

Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call

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Abstract

This artist talk explores the conceptual and technical dimensions of "Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call," an interactive installation designed to navigate the complex relationship between older individuals and contemporary technology and pop culture. Drawing inspiration from Joseph F. Coughlin's "The Longevity Economy" and Wendy A. Rogers and Arthur D. Fisk's "Designing for Older Adults," the installation aims to provide a transformative and inclusive experience for users of all ages within the context of the longevity economy. At its core, the installation features a comfortable chair facing a television, accompanied by a specially crafted device resembling a classic telephone. Leveraging principles from "Designing for Older Adults," this device serves as a tangible interface for users to access a tablet, using the number keys reminiscent of a vintage telephone keypad as digital keys to navigate and play classic video games such as Atari's Pac-Man. The technical underpinning integrates p5.js, a JavaScript library, and a wireless version of the classic ATARI joystick integrated into the telephone in the design of the interface, to ensure a seamless and engaging user experience. By intertwining elements of nostalgia, modern technology, and design principles tailored for older adults, Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call not only entertains but also fosters meaningful connections between generations. The installation stands as a testament to the potential of interactive media art in shaping a more connected and vibrant society within the dynamic landscape of the longevity economy.

Keywords

Intergenerational Dynamics, Interactive Installation, Old People's Reactions, Videogame-Phone-Call, Interactive Installation, Longevity Economy, Designing for Older Adults, p5.js

Introduction

This paper delves into the conceptual framework and experiential dimensions of an interactive installation that actively engages with Joseph F. Coughlin's [1] pioneering work, "The Longevity Economy." Coughlin's insightful exploration of the economic and social dynamics surrounding the aging population serves as a foundational lens through which we approach the complexities of aging in a world rapidly shaped by technological and cultural shifts. In "The Longevity Economy," Coughlin challenges traditional perspectives on aging, highlighting the vast potential of older individuals as active participants in shaping societal landscapes [1].

As we venture into the design and implementation of our interactive installation, we draw inspiration from Coughlin's call to view the aging demographic not merely as consumers but as integral contributors to a vibrant and evolving cultural tapestry. The installation goes beyond observational studies of older people's reactions to modern technology and pop culture. By integrating Coughlin's emphasis on the active engagement of the older population, we aim to create an immersive experience that mirrors the dynamic nature of the longevity economy. The installation is carefully crafted to provide a platform for older individuals to interact with contemporary technology, showcasing their resilience, adaptability, and potential impact on cultural innovation.

Through this exploration, we aspire to contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding the longevity economy by demonstrating how interactive media art can foster connections between generations. By intertwining Coughlin's arguments with our installation's objectives, we aim to unveil the transformative potential of bridging generational divides, fostering understanding, and enriching the lives of both older and younger individuals within the context of a rapidly evolving cultural landscape.

Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call

Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call is an interactive installation that seamlessly combines elements of nostalgia with modern technology, offering a unique experience designed to bridge generational gaps. The installation centers around a comfortable chair positioned in front of a television, accompanied by a specially designed device resembling a classic telephone – a symbolic blend of the past and the present.

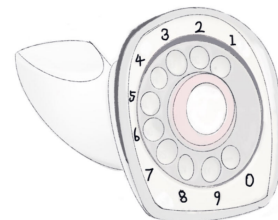


Figure 1. Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call sketch. Image by the author.

The conceptual core of the installation is rooted in Joseph F. Coughlin's "The Longevity Economy," which emphasizes the active engagement of older individuals in contemporary society. In this context, the installation leverages the concept of nostalgia to create a familiar yet updated environment, fostering a sense of comfort for the elderly while introducing them to modern interactive experiences.

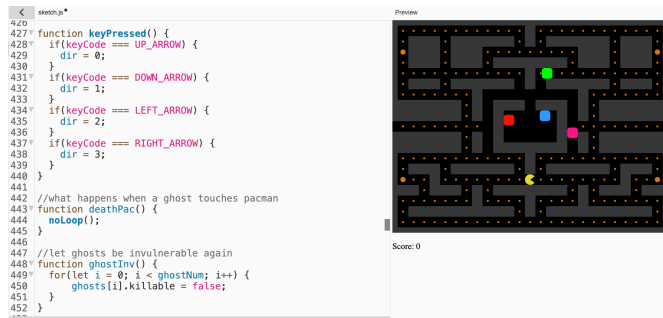


Figure 2. P5JS version of Pac-Man by the user 'frutose' [2]. Image by the author.

The device, designed to look like a vintage telephone, functions as a conduit to a tablet interface. Utilizing the number keys reminiscent of an old telephone keypad, users can access a variety of classic video games. The interface, displayed on the adjacent television, includes beloved titles like Atari's Pac-Man, providing a nostalgic trip down memory lane for the elderly.



Figure 3. Wireless version of the classic ATARI joystick. Image by ATARI [3].

Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call is an intricately designed interactive installation that integrates p5.js, a JavaScript library, coding version of vintage games such as Pac-Man (figure 2) to create a seamless blend of nostalgic elements and modern technology. The installation revolves around a comfortable chair facing a television, accompanied by a specially crafted device resembling a classic telephone – a symbolic union of the past and the present. The classic telephone adapted to a wireless version of the classic ATARI joystick allows user to make round movements to control game actors on the screen.

The heart of the installation lies in the technical ingenuity of the p5.js framework. The device, designed as a vintage telephone, acts as a tangible interface for users to access a tablet connected to the system. The telephone's number keys, functioning as interactive buttons, serve as digital keys to navigate through a curated selection of classic video games displayed on the adjacent television screen.

The p5.js library facilitates an immersive and responsive gaming interface, allowing elderly users to engage with iconic titles such as Atari's Pac-Man. The integration of p5.js not only enables the seamless transition between games but also provides a visually appealing and user-friendly experience.

Behind the scenes, the installation employs p5.js functionalities to handle user inputs, interpret key presses, and dynamically render the gaming interface. The nostalgic-inducing graphics, reminiscent of vintage video games, are rendered in real-time using p5.js, creating an authentic and immersive gaming environment.

By leveraging the capabilities of p5.js, Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call transcends traditional boundaries, offering a technically sophisticated yet user-friendly interface for older individuals. The combination of nostalgic design elements with p5.js interactions transforms the installation into an engaging and memorable experience, showcasing the potential of interactive media art within the framework of the longevity economy.

Design Aspects

In shaping the conceptual and technical aspects of Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call, Wendy A. Rogers and Arthur D. Fisk's principles from "Designing for Older Adults" [4] have played a pivotal role. This influential work emphasizes the importance of creating designs that cater to the unique needs and preferences of older individuals.

As we navigate the intricacies of blending nostalgia with modern technology, Rogers and Fisk's insights guide our approach to ensuring an inclusive and user-centric interactive experience.

The design of the vintage telephone-like device aligns with Rogers and Fisk's emphasis on creating intuitive interfaces for older adults. The tangible familiarity of the phone, combined with the digital keys for navigating the gaming interface, speaks to their principles of designing interfaces that resonate with the cognitive and physical capabilities of older users.

The visual aesthetics and user interactions within the p5.js gaming interface are crafted with careful consideration of Rogers and Fisk's recommendations for clear, concise, and easy-to-navigate designs. Leveraging p5.js functionalities aligns with their advocacy for adaptive technologies that accommodate a diverse range of users.

By integrating the principles from "Designing for Older Adults," *Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call* aims to create an environment that not only sparks nostalgia but also prioritizes accessibility and usability for older individuals. This consideration ensures that the installation aligns with the principles of inclusive design, fostering an engaging and comfortable experience for users of varying ages within the context of the longevity economy.

Final Considerations

In conclusion, *Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call* emerges as an embodiment of the interplay between nostalgia, modern technology, and the unique considerations outlined by influential scholars in the field of aging and design. Wendy A. Rogers and Arthur D. Fisk's foundational work in "Designing for Older Adults" has provided a guiding framework for creating an interactive installation that not only captures the essence of nostalgia but also prioritizes accessibility and usability for older individuals.

The installation's conceptual underpinning aligns with the vision of an aging population actively engaging with and contributing to contemporary societal landscapes. By integrating elements of familiarity through a vintage telephone-like device and coding in p5.js, *Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call* showcases the transformative potential of media art within the context of the longevity economy.

The deliberate fusion of nostalgic design with cutting-edge technology aims to not only entertain but also to create meaningful connections between generations. By allowing older individuals to navigate and play classic video games through a familiar interface, the installation fosters a sense of comfort and engagement, bridging generational divides dynamically and interactively.

As we reflect on the journey of conceptualizing and implementing *Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call*, we recognize the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration. The synthesis of insights from aging studies, design principles, and technical innovation has resulted in an installation that goes beyond mere observation to actively involve and empower older individuals within the evolving cultural landscape.

In essence, this work contributes to the ongoing dialogue on the transformative potential of interactive media art in shaping inclusive and enriching experiences for individuals of all ages. "*Nostalgia-Updated: Videogame-Phone-Call*" stands as a testament to the intersection of nostalgia, technology, and design, offering a glimpse into a future where creative installations contribute to a more connected and vibrant society within the expansive realm of the longevity economy.

Acknowledgments

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Author Biography

Born in 2002 in Shanxi Province, Mainland China, YaNi Zhang is currently in the third year of undergraduate studies at Roy Ascott Studio Advanced Program in Technoetic Arts in Shanghai. A strong interest in humanistic concern and social and humanistic issues permeates his artistic creation. Through artistic expression, she explores complex issues in contemporary society and strives to provoke deep thinking and meaningful dialogue. They focus on issues such as social justice, human rights, cultural diversity, and social change, and use his work to convey concern and consideration for these issues.

Dr. Clarissa Ribeiro, Program Coordinator of the Roy Ascott Studio Advanced Program in Technoetic Arts at SIVA/DeTao in Shanghai, has been honored with the Pete Townshend Endowed Senior Lectureship in Performative Technoetics (2022-2024). Ph.D. in Arts (ECA USP Brazil, Poéticas Digitais/CAiiA hub of The Planetary Collegium, UK), Fulbright Postdoctoral Scholarship awardee (UCLA, Art|Sci Center/James Gimzewski Lab, USA), M.Arch. (IA USP, Brazil), B.Arch, member of the UCLA Art|Sci Collective (2013-present), is the chair of the first Leonardo/ISAST LASER talks to be hosted in Brazil/Latin America (2017-present). The core of her explorations is the interest in cross-scale information and communication dynamics that impact and shape macro-scale emergent phenomena. She has been exploring the metaphysics of information visualization in subversive morphogenetic strategies that welcome the animistic to navigate ecologies as cosmologies.