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Microsoft Awards UCF Research Team
Two HoloLens Units for Memory Lens Project

A UCF research team, Dr. Lori C. Walters, Eileen Smith, Robert Michlowitz, and Alexia Mandeville, in partnership with Dr. Fran Blumberg from Fordham University, have been awarded two of the first Microsoft HoloLens units. The HoloLens is the first fully untethered, holographic computer, enabling high-definition holograms to integrate with our world. It intelligently maps a room, mixing holograms with the environment. Pinning holograms in physical locations is as easy as placing a physical object in a room leading to the interaction with holograms and everyday objects together. Microsoft HoloLens understands gestures, gaze, and voice, enabling interaction in the most natural way possible.

The UCF research team’s project, Memory Lens: A Dynamic Tool for Capturing Societal Memory, explores the unique capabilities of the Microsoft HoloLens to facilitate intergenerational transfer of knowledge about key historical periods between youth and elders and to gather what we refer to as Micro-Oral Histories (MOH). The centerpiece of Memory Lens is intergenerational learning as facilitated by child-adult interaction. The proposed experience is an interactive “Play and Tell” that utilizes the gesture capabilities of the HoloLens to examine preloaded and user-generated content based on a topic/era. Objects can be 3D models, photographs, video, audio, and related MOHs. Experience progression is facilitated by interaction with the virtual objects via the HoloLens’ gesture capabilities and the contribution of MOHs and scanned materials.

Oral histories are typically lengthy interviews on specific topics or entire life stories that help to preserve key historical events/periods and societal memory. However, shorter but equally compelling information is often left unrecorded. Further, triggering personal reflections in a natural conversational manner is quite difficult. The HoloLens will be the interface for an experience using 3D and other objects that provide discussion cues to facilitate elders’ sharing of personal MOHs of these periods. The content of the MOH will be electronically transcribed to unlock the educational content and shared with subsequent application users. Users also can capture 3D objects to be added to the experience, thus creating a dynamic intergenerational sharing and learning platform.

UCF was among only 10 institutions to receive these advanced devices. Other University recipients include Carnegie Mellon, Dartmouth, Virginia Tech, University of California/Berkeley, Texas A&M University, and University of Kansas.

The Microsoft announcement can be found at http://blogs.windows.com/devices/2015/11/11/meet-the-award-recipients-of-the-first-microsoft-hololens-academic-research-grants/

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