

Experiencing the Treaty of Utrecht

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ABSTRACT

For the upcoming festivities around the treaty of Utrecht, we are developing three applications that, in a broad sense, are meant to accompany a city tour through Utrecht. They will sketch different aspects of in the historic situation around 1714, when the treaty was signed. All applications have interactive and location based aspects, and are being developed for the current generation smart phones.

Keywords

Location based, Augmented reality, history.

INTRODUCTION

The treaty of Utrecht resolved the war of the Spanish succession, and marked the end of the wars of Louis XIV and the opposition to French expansionism by the Grand Alliance brought together by William III, the Dutch stadtholder and king of England, Scotland and Ireland. It also began a new era of European politics which introduced the idea of balance of power which the celebrations are commemorating. In the Dutch context, it comes at the end of the Golden Age, giving rise to a new more formal artistic style heavily influenced by the French court style.

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DESCRIPTION

In a broad sense the applications are meant to accompany a city tour through Utrecht. However, the audiences and form differ considerably, and one of the applications can in fact be viewed anywhere in Europe. Descriptions show our current status and the eventual realization may change somewhat.

Table 1 summarizes the three applications

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| Concept | Form | Perspective | Location Specific | Objective |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Murder game | Fiction/ Gaming | Local | Historic locations | Awareness of local history |
| Poet Battle | Dialogue | Thematic | Contextual with present usage | Awareness of personal historic baggage |
| A century of wars, Europe 1614-1714 | Infographic | Global | Not location specific | Awareness of European and Global history |

Table 1: The three different applications commemorating the treaty of Utrecht.

Murder Game

The first application is a murder game that illustrates contemporary daily life, economic conditions, religious thought and political struggle in a playful way. The intended audience is children from 8 to 80 years. The game will be a more or less classic ‘whodunnit’ puzzle game with different characters involved in different parts of early 18th century society. To find hints for gameplay, real locations in Utrecht should be visited and the game is therefore complemented by an integrated guide for a city walk through the center of Utrecht. The game script will be roughly based on an historic murder on David Johan Martens, the brother of the contemporary mayor of Utrecht. This will allow different historic characters such as the mayor’s family and servants, rich merchants, priests, and foreign diplomats and their supporting entertainment scene to enter the game.

Poet Battle

The second application will read and suggest poems at different locations illustrating the so called poet-battle that raged at time. The intended audience is adults, and in particular book-lovers. The poet-battle revolved around a difference of opinion on artistic style in poetry, with proponents for a free and polemical style written in the Dutch vernacular, versus a more formal classical and French courtly style written in Latin, French or Latin inspired Dutch vernacular. It echoes the use of Dutch versus English today. A city tour will include some bookshops, and at different locations poems will be ‘‘read’’ by the device. We are still investigating the possibility of a physical installation with directed audio in addition to using a handheld device. While following the tour the user will be able to express preferences and will accordingly be guided to different parts of the city.

A century of wars, Europe 1614-1714

The third application is an augmented reality application that will be visible over all of Europe. The intended audience is adults with some interest in history. It is an animated infographic showing the alliances and struggles that took place in the 100 years preceding the treaty of Utrecht together with some landmark historic events counting down in 100 seconds. It will finally point to the exact spot where the treaty was signed and give some hints about the historic direction the main players took after the treaty. By towering over the full sky it will give a feeling for the European and worldwide importance of the treaty

and how the conflict of the war of the Spanish succession fitted in a long struggle for European power. The application is like a virtual monument to the treaty and the century of wars that preceded it which shaped Dutch and European history.

CONCLUSION

We are developing three location based applications to commemorate the treaty of Utrecht.

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