name is Tim Steinkuhler, I'm 22 years old and I study Business Mathematics and Informatics (BWI, soon to be known as Business Analytics) at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. In our third year, all business analysts have 12 ECTS to fill with whatever subjects they like (as long as it's somehow related to our own studies). I chose to fill mine with Web technology and the project this essay is about, Project Interactive Multimedia. This project seemed to me like it was a good opportunity to explore a side of informatics we don't see a lot of at BWI. The idea of interactive multimedia speaks to me. I think it will have a very big influence in the future. It can have a positive impact in education, making studying more like an interactive experience instead of just reading a book and writing on a notepad. A lot of companies can use it to make it more fun to watch commercials.

One can think of a lot of implications of this concept, but in this project we were to learn the basics. In this document, I will give an insight in the process of making the application, from coming up with the theme to finishing up the application.

## Coming up with a theme

My group and me decided to combine the process of getting to know interactive multimedia with a little self-reflection and a lot of humor. We thought of a lot of different things to show, but procrastination as the basic theme. All three of us are trying to round up the final part of our Bachelors degree; in fact this project could have been the final step towards that. Instead, all of us have made some choices in the past that were in the exact opposite direction of reaching that final goal.

There have been days that in fact I think I actually accomplished doing absolutely nothing. Not even doing the laundry or grocery shopping or even showering. Most of these days were actually days after nights I had been drinking and or working, but still, I consider them wasted days. Seeing that these types of days are behind me, it was time to make the best of it and at least have a laugh about it.

## Plotting the scenario

As watching people doing absolutely nothing, could get a little boring to watch, we decided to mix it up a little and we might have gone a bit overboard! We decided to introduce ourselves as three of your friends and that you as the user of our application were one week away from your final exam. Each day one of your friends calls you with only one goal: to keep you from doing what you're supposed to do and come with them to enjoy all the fun things in the world you can possibly think of.

Each of us then got two days to fill up with our own question of that day. I decided to ask the user out to Awakenings festival for the first day, because I had bought a ticket to go there myself, in the last weekend before the end of this academic year. In fact I went there and it might have caused me to get a worse grade than I could have gotten for an exam this week. Going to awakenings for free seemed like a tempting enough option to skip preparing for your exam.

For the other day I chose one of my other favorite activities; gaming. I could play games all day long any day of the week if I had to, especially at times when I know I'm really supposed to do something else. I wanted to see if the user could relate to that.

My teammates Erik and Ralf decided to do some other things with their days. Ralf, being a soccer player, asks the user out to come with him to try and win a tournament and of course there will be girls to impress on the sidelines.

With his second day and the last day before the end of the week, he came up with the idea of winning a trip to Las Vegas. He really went all out and thought of parties and gambling and a flight to get you back in time for the exam.

Erik decided to ask the user to watch the matrix trilogy with him and the second day if you would like to join him in going to the gym. Both options that are tempting because they don't really harm your studying program in the long run – you can get up in the morning the next day and get right back on track. This makes his options very possible sources of distraction.

At the end of the video application, the user gets a grade from 1 to 10 with the score for his final exam. The choices he made during the videos will influence this. The more time you spend studying during the final week of preparation, the higher your grade will be.

## Creating

Creating the application was a lot harder than we thought. First of all, somehow we weren't able to get the trial version of flex builder, because the website wasn't cooperating and then once we did have it, somehow the example applications from the Advanced and the IMM package were not working the way they were supposed to. We had a lot of ideas that we weren't able to accomplish and in the end we decided to keep the application simple and focus on getting the best possible video material for the application.

Then there were some other problems when we couldn't get our video material to work in the application. After we changed our strategy and download everything instead of streaming it from YouTube, it did work, but we spent a lot of time downloading, cutting and downsizing videos that would not have been necessary if we had just changed the tag in the XML file.

What we did manage to achieve is get all of the right material onto the site before the deadline, so looking back it wasn't so bad. Ralf and I worked together on the application and we left the honor of creating our trailer to Erik – the video-editing specialist. I think this was a good way to divide the work and we all spent approximately the same amount of time on the project.

## Conclusion

Keeping it simple did pay off in the end, because I felt that we received a very enthusiastic response from our audience during the final presentation. It all went very smooth. There were no technical difficulties and our presentation made everybody laugh and that was what we were aiming at.

I felt this project was a very nice way to get familiar with interactive multimedia and it is a subject I would like to explore a lot more in the future. Thank you for taking the time and read my essay and view this website!