

ViSiCAST Deliverable D7.1: Website Peer Review

Project Number:	IST-1999-10500
Project Title:	ViSiCAST Virtual Signing: Capture, Animation, Storage and Transmission
Document Type:	Peer Review

Deliverable Number:	D7.1
Contractual Date of Delivery:	Month 3
Actual Date of Delivery:	Month 4
Title of Deliverable:	Website
Work-Package contributing to the Deliverable:	Workpackage 7
Nature of the Deliverable:	OT
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Date of Review:	18-9-2000

Executive Summary:

The VisiCast website is a well designed and modern “project website”. It provides immediate and concise information on the project and it’s goals as well as more detailed information for those who are interested. Also it serves as an information exchange tool for the project partners.

Beyond these functional aspects the form of the website also shows that some care and attention has been given to graphic design as well as navigation interface design and multimedia extensions have been used in relevant places.

Review of VisiCast Website

Content

The VisiCast website (<http://www.visicast.org>) is clearly split into a number of sections straight from the home page. This main section subdivision is very clear, making it very easy for someone who wants to find out more about the VisiCast project to find relevant information.

The *Project Summary* section provides a concise description of the goals of the VisiCast project as well as a little more detail on the actual project work packages and information on how the results of the project will be used. More detailed information can also be found in a separate pdf document with the full project summary. This is a pragmatic way of separating information of interest to the casual reader from more detailed information of interest to people whose attention has been caught by the basic information.

The *Partners* section lists the partners involved in the project, giving an overview of who is who and who does what as well as providing hyperlinks to more detailed information on each of the partners. As with the project summary section the way in which basic information is presented without excess clutter (but still providing links to detail) is both thoughtful and effective.

The *Demo* section provides short movie demonstrations of some of the aspects of this project. This effectively complements the largely written information in the project summary section.

The *Members Only* section is secured by a password mechanism and contains internal project documents such as project contracts, meeting agendas and minutes, etc. This is a more effective way for such documents to be distributed than an e-mail circular list. E-mails do get lost and in this way these documents are always clearly accessible in one place.

Presentation

The site is presented with a well-designed uniform colour scheme and layout. Navigation tools and structures are consistent throughout the site adding to the impression of a web site that has had a little care and attention given to it by a graphic designer.

Good use is made of web multimedia formats such as Flash animations, movie files and JavaScript to animate buttons and menus. As the movie files (in the demo section) are quite large it would perhaps be nice if they were made available in some streaming video format at 56K modem bandwidth.

Conclusion

This VisiCast website is a “classical” website in that it effectively disseminates project information to people anywhere on the planet, using whichever web browser is convenient to them. It is however a modern instance of such a site because the graphic design is very up to date and it provides more than pure HTML content. The site content does change and get updated over time which is also inherent to the nature of such sites. As is a small amount of “work in progress”.

After a brief inspection of the site it was entirely clear what the VisiCast project is trying to achieve, who is involved in the project and what they are doing.