

Communication Design for Interactive Media II: Creating Storyboards

DES 596 B1 | Winter 2012

Storyboards are a planning tool that will help you communicate and develop your ideas. They will also allow you to flag potential problems with the plan for your animation, TV commercials, multimedia design and film making. Storyboards show only the key frames of your animation, in other words, the major actions in your animation. You don't have to be an expert at drawing to communicate your ideas

Tips for creating a storyboard

- Don't make your storyboard squares or too large, keeping them small will allow you to draw more quickly
- Print out your rectangles instead of drawing them by hand (use a 4:3 ratio, or one that matches your screen ratio)
- Sketch in pencil so that you can erase and re-work your frames. Ink and fill in with colour after you have refined your frames if you want / need to
- Write short notes about what is happening under each frame
- Number your shots

Indicating movement in your storyboard

Arrows

Use arrows to indicate movement in a shot. You won't be indicating a camera's movement, but you may, create the illusion of zooming in on your letter forms. You can also use arrows to indicate movement of your type. It may tip or tilt, but you don't want to have to draw every frame to show the movement.

Floating Frames

You may want to add extra frames in certain sections where the action is complex. For example, in a film if a camera were to pan over a landscape the storyboard artist might add an extra frame to describe this. They might also draw the whole landscape and indicate as arrow to show the direction of the camera movement.

Transitions

Transitions are used to bridge between scenes. You will most likely not need to use transitions in this animation as you are probably just using one scene. (Examples: fade, wipe, quick cut, etc.)

Emphasizing Movement for a Livelier Effect

Classical animation uses several techniques and tricks to make movement snappier and more emphatic. Exaggerated, comic animation goes wild with these things; naturalistic animation uses them with more restraint. It is all a matter of style. Not all styles of animation use these things, but this is a little bag of tricks that is handy to have.

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Anticipation

If you know a big move is coming, emphasize it by going backwards first. In other words, before leaning forwards, lean back a bit. This is like a pitcher's windup, and it telegraphs the movement, and makes it more believable. People often anticipate a motion just to get up enough momentum.

Follow-through

After the move, let the moving object go slightly beyond the final point. This can be a whole trajectory in itself, like the pitcher's arm continuing downward after the ball is released.

Squash & Stretch

Make the object slightly elastic, so it stretches into a movement, and squashes on impact with another object. This adds life to bouncing balls and other simple movements.

Drag

With complex objects and characters, you can show the force of inertia by having different parts follow the trajectory at different rates: the slower bits appear to "drag," as does any object at rest suddenly being an object in motion. These bits can also be behind-time in the trajectory. Disney has always used this to great effect with the hair and clothing of human characters, and ears and tails of animal characters, so a character leaping up is followed by these peripheral parts, then when the character is on the way down, the hair, ears, etc, are still travelling up, and reverse course a little more slowly.

Cycles: making it go Round Again

If you make your last drawing connect smoothly with your first drawing, you will have the possibility of repeating action. This is often used for rhythmic movements like walking, but many things can use this principle. If you are design web animation that will repeat itself at least once, you will want to plan a smooth transition from last image to first, or you get the annoying result of watching an animation finish then start over again. Special effects, like flames, can cycle as well.

Ease in and Ease out

As action begins we have slower movement, which accelerates in the middle before slowing down at the end of the action.

Arcs

All actions, with few exceptions, follow an arc or slightly circular path. This is especially true of the human figure and the action of animals. Arcs give animation a more natural action and better flow. Think of natural movements in the terms of a pendulum swinging. All arm movement, head turns and even eye movements are executed on arcs.