

An aerial photograph of a dense forest, showing a network of paths or streams that create a complex, branching pattern across the landscape. The colors are muted greens and browns, suggesting a natural, somewhat overgrown environment.

A Web Odyssey

Serge Bouchardon

“This work compares the navigation of Ulysses to our navigating the web. This funny, original idea leads to a story with game elements that is fun to play, where the user has to solve small interaction puzzles related to web navigation perils. Those puzzles are entertaining and surprising and contribute very well to a coherent experience of an adventure through web navigation.”

ICIDS 2021 Jury

A Web Odyssey

Abstract

The interactive narrative *A Web Odyssey* deals with the navigation on the Web. It is based on the figure of Ulysses trying to navigate back to Ithaca and reconnect with his island, kingdom and home. It features the different episodes of *The Odyssey* (the Cyclops, Circe, the Sirens, Calypso...). The goal of the user is to reconnect to the e-thaca network. Parallels are then drawn between the oblivion caused by the lotos flowers and the infinite scrolling of social networks, the eye of the Cyclops and the webcam which monitors the Internet user (and which must be blinded or disabled), the Underworld and the Dark Web... The ecological question is also addressed through the Sirens, who feed on human flesh, and the streaming platforms which consume a lot of energy and data and feed on the resources of our environment.

Keywords

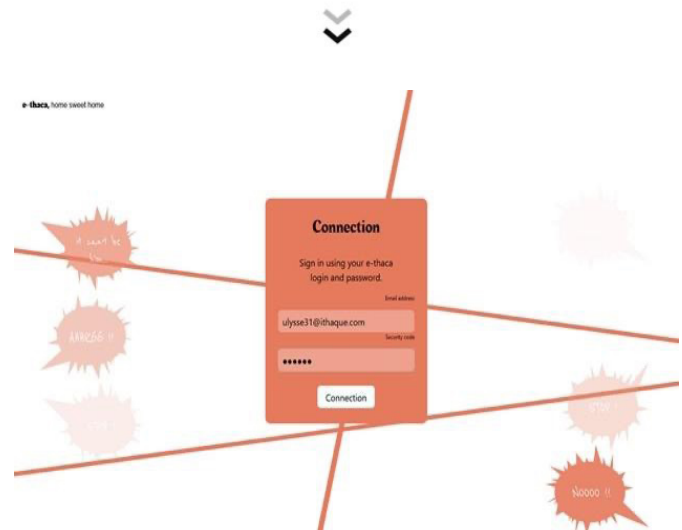
Social networks, social media addiction, webcams, surveillance, cyberbullying, online gaming

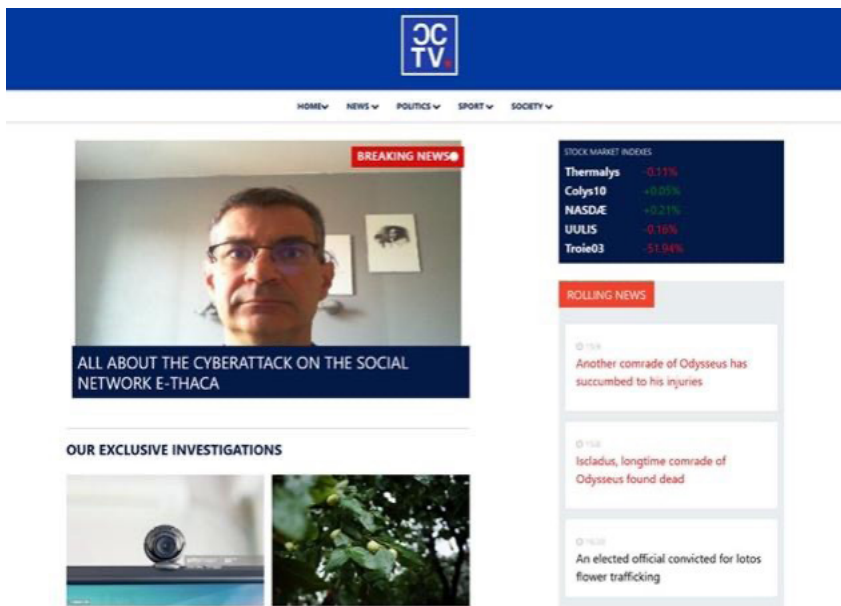
Description

In this story, like Ulysses, the user needs to have a good understanding of the (connected) environment to interact effectively and complete their journey. This interactive narrative, which articulates literary, educational and recreational dimensions, invites us to reflect on digital technologies, social media, platforms, and our will and (dis)ability to disconnect and reconnect.

A Web Odyssey

Based on Homer





Serge Bouchardon is Professor at the University of Technology of Compiègne (France), where he teaches interactive writing. His research focuses on digital creation, in particular digital literature. As an author, he is interested in the way the gestures specific to the Digital contribute to the construction of meaning. His creations have been exhibited in many venues in Europe, America, Africa and the Middle East. They have also been selected in various online reviews (*bleuOrange*, *Hyperrhiz*, *SpringGun*, *The New River*).