

MAS 845–Cinematic Storytelling  
Assignment 3  
Video Story Engine

The goal of this assignment is to develop a machine strategy that you think might be successful in creating a story presentation from a small collection of video clips.

There are three aspects to the assignment: gathering story content, designing content knowledge representation and a designing a story engine (algorithm) for search and presentation of the story material.

Each group should decide on a story topic and collect video material that would allow you to make a few sequences. Based on your selection of topic, you will have a sense of whether your story is about an event (a dinner party, a demonstration), a portrait (a person, an institution), an issue (abortion, stem cell research) or a process (creating a building, a meal). Think about how you would want an audience to be able to explore this story. What are the criteria for content ordering? What are the properties of the content that the system knows about? How is the story constructed? How can the system and the audience make decisions about what to show or see next?

When you return with the footage, cull the material that you think makes a semi-coherent database. Develop your algorithm and use it to assemble a set of sequences from the video material (each no longer than 5 minutes).

This assignment does not require that you implement the computational engine. Be prepared to describe your proposed system in detail to the class, a clear map for future implementation. Discuss story representation and construction issues and solutions that arose during your work.