University of Toronto Archives

Ron Baecker fonds

B2018-0031

Marnee Gamble
April 2019

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Contents

Biographical Note

Prof. Ronald Baecker, a graduate of Applied Math at MIT (Ph.D. 1969), came to the University of Toronto in 1972 as an Assistant Professor of Computer Science. He immediately became co-director of the joined Dynamic Graphic Project laboratory with Prof Leslie Mezei, a role he held through most of his career at the University of Toronto and as Professor Emeritus is still Director. He was appointed Associate Professor, cross appointed to electrical engineering in 1975 and Professor in 1989. In 1996 he was the founding director of the Knowledge Media Design Institute (KMDI) and remained active in this role off and on until 2009. From 2009-2018, he was the Director of the Technologies for Aging Gracefully Lab (TAGlab) and remains Director Emeritus. He was also Bell Universities Laboratories Chair in Human-Computer Interaction from 2002-2011. He is a fellow of the Association of Computing Machinery (ACM) and has been recognized as one of the Top 60 Pioneers in Computer Graphics by ACM. In 2015 he was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Canadian Association of Computer Science.

Sources: http://ron.taglab.ca/
http://hciweb.cs.toronto.edu/DGPis40/speakers_session3.html#baecker
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ronald_Baecker

See also Appendix 1 for summary descriptions of key research areas taken from Baecker's 2018 CV

About Dynamic Graphics Project lab of the University of Toronto

From http://www.dgp.toronto.edu/home/:

> *The Dynamic Graphics Project was founded in 1967 by Professor Leslie Mezei. He was joined by Professor Ron Baecker in 1972, who coined the name Dynamic Graphics Project in 1974. The lab's name was intended to imply the spirit of the place, and to encompass both Computer Graphics and Dynamic Interaction Techniques, which was subsumed by the new field of Human Computer Interaction in the early 1980's. The lab is now home to several faculty members and dozens of post-docs, visiting researchers, graduate students, undergraduate research assistants, and staff. The lab's alumni are now on faculty at top universities throughout the world and at major industrial research labs, and have also won academy awards for their groundbreaking work.*

Website to their 40th anniversary - http://hciweb.cs.toronto.edu/DGPis40/index.html

Some of the people whose work is represented in B2018-0031:

Marilyn Mantei – Associate Prof of Comp Science – member of Dynamic Graphics Project
- Human Computer Interaction
- managed CAVECAT project – early videoconferencing and shared drawing, writing and programming software; evolved into TELEPRESENCE, a desktop videoconferencing software
http://www.dgp.toronto.edu/people/MarilynMantei/mantei.html

William Buxton – Master in Computer Science from University of Toront , lecturer and researcher 1970s – 1990s
- Considered a pioneer in human-computer interaction
- he is currently principle researcher at Microsoft but was a lecturer and researcher in DGP from late 1970 into mid 1990s
- he is a Fellow of ACM - in 1995, 3rd Recipient of the Canadian Human Computer Communications
- his research at UofT has always been coupled with research in industry including Xerox PARC, Alias Research
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Buxton
http://hciweb.cs.toronto.edu/DGPis40/speakers_session3.html#buxton

Chris DiGiano – Master's Student of Prof. Baecker
- University of Colorado Boulder - Adjoin Ass. Professor
- areas of research – AI and Human Centered Computing
- http://www.cs.colorado.edu/people/christopher_digiano.html

Leslie Mezei
- Founder of the Dynamic Graphics Project
- started researching and teaching computer graphics in 1967
- early creator of computer art
- http://hciweb.cs.toronto.edu/DGPis40/speakers_session5.html

Brad Myers
- PhD in computer science 1987
- Professor in the Human-Computer Interaction Institute in the School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University
- ACM SIGCHI Lifetime Achievement Award in Research in 2017
http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~bam/

Scope and Content

ca. 1969-2008 0.4 M (1 box) of textual
0.07 m (1 box) of photographs
23 reels of 16 m film
38 Videocassettes
1 poster

Records in this fonds consist mainly of film and video documenting many of the projects developed within the DPG by Prof. Ron Baecker as well as with colleagues and graduate students. Included are film reels collected and exhibited for the 20th anniversary and incorporated into the video Dynamic Image. These document very early projects such as Baecker's Genesys: Computer Animation System (MIT, 1969), Leslie Mezei's Art of Computers (1971), George Olshevski's Regular 4D Polytopes (ca. 1971). A poster from this event is also included. Videos demonstrate many of the technologically advance graphic works done by the DPG lab under Baecker's directorship including, to list a few, CaveCat, Telepresence Ontario, MAD (Movie Authoring Design) and Apple Design Competition 1993 (Globall).

There is also one box of textual records documenting to limited degree other areas of Baecker's career including TAGlab, Knowledge Media Design Institute and NECTAR – network for Effective Collaboration Technologies through Advanced Research. There is also a series of portraits done of Baecker in 1987 as well as an album documenting the work of the Telepresence Ontario Project.

Access: Open

For film and Video – see listing and consult Special Media Archivist
For Textual – B2018-0031/001
For Photographs – B2018-0031/001P

List of Films

Description	Author	Dates	Extent	Original Numbers
"Sorting Out Sorting"	Baecker	1981	1 reel : Final Orig Rev	
"Sorting Out Sorting"	Baecker	1981	7 reels : checkprint and workprints ; 1 rental print	
"Genesys: Computer Animation System" - MIT - Interneg	MIT	1969?	1 reel interneg	
"Transportation Dispatching Agency"	Duff, Haver, Baecker, Bunt, Tuoid (?)	1976	2 reels: final edit workprint and Sound track: 8:48	
"Mezei Tests ?"	Leslie Mezei ?	ca. 1970	1 reel	
"Avta" -	L. Mezei	ca. 1970	1 reel : 8:50	Art Show '87 - reel 6
"Regular 4D Polytopes"-	George Olshevski	ca. 1971	1 reel: 8:40	Art Show '87 - reel 7
"Sosoon" Experimental Computer Annimation	George Singer	1974	1 reel 8:07	Art Show '87 Reel 8
"Sampleart"	Leslie Mezei	1971	1 reel	Art Show '87 Reel 9
"Transportation Development Agency"	Duff, Haver, Baecker, Bunt, Tuoid (?)	1976	1 reel : 8:48	Art Show '87 Reel 11
Genesys: Computer Animation System	MIT	ca. 1970	1 reel: 15:41	Art Show '87 Reel 13
"Program Animation Sampler"	Ron Baecker ?	n.d.	1 reel	Art Show '87 Reel 15
:Graphic Simulation by Computer Animation"	Several including Olshevski	1972	1 reel: 15:47	Art Show '87 Reel 17
"Art from Computers"	Leslie Mezei	1971	1 reel : 8:13	Art Show '87 Reel 18
"Sorting out Sorting"	Baecker	1981	1 reel : 30 min	Art Show '87 Reel 42
"Reaction Dynamics"		n.d.	1 reel	Art Show '87 Reel 52

List of videos

Item number	Title - Description	Author	Dates	Extent	Original Numbers
B2018-0031/001M	Shazam and Shoup's colour system; Small Talk Movie System		1974	1 Umatic Videocassette	102
B2018-0031/001M	CHI-GI Press Demo Reel	by DGP	1987	1 Umatic Videocassette	165
B2018-0031/001M	Siggraph Video Review containing works from Brad Myers and William Buxton when they were with the DGP		1987-1988	1 Umatic Videocassette ; 2 VHS tapes	212, 216 and 263
B2018-0031/001M	Interactions Techniques Sampler "c" (45 min)	R. Baecker : DGP	1987	1 Umatic Videocassette	172
B2018-0031/001M	Creating User Interfaces by Demonstrations: The Peridot UIMS	by Brad Myers ; Pub: DGP	1988	1 Umatic Videocassettes	167
B2018-0031/001M	Volume #1 An Introduction ot CSCW	by Ron Baecker	1990	1 VHS Tape	235
B2018-0031/001M	Volume #3 Modalities of Interaction and Share	by B. Buxton	1990	1 VHS Tape	228
B2018-0031/001M	Volume #4 Meeting Environments	by Marilyn Mantei	1990	1 VHS Tape	227
B2018-0031/001M	Logomotion ; Tic Tac To Animation	by Ron Baecker and John Buchanan	1988	1 Umatic Videocassette	229
B2018-0031/001M	Non speech Audio Anthology	by Chris DiGiano	1992	1 VHS tape	266
B2018-0031/001M	CHI Lab Overview Master Video	Ron Baecker	Apr-91	1 Umatic Videocassette	
B2018-0031/002M	Bringing Icons to Life Video Supplement to CHI '91		1991	1 VHS tape	

Item number	Title - Description	Author	Dates	Extent	Original Numbers
B2018-0031/002M	Cultech Master's Workshop (dub)	Canadian Centre for Study of Culture and Technology	1992	1 VHS Tape	
B2018-0031/002M	CSC 318 – Lecture 1-6 Jan 1992	Ron Baecker	1992	1 Hi 8 Videocassettes	
B2018-0031/002M	CAVECAT Retrospective (2 copies)	by Marilyn Mantei	1992	2 VHS Tapes	
B2018-0031/002M	Telepresence Sampler (26 min)	by Bill Buxton	1992	1 VHS tape	
B2018-0031/002M	Sasse the Collaborative Editor - Master	by Ron Baecker	1992-1994	1 VSH Tape; 1 Hi 8 Videocassette	
B2018-0031/002M	"Computers for the Rest of Us" Design Series (27 min)		1992	1 VHS Tape	
B2018-0031/002M	HCI Sampler	by Ron Baecker	1992	1 VHS Tape	
B2018-0031/002M	HCI Lecture	by Ron Baecker	1993	1 Hi 8 Videocassette	
B2018-0031/002M	Apple Design Competition - The Story of Iggy and the Globall	by Egalitarian Dogcow Group	Jun-93	1 VHS tape	
B2018-0031/002M	Videos of Prototypes for Globall, Uof T Submission	Uof T computers science students	1993	1 VHS tape	
B2018-0031/003M	Hydra: Using Spatial Cues to Improve video Conferencing	William Buxton	1993	1 VHS tape	
B2018-0031/003M	Logomedia	Ron Baecker	1994	1 VHS tape; 1 mini DV	
B2018-0031/003M	International Design Competition Part 1 & 2		1994	2 VHS tapes	
B2018-0031/003M	MAD - Movie Authoring Design	Ron Baeker?	1994-1998	3 VHS tapes; 1 software CD	

Item number	Title - Description	Author	Dates	Extent	Original Numbers
B2018-0031/003M	CS 318 – Lecture 1	Ron Baecker	1994 or 1995	1 Hi 8 Videocassette	
B2018-0031/003M	Apple Design Project '95 Footprint (10 Min) submission	Uof T computers science students	1995	1 VHS tape	
B2018-0031/003M	"Bay Street Station"	Ron Baecker	2007	1 DVD	

Textual Records

File number	File title	Date range
B2018-0031/001(01)	Dynamic Graphics Project – 40th anniversary 2008	2008
B2018-0031/001(02)	DGP – Early Student paper 'A proposal for the Film Animation of the Warnock Hidden Line Elimination Algorithm' by Carolyn Dutky Romano	1972
B2018-0031/001 (03)	'Sorting out sorting' video – brochure	1981
B2018-0031/001(04)	Knowledge Media Design Institute	1996-2004
B2018-0031/001(05)	TAGlab, articles	2011-2012
B2018-0031/001(06)	MAD – Movie Authoring Design – legal agreement	1997
B2018-0031/001(07)	ePresence Interactive Webcasting System – rights agreement	2003
B2018-0031/001 (08)	Telepresence Ontario – information brochure	199-?
B2018-0031/001(09)	Design 95 – A student Design Problem sponsored by Apple – includes UofT design Footprint	1995
B2018-0031/001(10)-(11)	Workshop – Starting and Running a Successful Software Company	1997
B2018-0031/001(12)-(13)	NECTAR - Grants and Talk	2003-2004
B2018-0031/001(14)-(18)	NECTAR - Reports	2004-2007

Photographs

File number	File title	Date range
B2018-0031/001P (01)	Ron Baecker, portrait including colour transparencies and 1 print	1987
B2018-0031/001P (02)-(04)	Telepresence Ontario Project - photo album includes prints, slides and negatives	1990s?
B2018-0031/002P	Poster – The Dynamic Image	1987

Appendix 1 – Extract from Significant Research Contributions (C.V. 2018)

***Interactive computer animation*.** I developed, as a Ph.D. student at MIT Lincoln Laboratory from 1966 through 1969, the first comprehensive conceptual framework for computer animation, embodied in Genesys — the first significant interactive computer animation system. This work helped launch the field of computer animation, now a several billion dollar a year industry.

***Software visualization (SV)*.** In the early- to mid-70s I began to focus more on software visualization, and produced one of the first profound demonstrations of the potential of computer animation to portray and elucidate computer program behaviour — the half hour film, Sorting Out Sorting (1981). This movie is widely acknowledged as the seminal contribution that launched the field of algorithm animation.

Collaboration technologies, especially for multimedia authoring and publishing. In the 1990s and through most of the first decade of the 2000s, I developed, together with students, colleagues and staff, two innovative collaborative multimedia technologies. We were the first group to employ hierarchically structured multimedia for the interactive authoring of digital video and other dynamic visual presentations, and the first to apply such a system to the creation of materials for software support and training. [D45]. More recently, we worked on the use of highly interactive webcasting with structured rich media archives as the ePresence Interactive Media environment

Technologies for aging gracefully. My current research programme focuses on the design of technologies for aging gracefully [B18], including electronic memory aids and other cognitive prostheses [C17]. This has concluded important work on the use of participatory design with individuals with severe cognitive impairments…