

Jeffrey Ventrella

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Massachusetts Institute of Technology (The Media Lab)	MS	Media Arts and Sciences	1994
Syracuse University	MFA	Computer Graphics/Video	1987
Virginia Commonwealth University	BFA	Art Education/Art History	1984

I am a multi-faceted creative professional who writes software and designs interactive art, web sites, games, and exploratory software toys. I am also a teacher and a writer, and I have a passion for making technology accessible to everyday people. I have deep experience in startup companies, including 6.5 years as a cofounder for There.com, growing from two people to over a hundred, thrived for 12 years, and influenced later virtual worlds, including Second Life (where I have also worked) Some of my creative gems can be found here:

http://www.swimbots.com/	An Artificial Life Game
http://www.melodyball.com/	Algorithmic Melody Generation
http://www.ventrella.com/Ideas/NASAIImages/NASAIImagesTimeLine.html	Internet Archive Widget
http://www.ventrella.com/Ideas/GravityTetris/GravityTetris.html	Physics-based Tetris Experiment
http://www.avatarpuppeteering.com/	Direct-Manipulation (Second Life)
http://www.divisorplot.com/	Visual treatment of Number Theory
http://www.ventrella.com/Tweaks/Pentagrams/index.html	A Fibonacci Dance
http://www.ventrella.com/Ideas/Airport/airport.html	Developed while at MIT

Employment History

[Visual Music Systems](#), Boston, MA 6/11 – present

Principle Developer

(this is a new position in an innovative startup company developing interfaces and algorithms for a highly expressive performative artform, lead by Bill Sebastian)

Independent Consultant/Developer of Interactive Designs 7/09 – 5/11

Developed an iPad app: 3/11 – 5/11

<http://www.ventrella.com/peck/index.html> - as the foundational framework for an educational game

Worked on a stealth startup project with [Will Harvey](#), Palo Alto, CA 1/11 – 3/11

[The Internet Archive](#) San Francisco, CA 10/10 – 11/10

Designer/Engineer: Worked closely with internet visionary [Ted Nelson](#) on implementation of ZigZag for the [Open Library](#).
Project management, JavaScript/HTML5/CSS development

[Emota.net](#) Menlo Park, CA 7/09 – 9/10

Designer/Engineer: NSF-funded start-up. Consulted on design; development: interactions and interfaces for social connectedness.
Developed JavaScript code for web and iPad.

<p><u>School of Interactive Arts and Technology</u>, SFU, Vancouver, BC Research Scholar: nonverbal communication in virtual worlds. Taught Advanced Game Design class to 4th-year students. Wrote the book: <i>Virtual Body Language</i>: www.virtualbodylanguage.com</p>	9/09 – 8/10
<p><u>The Internet Archive</u> San Francisco, CA Developer/Designer: built home page for NASAIImages.org; designed and implemented the 'create account' page and other pages. Helped design the Open Library Bookreader using JavaScript/CSS.</p>	3/08 – 7/09
<p><u>Centre for Digital Media</u> Vancouver, BC Faculty: Developed curriculum and taught <u>Building Virtual Worlds</u>, advised students on industry-funded projects</p>	8/08 – 12/08
<p><u>Millions Of Us</u> Sausalito, CA Consultant: Developed avatar-customization tool, general consulting</p>	1/08 – 2/08
<p><u>SheZoom</u> New York, NY Animator: designed and implemented <u>Shemoticons</u> in Flash</p>	12/07 – 1/08
<p><u>Linden Lab (Second Life)</u> San Francisco, CA Senior Developer: Developed software and designs for Second Life, invented Flexi Prims, <u>FollowCam</u>, vehicle physics, camera behavior, <u>avatar customization</u>, and user interfaces</p>	1/05 – 11/07
<p><u>Adobe Systems</u> San Jose, CA Programmer: Worked with the <u>Acrobat 3D</u> team (originally Adobe Atmosphere), developed JavaScript for direct manipulation, modeling, and interactive behavior of 3D content</p>	2/04 – 7/05
<p><u>There, Inc</u> Menlo Park, CA Co-Founder and Principle Inventor of <u>There.com</u> Developed prototype with Will Harvey April 1997 to April 1998; co-founded company with Will on April 1998. Invention of technologies and designs for avatars, vehicle physics and navigation, camera behavior, sound design, animal behaviors, and real-time voice-activated speech animation. Principal author on first <u>patent</u> granted to the company.</p>	4/97 – 1/04
<p><u>Rocket Science Games, Inc.</u> San Francisco, CA Designer/Engineer: Designed and prototyped software games. Worked with author <u>Michael Crichton</u> on a game prototype. Designed <u>Darwin Pond</u></p>	7/95 – 4/97
<p><u>ABSOLUT Vodka</u> (via <u>TBWA/Chiat Day</u> NY, NY) Artist/Programmer: Developed code to generate stylized genetic algorithm-based variations of the <u>Absolut Vodka Bottle</u> using interactive evolution. Published online as promotion for the "Absolut Kelly" web site, Consulted with <u>Kevin Kelly</u> on the site</p>	2/96 – 5/96
<p>Protozoa San Francisco, CA Software Engineer: Worked with <u>Brad deGraf</u>. Developed interactive tool to generate 3D tree models for a computer game.</p>	3/95 – 3/95

<p>Tufts University, Experimental College, Medford, MA Instructor: Designed and taught course: "Populating Virtual Reality". (Artificial Life: cultural implications, technical aspects).</p>	1/95 – 3/95
<p>Papyrus Design Group, Somerville, MA Designer: Developed script and consulted on animated characters for proposed CD-ROM-based interactive comedy game.</p>	12/94 – 3/95
<p>Do While Studio, Boston, MA Artist: Developed interactive animations; worked with artist Jen Hall</p>	9/94 – 4/95
<p>Cinergi Productions Lenox. MA Artist/Programmer: Feature Film Special Effects Animator, (Sylvester Stallone Film, Judge Dredd) Programmed custom animation effects on SGI IRIS; collaborated artists.</p>	7/94 – 8/94
<p>Visible Language Workshop, MIT Media Lab, Cambridge, MA Research Assistant: multimedia interfaces, AI, information design, and animation.</p>	9/92 – 3/94
<p>University of California, San Diego, Visual Arts Dept. San Diego, CA Instructor: Worked under Harold Cohen, developed curricula and taught courses in Graphics Programming, 3D CAD, and C Language</p>	1/92 – 6/92
<p>Syracuse University Computer Graphics Specialist, Created Scientific Data Visualizations for supercomputer research. Taught workshops; Produced videotapes; Acquired video equipment, Attended Data Visualization Workshops at NCSA.</p>	7/87 – 12/91
<p>Syracuse University Department of Industrial Design, Syracuse, NY September 1987 – December 1991 Instructor: Taught Computer Aided Design for Industrial Design; Used SDRG-IDEAS software running on a VAX mainframe. Developed curriculum and co-authored graphics library for programming.</p>	9/87 – 12/91

Technical Skills

Software Languages: C++, Java, JavaScript, HTML5, (currently learning Objective-C for iPad/iPhone)
Platforms: Mac Carbon/Quartz, iPad, Windows (Win32), general web, several dev tools
Other: Photoshop, Flash, user experience design, cel and character animation

Lectures/Presentations

<p>Pittsburgh, PA Presented at Carnegie-Mellon University's Entertainment Technology Center</p>	8/11
<p>Vancouver, BC, Canada Gave keynote presentation at International Symposium on Computational Aesthetics in Graphics, Visualization, and Imaging: a SIGGRAPH co-located conference.</p>	8/11

Menlo Park, California Gave a presentation at the Talks on Computing Systems series at Carnegie-Mellon University, Silicon Valley, NASA Ames Campus	5/11
Laval, France Gave the first keynote at the Laval Virtual conference	4/11
Los Angeles, California <i>Virtual Body Language</i> Presented avatar expression at an invitation-only workshop at ICT, USC	2/11
Banff, Alberta, Canada , <i>Self-Portraits in Mandelbrot Genetics</i> Smart Graphics . Presented mathematically-generated artworks	6/10
Toronto, Ontario, Canada , <i>The Gestural Turing Test</i> AAMAS Presented motion-capture experiment in nonverbal communication and believability (details available at http://gesturalturingtest.com/)	5/10
Melbourne, Australia , <i>Workshop Lecturer</i> ACAL - Presented ecological simulation using planetary toy physics, emphasizing Open, collaborative development	12/09
Palm Springs, California , Keynote Speaker. HPC Horizons. How genetics, physics, and communication can be represented for efficient traversal over the internet for virtual worlds. Other Keynote speakers were Craig Venter and Jaron Lanier.	3/08
Boston, Massachusetts Prime Numbers are the Holes Behind Complex Composite Patterns (The Divisor Plot) at the 7 th International Conference on Complex Systems	10/07
Vancouver, BC, Canada <i>Online Body Language - Expressivity and Identity in Avatars and Autonomous Creatures</i> School of Interactive Art and Technology (SFU) Research Colloquium	9/07
Boston, Massachusetts <i>Physical Avatar – a new technology for Second Life</i> SIGGRAPH conference Tech Talk	8/06
Bloomington, Indiana A Particle Swarm Selects for Evolution of Gliders in Non-uniform 2D Cellular Automata - paper presented at Alife X conference	6/06
Pittsburg, Kansas presented overview of work at Pittsburg State University	4/05
Bilbao, Spain conducted workshop at the Universidad del Pais Vasco on <i>techniques for using mathematics to generate portraits. Presented interactive and print work at La 17 Exposición de Audiovisuale.</i>	12/04
Bilbao, Spain Sharing the Virtual Ecosystem (the Interactive Web of Virtual Life and Avatars) Art and Technology Symposium, Universidad del Pais Vasco	12/03
Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA Avatar-Centric Communication in There , co-lectured with Dr. Chuck Clanton , at the Human-Computer Interaction Seminar	4/03

Dundee, Scotland <i>Artful Biology: Simulated Creatures for Software Entertainment</i> , presented at International Centre for Computer Games and Virtual Entertainment	2/01
Paris, France Avatar Physics and Genetics , presented at Virtual Worlds, 2000	7/00
San Jose, CA presented artificial life research at Digital Biota conference	11/99
Syracuse, NY Presented overview of artistic development Syracuse University Visual and Performing Arts Dept.	2/99
Paris, France Designing Emergence in Animated Artificial Life Worlds presented at Virtual Worlds 98	7/98
Los Angeles, CA Attractiveness vs. Efficiency (<i>How Mate Preference Affects Locomotion in the Evolution of Artificial Swimming Organisms</i>) - presented at Artificial Life VI	6/98
Brighton, England Darwin Pond - Demonstration presented at the European Conference on Artificial Life	7/97
Montreal, Canada <i>Eukaryotic Virtual Reality (The Emergent Art of Artificial Life)</i> - presented in a Panel at ISEA95 conference	9/95
Geneva, Switzerland <i>Disney Meets Darwin</i> - Paper presented at Computer Animation, '95	4/95
Cambridge, MA <i>Explorations in the Emergence of Morphology and Locomotion Behavior in Animated Characters</i> - Paper presented at Artificial Life IV , MIT	7/94
San Diego, CA Artificial Life and a Computer Art of Emergence - slide and video lecture: Center for Research and Computing in the Arts, UCSD	5/92
New London, CT <i>A Genetic Approach to Computer Art</i> - Visiting Artist, lectured and conducted workshops on mathematical images, Center for Arts and Technology, Connecticut College	10/91
San Francisco, CA Factors Inducing Periodic Breathing in Humans (<i>a case study in scientific data visualization</i>), co-lectured with Dr. Wayne Fordyce, at Visualization '90	10/90
Halifax, Nova Scotia <i>Computer Graphics for the Human User (Interactive Concepts and Techniques as Applied to Computer Art)</i> - half-day tutorial, presented at Graphics Interface/Vision Interface	5/90
Williamsburg, VA A Computergraphical Model of Multi-generational Family Systems – Presented (with Jim Amodio and Tom Schur) at Advanced Computing for the Social Sciences	5/90
New London, CT <i>Using Mathematics to Arrive at Imagery</i> - Presented at the Arts and Technology Symposium II Connecticut College	2/89
Syracuse, NY Television Interview (with computer animations) on 6:00pm news story on Chaos: interviewer, Scott Atkinson, News Center Five	7/88

Syracuse, NY Fractal Geometry in Art - The Mandelbrot Colloquium, with four other speakers including Dr. Mandelbrot

11/86

Published Works

From Ragdoll Physics to Expressive Avatars

Short paper to be published in the proceedings of Laval Virtual conference: 2011

Virtual Body Language – my first full book

Currently available at www.virtualbodylanguage.com - to be published by [ETC Press](#) in mid-2011

Self-Portraits in Mandelbrot Genetics – Springer: conference proceedings of [Smart Graphics](#), 2010

The Gestural Turing Test - published in the conference proceedings of [AAMAS](#), 2010

Glider Dynamics on the Sphere: Exploring Cellular Automata on Geodesic Grids. to be published in the Journal of Cellular Automata (Editor Andy Adamatzky)

<http://www.ventrella.com/Alife/Cells/GlidersOnSpheres.pdf>

A Spherical XOR Gate Implemented in the Game of Life to be published in the forthcoming book: Game of Life Cellular Automata, Editor Andy Adamatzky, Springer.

Evolving Structure in Liquid Music [The Art of Artificial Evolution](#), Natural Computing Series, Springer-Verlag, Editors: Romero, J., and Penousal, M. November, 2007

<http://www.springer.com/west/home/computer/foundations?SGWID=4-156-22-173745009-0>

Evolving The Mandelbrot Set to Imitate Figurative Art [Innovations in Evolutionary Design](#), Natural Computing Series, Springer-Verlag, Editors: Hingston, P., Barone. L., and Michalewicz, Z. Berlin, 2007

<http://www.ventrella.com/Tweaks/Portraits/EvolvingMandelbrot.pdf>

Gliders and Riders - A Particle Swarm Selects for Coherent Space-time Structures in Evolving Cellular Automata – a chapter in [Stigmergic Optimization](#), from the Studies in Computational Intelligence Series. Vol 21, Springer-Verlag. eds. Ajith, Grosan, and Ramos. page 131, 2006

<http://www.springer.com/east/home/computer?SGWID=5-146-22-173661230-0>

GenePool – Exploring the Interaction Between Natural Selection and Sexual Selection –Chapter 4 in [Artificial Life Models in Software](#), ed. Andrew Adamatzky and Maciej Komosinski. Springer, 2005. Page 81

<http://www.springerlink.com/content/tv10101372574541/>

Animated Artificial Life, Chapter 3 in [Virtual Worlds \(Synthetic Universes, Digital Life, and Complexity\)](#) (ed. Heudin, J.C.) Perseus Books, 1999 pages 67-94

http://www.ventrella.com/Alife/Animated/animated_0.html

A Computergraphical Model of Multi-Generational Family Systems, chief author and editor (with James H. Amodio, MPS, and Thomas J. Schur, MSW), in [Social Science Computer Review](#), Spring 1991 Volume 9 Number 1, pages 13-26

<http://ssc.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/9/1/13>

A Particle Swarm Selects for Evolution of Gliders in Non-uniform 2D Cellular Automata published in Alife X conference proceedings, MIT Press, 2006

<http://www.ventrella.com/Alife/Cells/GlidersAndRiders/SwarmGliders.pdf>

[Avatar Physics and Genetics](#), published in Virtual Worlds, 2000 (ed. Heudin, J.C.), Springer-Verlag Berlin/Heidelberg
<http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=647690.731011&coll=GUIDE&dl=GUIDE&CFID=15151515&CFTOKEN=6184618>

Interview quotes in the article "**Evol-artists - a New Breed Entirely**", in EvoNews newsletter. Issue 11, Summer, 1999. (<http://www.dcs.napier.ac.uk/evonet/>)
http://evonet.lri.fr/evoweb/news_events/news_features/article.php?id=40

Designing Emergence in Animated Artificial Life Worlds, Virtual Worlds, 98 (ed. Heudin, J.C.) 1998, Springer-Verlag pages 143-155
<http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=733452>

Attractiveness vs. Efficiency: (How Mate Preference Affects Locomotion in the Evolution of Artificial Swimming Organisms), Artificial Life VI, 1998, MIT Press
<http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=286160&dl=&coll=&CFID=15151515&CFTOKEN=6184618>

Sexual Swimmers: Emergent Morphology and Locomotion Without a Fitness Function, From Animals to Animats, (page 484) 1996, MIT Press
http://www.ventrella.com/Alife/Sexual/sexual_0.html

Disney Meets Darwin: The Evolution of Funny Animated Figures, Computer Animation '95 Proceedings - Geneva Switzerland
<http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=791214.791452>

Explorations in the Emergence of Morphology and Locomotion Behavior in Animated Characters, Artificial Life IV proceedings, MIT Press, 1994

Other Published Materials:

Blog Interview by Andrea Romeo:
<http://brain2brain.ning.com/profiles/blogs/il-medium-del-futuro-lavatar> June, 2009

Write-up on artificial life research with color illustration in **Morph's Outpost**: "ALIFE IV, or, The Bots are Coming", by Marc P. Seybold, page 18, Nov. 94 issue.

Write-up on Air Traffic Control Visualization Prototype: Enhancing Air Traffic Control Information, by David L. Chandler, in the [MIT Technology Review](#), pages 10-11 8/94

Co-designed cover of **IBM Systems Journal** ([vol. 33, No 2 1994](#)) with J.F. Musgrave, image depicts a family of images I designed. 6/94

Created five illustrations for book: [The Children's Machine \(Rethinking School in the Age of the Computer\)](#), by Seymour Papert, 6/93

Two images published in the large color-illustration book: **Digitale Visionen**, IBM Germany, by Dr. [Herbert Franke](#), 1989

write-up on computer art, with two color illustrations, in the article, Die Wunderwelt Der Gebrochenen Dimension by Susanne Pach, in Video activ, April/May, 1989, Germany, 5/89

Creatures du Plan Complexe, (French translation of IRIS Universe article (below), with color illustrations, in Tech Images, January issue: Paris France, 1/89

Creatures of the Complex Plane (with six color illustrations), published in IRIS Universe, summer '88 issue, Silicon Graphics, Inc. 8/88