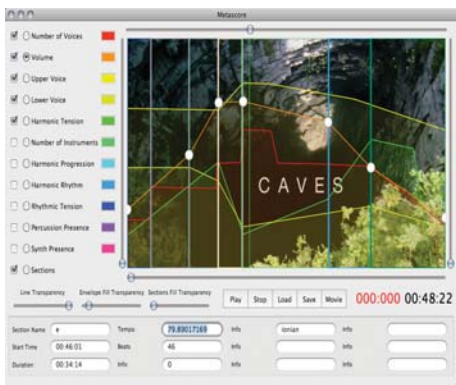


Spreading Jam2Jam around the world

The Jam2Jam team has recently increased its profile in Hong Kong after the Hong Kong Institute of Education bought 100 MacBooks to encourage teachers to use Jam2Jam.



The One Laptop Per Child project is tapping Jam2Jam for a rollout to Aboriginal communities.



From little things, big things grow, goes the saying, and Jam2Jam is no exception. From the time it was featured in *Wheels* at the beginning of the year, the Queensland University of Technology-backed collaborative music project has gone from strength to strength.

Most recently Jam2Jam has done everything; from a major MacBook investment in Hong Kong, a multinational conference about collaborative music education, potential commercial collaborations, outreach in Aboriginal communities, and a new music creation tool for films that has caught the attention of filmmakers around the world.

A product of the QUT-based Australasian Cooperative Research Centre for Interaction Design (ACID), Jam2Jam funnels gestural data from virtual musical instruments over the Internet, allowing users to play collaboratively with people located on the other side of the globe. It's built with Impromptu, uses Mac OS X's Core Audio technologies and generative technologies to overcome issues of latency and timing, as well as tapping into the power of ACID staffer Andrew Sorensen's Impromptu programming language.

From initial explorations through a two-month installation at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum, Jam2Jam has grown into a worldwide phenomenon. At the JamSkolan '09 symposium

(www.savetodisc.net/jamskolan09) recently held in Brisbane, QUT researchers welcomed representatives from as far afield as the Universities of Illinois and Massachusetts in the US; Cambridge University in the UK; the Malmö Academy of Music at Sweden's Lund University; and, most recently, the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIE).

The Hong Kong deal came about as Dr Steve Dillon, Network Jamming project leader within ACID, reached out to the regional education body in an effort that saw Associate Dean and Professor Samuel Leong obtain 100 Apple MacBooks to encourage HKIE teachers to use Jam2Jam as well as GarageBand and other core Apple tools.

But HKIE isn't the only place where laptops are set to benefit from Jam2Jam: the team is working with the One Laptop Per Child project to build a version of Jam2Jam suitable for inclusion on 100,000 low-cost 'gifted' laptops set to be distributed in Indigenous communities across Australia.

"Part of the idea is this notion of cultural fluidity, and being ethical about how we relate to the communities we work with," Dillon explains. "People end up doing surprising things with the tools, particularly in Indigenous communities [such as FNQ's Lockhart River community, where Jam2Jam has been previously trialed in a partnership with HitNet, the Health Information Technology Network]."

However, Jam2Jam isn't the only product from the ACID effort: more recently, the team devised MetaScore, a music creation tool that uses Sorensen's toolset to automatically generate music to accompany movies based on parameters that users draw onto the video as it plays. MetaScore has already caught the eye of one Hong Kong film archiving organisation, which is considering its potential use in adding music to silent films.

The ACID team has also been invited to contribute to a number of music-creation publications, has been investigating possible applications for the apps' use by disabled children through a partnership with the Endeavour Foundation, and is exploring other options for permanent installations in libraries and other public facilities.

Yet as well as catching up with the projects' progress so far, JamSkolan '09 also pressed attendees to address a very real question: with ACID's funding set to expire in 2010, where should the project be directed next? Commercialisation is one option, as are potentially prolonging the research projects through other means or simply transferring the technology into communities that are interested in using it.

"The project won't stop," says Dillon, "just the current funding for it. The user response has been absolutely fantastic."

www.explodingart.com/networkjamming