IDC School of Design
अभिकल्प विद्यालय

Understanding Motion Comics

Design Research Project

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the research done for my design research seminer project and submitted as a written report to the Industrial Design Centre, IIT Bombay is a record of the original work done by me under the guidance of
Prof. Phani Tetali.

I affirm that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or falsified any idea/data/fact/source to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any violation of the above will cause for disciplinary action by the Institute .

Signature: 

Date:

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APPROVAL SHEET

The Design Research Seminar Report is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirement for Understanding the Motion Comic in Animation Design.

Project Guide : T. Mani

Date (DD/MM/YY) : 01/07/2016

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ABSTRACT

This project would involve studying and understanding motion comics for various platforms like iOS, android and windows.

My research area will be based on understanding the importance of camera angles and viewpoints in a interactive motion comics and creating a concept of multi- camera options for the users and afterwards creating a flowchart for the process.

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INTRODUCTION TO MOTION COMICS

Somewhere between printed comics and limited animation lies a new breed of medium: the motion comic. With visual styling similar to an animatic, but a fully produced soundtrack like an animated film, motion comics are combining the best of both worlds to serve a broader audience of comic fans and non-fans alike. Motion comics have created a new medium that blurs the line between traditional printed comics and animation by having elements of both.

While certain comic book narratives have already been adapted into various film franchises, televised cartoons, webcomics and interactive experiences, the emergence of the motion comic has further transformed the relationship between the comic book medium and moving image culture. It does so by directly appropriating the narrative and 'static' comic book artwork of the hypotext, which is then manipulated by animation software such as Adobe's After Effects to create an impression that is similar to paper-cut animation.

Early examples of the form include the episodic web-based Broken Saints (Dir. Brooke Burgess, 2001-2003), as well as Saw: Rebirth (Dir. Jeff Shuter and Daniel Viney, 2005), an adaptation from a one-off comic book title that acted as a prequel to the Saw narrative in the live-action films. There is a great deal of diversity in production approaches, including cinematic forms that attempt to emulate more orthodox forms of animation, to reconstructed motion comics that use comic book systems such as multiple panels, gutters and speech balloons to convey narrative.

This first generation is admittedly crude, but there is enough "motion" in these motion comics to keep the viewer's attention, and so far the music and voice acting have been great. Plus, the level of experimentation and sophistication will grow as more are produced.

I don't think motion comics will be a huge moneymaker, or replace traditional animation, but they are so easy to produce (compared with full-blown animation and live action) and these studios have thousands of stories to choose from, so there's no reason not to create them. Plus, they are perfect for the web, and when you allow embedding (like N), they can be a cost-effective, entertaining way to promote a bigger project.

THEORITICAL BASICS

Based on process of creating a motion comic from a technical perspective we can broadly classify motion comic in following categories :

Interactive Static

This type mainly comprises of simplistic motion with optional sound. Generally, comics in this category is digitized version of traditional comics with static panels and characters but have full interactive controls to browse the comic.

Interactive Dynamic

These comics have more technical aspects to it. Comics are much more interactive from reader's perspective. Artist can control the playback of animation using buttons or other appropriate commands giving the reader an immersive experience. The artist can also exploit other hardware features modern mobile device has to offer like motion sensors, gyroscope, light sensors to give additional interactivity to the comic.

Video Sequential

Comics in these categories are essentially structured on a timeline as a video sequence. Artist has full control over the comic book elements while creating it and even difficult features like special effects or character rigs could be added easily but it offers least amount of interactive controls as these motion comics are video sequences; one can only play, pause or stop the comic.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of this project is to create seamless connection between the eye movements and the appropriate response, e.g. change in perception. This concept will enhance the quality of the motion comics making them realistic and enjoyable. The aim is for a natural, free- fbwing form of interaction which will result in a memorable experience.

DESIGN PROCESS

Taking these option a little further for better user experience, I suggest ***multiple camera angles /viewpoints*** for a single panel would give the user more dynamism to visual narrative while feeling as if he were in that world. Other than having multiple camera angles, we can have ***180 degree view*** of the panel depending on the narrative. For example, the human visual field does not look like a video frame. We have (more or less) 180 degrees of vision and although you are not always consciously aware of your peripheral vision. this option can be used for a first person view of the character or the user itself.

For this technique we need to have pre-render graphics/animation designed by the artist himself with combination of hardware, software and sensory synchronicity just right it achieves something known as a sense of presence. Where the subject really feels like they are present in that environment.

This type of interactive motion comics can be made through dedicated software with embedded scripting languages that will allow the user to have precise control over the panel with wide range of camera options depending on the narrative. Everything that we know about our reality comes by way of our senses. It stands to reason then, that if we can present our senses with made-up information, our perception of reality would also change in response to it. We would be presented with a version of reality that isn't really there, but from our perspective it would be perceived as real.

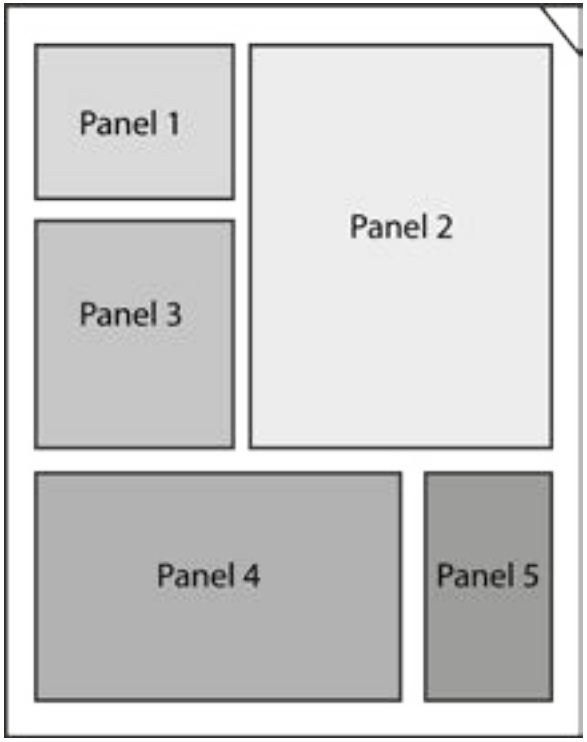
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Multiple Camera Angles/Viewpoints

Storytelling via comics or film is divided into a sequence of intermittent scenes. Each scene represent a part of the story and is succeeded by the next scene. Such shots are always portrayed with a single point camera. Changing the camera or point of view drastically in fluences the storytelling. For example a closeup can intensify the expression and a wide shot can increase uncertainity. The strong in fluence on the mood of the story telling allows different camera angles to make the story replayable. The concept proposes a number of camera angles that can be captured for each shot. Camera angles are extremely important to constructing a great composition. This allows the director to have enough control and still introduce some uncertain behavior. The selection of shots can be at random or also on user preference.

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

According to the existing static motion comics, each panel is dedicated to a particular action comprises of simplistic motion with optional sound. Each action sequence is projected through individial image comprising of non-changeble camera view.



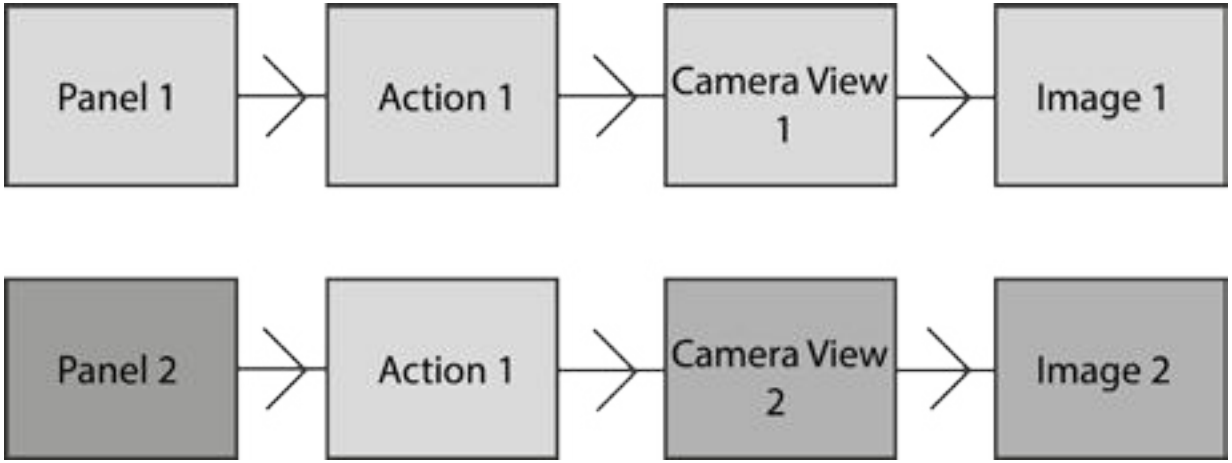
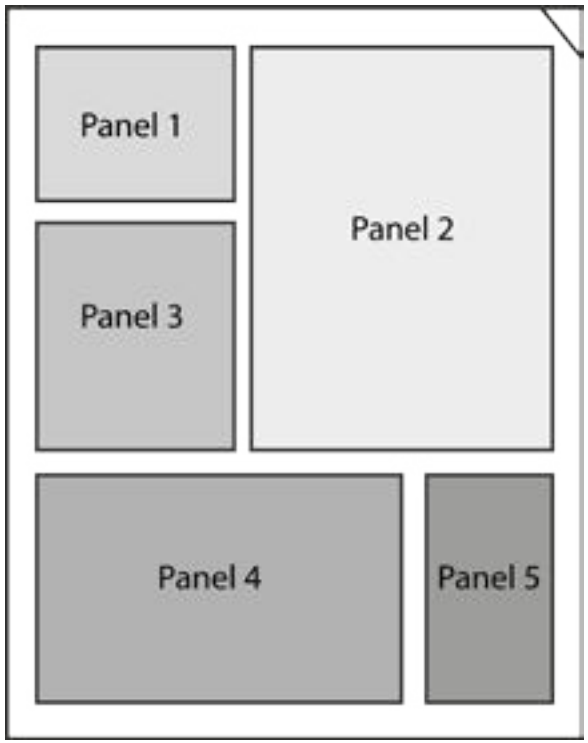


Fig. 1.1

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

But here, each panel consisting of a single action or any composition based on the narrative can have multiple option of camera angles refining and enhancing the feel of the particular narrative. It also gives the user to explore more viewpoints rather than having only one giving the user more control over the panel.



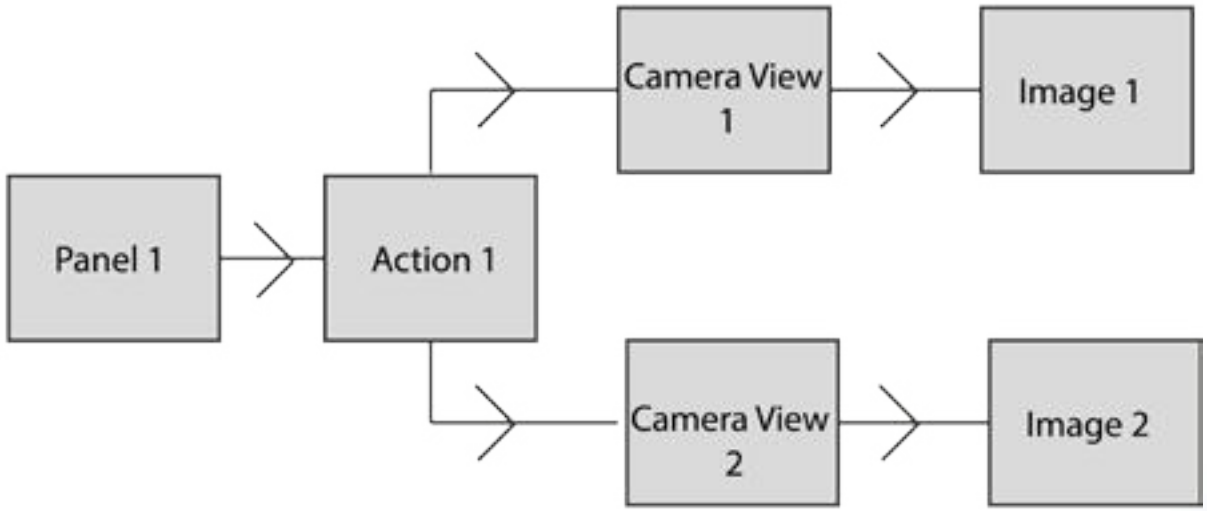


Fig. 1.2

CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Under the multi-cam option, each panel will be feeded with more than one pre-render CGI or animation sequence giving the user to change in their field of vision i.e. change in perception. This also ensures that a single action can be depicted on a single panel wih multiple views without going for anothet panel for the same. This will make the user more comfortable without moving his/her eyes for a single action to happen.

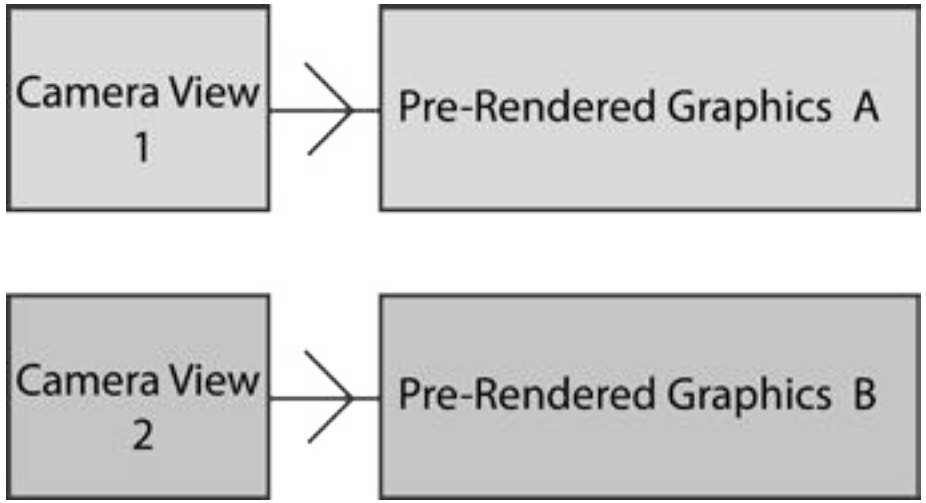
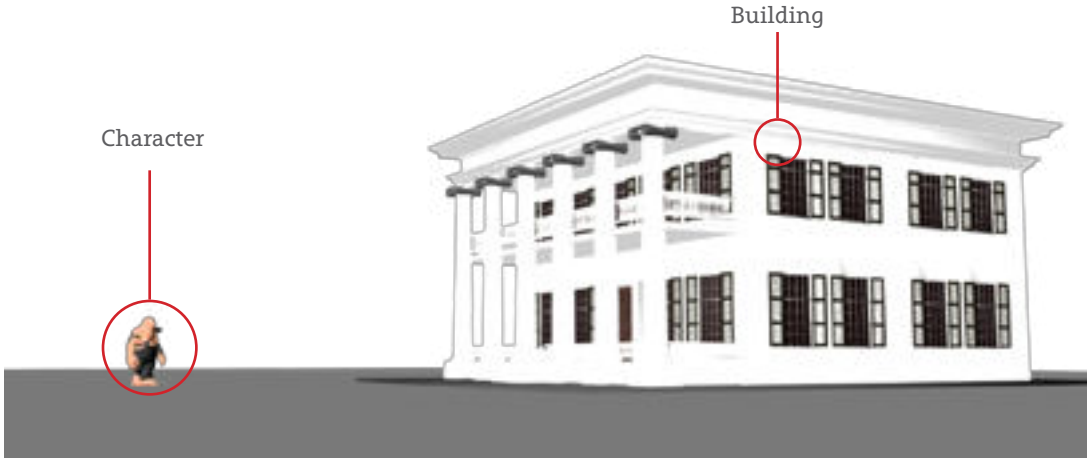


Fig. 1.3

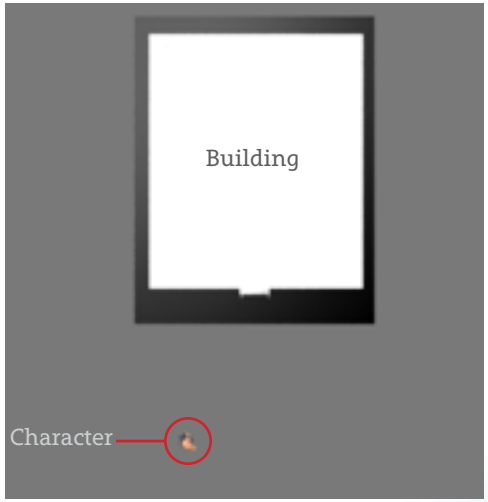
Example

Case 1

A character is standing infront of a giant building looking at it. The character's position is 45 degree from the entrance/front gate of the building.



Side View



Top View

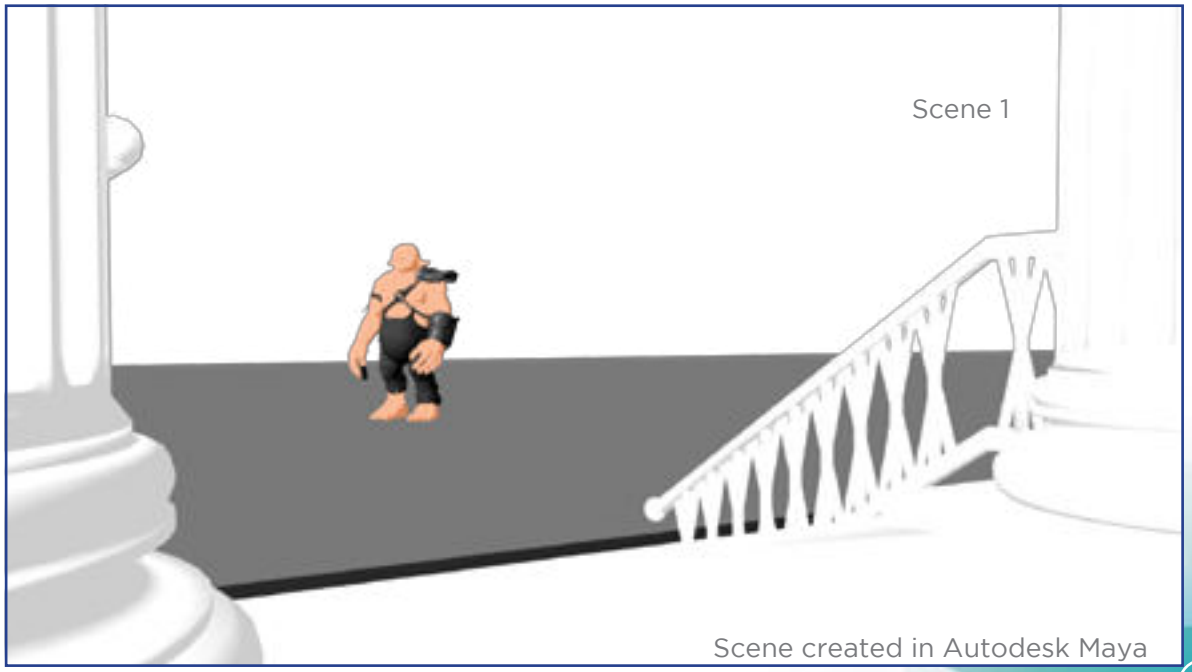
Scenes created in Autodesk Maya

Camera 1

The camera angle used in this frame helps the user to know the character size proportion to the size of the building.

Camera 2

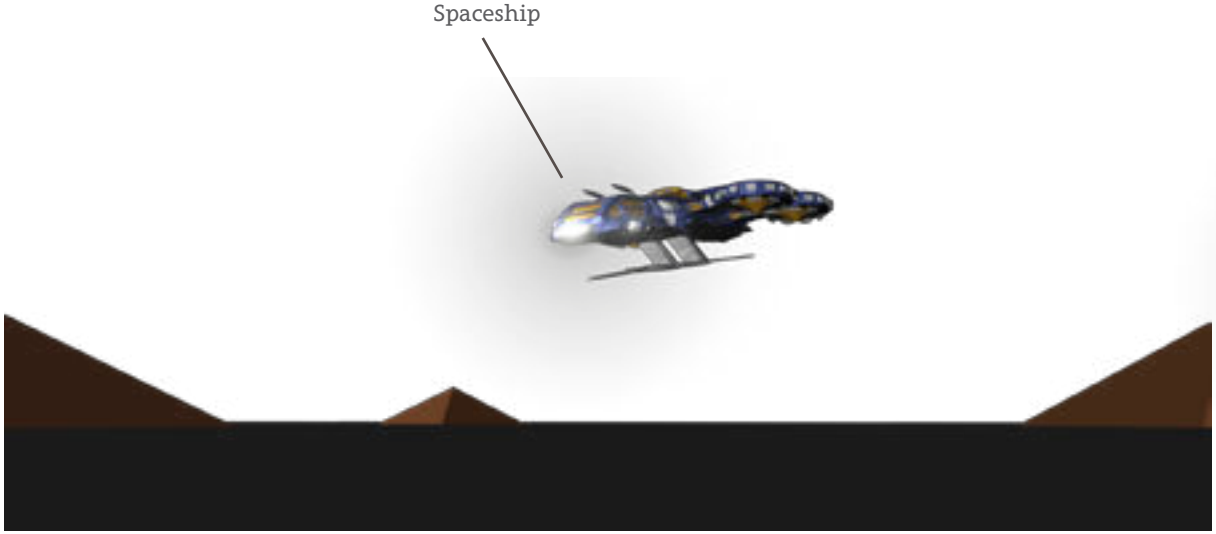
The second camera angle gives an anticipation that the character might enter into the building making the narrative more enhanced.



Example

Case 2

A spaceship is landing on a vast aliented land. The first camera angle shows the environment with respect to the spaceship. The second camera angle which is a close up shows the type and detalis of the spaceship.



Camera 1

Camera 2

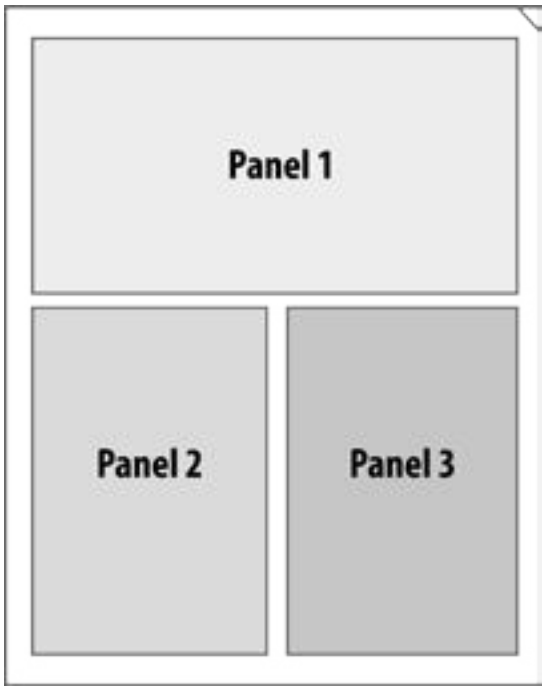
CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

180 degree camera view

The human visual field does not look like a video frame. We have (more or less) 180 degrees of vision and although you are not always consciously aware of your peripheral vision. This option can be used for a first person view of the character or the user itself.

180 degree concept constrains the viewer to only look around the source of action in the frame. This constrain solves for a problem faced by 360 degree views. At times, viewer in 360 view is looking in the opposite direction of the characters. Therefore a constrained panning around the subject allows the user to immerse itself into the action of the frame without compromising on the focus created by the director.

There are existing products that exploit this immersive dynamic view. A notable mention is the paralax wallpaper in iphone that allows the user to pan around the image by tilting the phone.



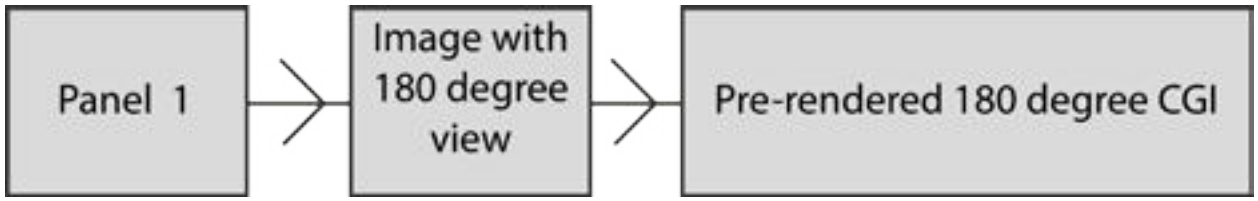


Fig. 1.4

The 180 degree CGI images or animations are created by stiching up individual video files or still images together using editing software, such as Autopano Video or VideoStitch, and the stitched file is injected with 360 degree metadata from Google.

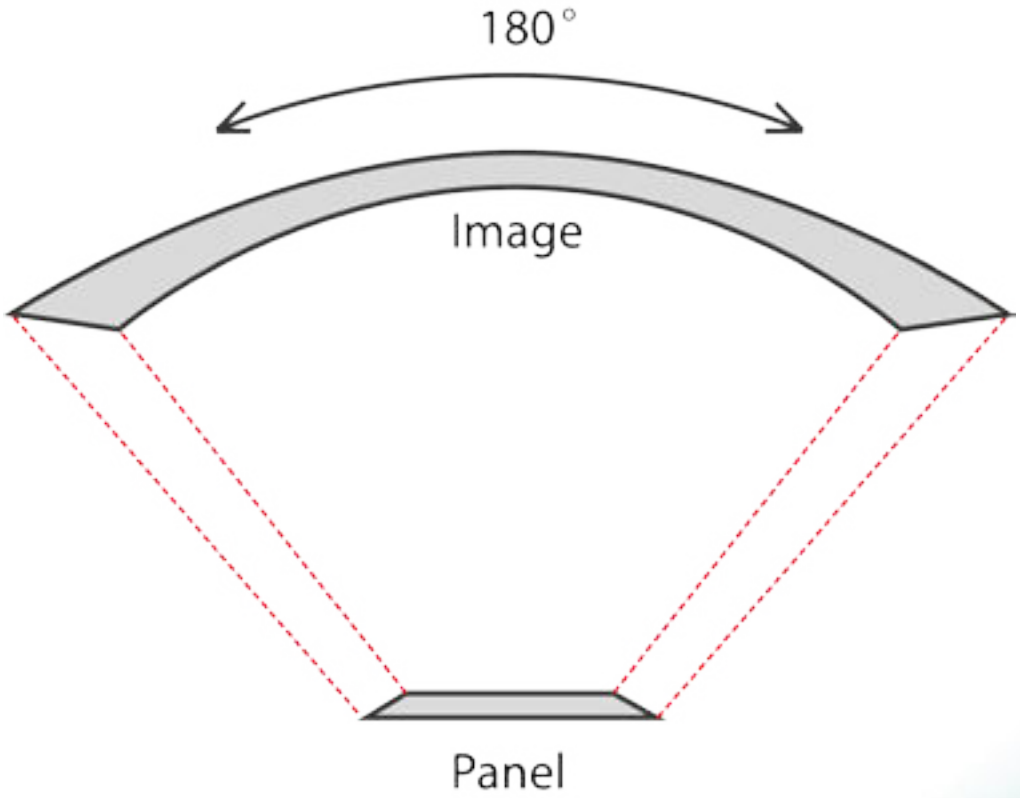


Fig. 1.5

Exterior

180 degree view

Interior

180 degree view

CONCLUSION

The research project allowed creative exploration to expand the possiblities of motion comics. The ideas proposed in the project propose two novel concepts for designing motion comics. The first concept 180 degree allows the user to immerse itself into the frame by being able to look around in a panaromic frame. This simulates the presence of being in place of the character. Whereas the second concept of multiple cameras allow the directors to portray the same scene in different ways. From character's view to bugs and birds eyeview, different viewpoints change the mood of the story. There is a scope of designing unique ways of scene selection thst make the story replayable.

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