



University of Essex



CREATIVE SCIENCE
FOUNDATION



Science Fiction Prototyping (a quick introduction)

Prof Victor Callaghan
Ansol Pena-Rios
Marc Davies



vic@essex.ac.uk <http://victor.callaghan.info>
acpena@essex.ac.uk <http://prlosana.com/>
midavi@essex.ac.uk

Essex University
Computer Science &
Electronic Engineering



Introduction & Welcome



- ▶ **5 minutes** – Welcome and introduction (divide into 5 groups)
- ▶ **15 minutes** – Intereality.net demo
- ▶ **5 minutes** – ‘Tomorrow’ video
- ▶ 10 minutes – Explanation of SFP Method
- ▶ **30 minutes** – Create Micro-SFP (10 mins brain storming, 20 mins writing fiction)
- ▶ **15 minutes** – Review Micro-SFPs / Q&A
- ▶ Science-Fiction Prototyping (SFP) pioneered by Intel to enable engineers and customers to generate ideas for future products.
- ▶ CSf will publish best Micro-SFPs on their web site (www.creative-science.org)
- ▶ Twitter site set up to discuss these Micro-SFPs
- ▶ Prize for best Micro-SFP and two best runners up (plus certificates)

14 in 1 Educational Solar Robot Kit
<http://www.scientificsonline.com/14-in-1-educational-solar-robot-kit.html>

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Creating New Products – An Example

New Product

Intereality.net



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Based on SFP from CS'2010



SFP's are short stories that describe future products and contexts

iPods were effectively small cocoons; something like a comfortable armchair enclosed within a sound-proof egg-like structure packed with sophisticated but largely invisible technology that included immersive mixed reality and sophisticated AI. When participating in a movie (the industry had long dropped the word “watching” which describing these new immersive movies) the immersive reality technology aimed to make the participant feel as though they were truly part of a fictional physical world.

[http://dces.essex.ac.uk/Research/iieg/papers/TalesFromAPod\(Paper\).pdf](http://dces.essex.ac.uk/Research/iieg/papers/TalesFromAPod(Paper).pdf)

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Intel / Creative Science Video

- ▶ CSf & Intel describe SFP (Science Fiction Prototyping).

▶ SFP uses short stories about the future to illustrate a new product, society or political idea.

- ▶ Stories act as a communication language.



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Science Fiction Prototyping



- ▶ Method uses peoples imagination to write short fictional stories about the future that is written around an idea you might have for a new product, business or political system – called a **science fiction prototype (SFP)**
- ▶ SFPs can be created by scientists, writers, students or anyone to influence the work of companies and other organisations.
- ▶ Outcomes of SFPs are used to create new kinds of businesses, products or cities.



Micro-SFPs

- ▶ We just have 30 minutes to write some SFP, so they need to be short!
- ▶ Luckily, there is a style of fiction writing that is very short, we will look at 3 types: (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_fiction)
 - **6 words** (Hemingway flash fiction)
 - **140 characters or 28 words** (Twitter-Text Fiction)
 - **6 paragraphs** (no limits but generally less than 200 words)



This is the style we will try today

Johnson's 5 Steps for Writing SFPs

▶ Johnson suggests the use of five steps to create an SFP:

1. Selecting the science and building an imaginative world,
2. Identifying a scientific inflection point,
3. Analysing the ramifications of the science on people,
4. Identifying a human inflection point, and
5. Reflecting on what was learnt.



<http://www.amazon.com/Science-Fiction-Prototyping-Designing-Future/dp/1608456552>

Micro-SFP: Examples of Extremes

<6 Word

- ▶ Lie detector eyeglasses perfected: Civilization collapses. – Richard Powers
- ▶ TIME MACHINE REACHES FUTURE!!! – nobody there – Harry Harrison
- ▶ Computer, did we bring batteries? Computer? – Eileen Gunn
- ▶ For sale: baby shoes, never worn – Ernest Hemingway (who, according to science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke, bet he could write a complete story in just 6 words starting this genre!).

<http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.11/sixwords.html>

These are examples of the Twitter/Text fictions we will write

<140 Characters (or around 28 words)

General Twitter/Text Micro Fiction:

- ▶ 'Meeting the Parents' (21 words, 109 characters) – Julie M Rodriguez
Barb didn't mind that her daughter had married a robot, truly. But was a nice Jewish android too much to ask?
- ▶ 'Guru 2100AD' (23 words, 114 characters) – Evert Asberg
"Go find yourself," the wise man said. The lad travelled the world to do so. Within a week he bumped into a clone.
- ▶ 'Fashion cycles' (25 words, 139 characters) – Dan McKay
As they peered from the time machine, Professor Lungren told his assistant, "See, I told you this style would be back in fashion some day!"

SFP Micro Fictions

- ▶ Smart Luggage (27 words, 127 characters)
"Hold on Sarah, I think I just got a text from him!" Oh, it's from my smart handbag letting me know I left it at Bob's (again!).
- ▶ Holographic Friends (26 words, 134 characters)
"Were you next to Sarah today? Urr, sort of, she was ill but my holographic phone projected her next to me so she didn't miss class!"

Writing Twitter/Text Micro SFPs

- ▶ **Twitter-Text SFPs** are just a sentence or two, totalling 140 characters or less (around 28 words but play it safe and go for less than 25).
- ▶ It needs to **focus on some technology** (eg machine, gadget, etc) which you should underline, and include an **action to illustrate its use**, plus characters (pronoun or indirect references are ok) framed in a **simple (if partial) narrative**, as in any story.
- ▶ Start by identifying the technology, then the plot. Start big, then reduce it to <140 characters

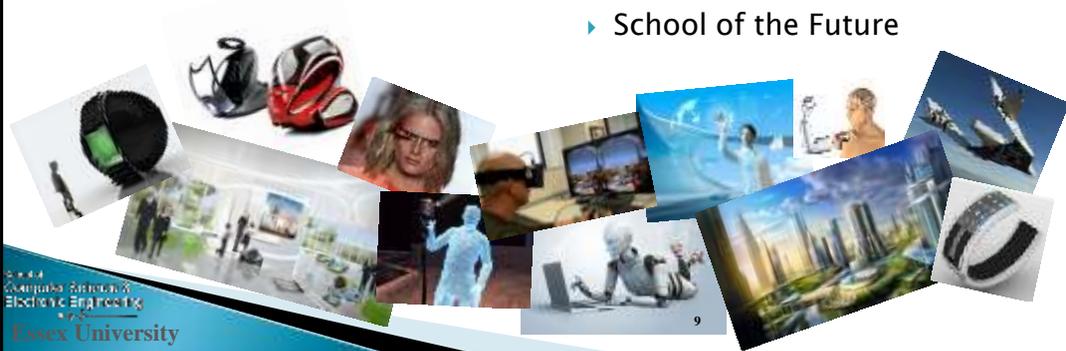
<http://espressostories.com>

Method

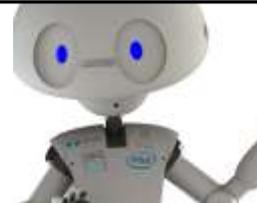
- ▶ Divide into groups of around 5 people
- ▶ Spend 10 minutes in group brainstorming ideas for the technology focus
- ▶ Spend 20 minutes writing Twitter/Text SFP.

Example Topics

- ▶ Home of the Future
- ▶ Phone of the Future
- ▶ Hospital of the Future
- ▶ Travel of the Future
- ▶ Sport/Games of the Future
- ▶ Restaurant of the Future
- ▶ Entertainment of the Future
- ▶ School of the Future



Lets Get Creating!



Some References

- **Ernest Hemingway**, "For sale: baby shoes, never worn", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/For_sale:_baby_shoes,_never_worn (accessed 13.3.14).
- **David Gaffney**, "Stories in your pocket: how to write flash fiction", [theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/may/14/how-to-write-flash-fiction), Monday 14 May 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/may/14/how-to-write-flash-fiction> (accessed 13.3.14). Provides 6 rules for writing micro-fiction.
- **Chris Worth, R.P. Bird**, "Espresso Stories" invites, reviews and hosts Micro-Fiction of 25 words or less. This site has hundreds of micro-fictions organised by genre and author, <http://essporestories.com/>. In addition, this site has a useful set of writing guidelines, see; http://essporestories.com/story_writing_tips.php (accessed 13.3.14)
- **Ben Jones, Fee Plumley** "The-Phone-Book-Com" (a digital publishing project that ran from 2000 to 2003 and served as the model for 150 word short-stories for phones), <http://www.fonebk.com/> (accessed 13.3.14)
- **Wired**, "Very Short Stories (over 50 6-word stories), Issue14.11 – November 2006. <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.11/sixwords.html> (accessed 13.3.14)
- **Kyle Hill** "Sci-Fi in Six", Science fiction short stories told in six paragraphs or less . Kyle Hill wrote all the stories around artwork submitted by others, <http://scifinsix.tumblr.com/> (accessed 13.3.14)
- ▶ **Essex University**, "Microfiction at Essex" (self-contained piece of writing in ten words or fewer – workshops organised by 'Learning and Development' and the 'Faculty of Humanities and Comparative Studies' for teaching writing, reading, and thinking skills, <http://www.essex.ac.uk/ldev/microfiction/> (accessed 13.3.14).



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midavi@essex.ac.uk

More information can be found on:
<http://www.creative-science.org>