

Advertising in the Third Dimension

With the Virtual Stage, advertisers are discovering a new dimension: the floor. This innovative system, using digital image-processing with cameras from Allied Vision Technologies, transmits advertising messages in an original, entertaining and interactive way.

Mobidium is a young company from France based in Paris that specializes in developing and marketing innovative, interactive multi-media applications for marketing events, trade shows, point-of-sale advertising, museums and exhibitions.



The Current Situation: Consumers Oversaturated With Advertising Messages

The Virtual Stage attracts the attention of people who are otherwise oversaturated with advertising messages every day, by using the horizontal dimension of the floor, and the consumer himself can trigger the message or interact with it in a playful way. Whether at a trade fair, a marketing event, a press conference or directly at the point of sale, it makes the product look sharp and innovative.

The Solution: A New Advertising Medium

An image of the surface of water is projected onto the floor. When someone steps on this image, each step sets off ripples, and goldfish flee from the intruder. When a button is pushed, the virtual pond turns into a pile of leaves. If the visitor walks over the image, the leaves fly around him as though he were walking through real foliage. Water or foliage effects are only samples of the "aha" experience that the Virtual Stage produces for each visitor. This new technology is aimed primarily at advertisers and ad agencies looking for new, original and impressive advertising media. The images and animation can be adjusted and personalized any way you like to set the scene for a brand, logo or product.

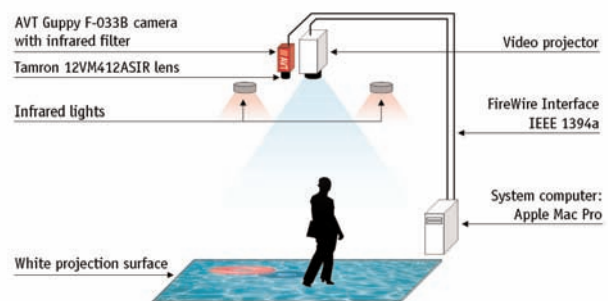
The amazing realism of the virtual stage can be attributed to the use of the latest image-processing technologies: As someone walks over the image, a camera captures the motion and software analyzes it in order to alter the image with the corresponding effect with no visible delay.

The floor of the Virtual Stage is just a walk-on horizontal canvas and contains no sensors or motion detectors. A projector projects a computer-generated image from the ceiling onto the floor.

A digital camera from Allied Vision Technologies monitors the presence and the movement of people on this background image and transmits the data to a system computer, an Apple Mac Pro, which also generates the image.

Software developed by Mobidium analyzes the event in real time, takes each step and each movement by the person and figures out how the stage should react – like the ripples on the surface of the water or the flight of fish in the virtual pond.

Virtual Stage Mobidium SAS – Paris, France

The image produced on the floor can be larger or smaller depending on the height of the ceiling. The key is to connect several projectors and cameras in series, so the system can create surfaces any size in a mosaic pattern with a giant background image.

The Requirements: Fast Data Transmission and Multi-Camera Functionality

„The key to the success of this kind of application is, first, successfully locating the person on the floor and then quickly capturing, transmitting and processing the image,“ noted Patrice Etienne, Director of Mobidium. The camera therefore plays a critical role in the system’s ability to react immediately to human movement. „With larger compositions in a mosaic pattern, the system must also be able to operate several adjoining cameras.“

Customer Satisfaction at AVT: “It’s like the Guppy was created for the Virtual Stage”

IMASYS, Allied Vision Technologies’ exclusive distributor in France, recommended an AVT Guppy digital camera, the Guppy F-033B to Mobidium. This FireWire camera transmits image data at up to 58 frames per second at VGA resolution

(0.3 megapixels). It is a monochromatic camera equipped with an infrared filter (IR-Pass) to prevent potential interference due to changing ambient light conditions interacting with infrared lighting. “It’s like the Guppy was created for the

Virtual Stage,” says Patrice Etienne with delight. “As a sturdy industrial camera, it works very reliably and produces high image quality. Its FireWire interface is also ideal for multi-camera operation and naturally works perfectly with the Mac computers that we use.”

Practical Implementation: Marketing Events and Point-of-Sale Advertising

The Virtual Stage has been used at large functions, like trade fairs, corporate events and fashion shows. For example, it was used at the anniversary celebration of ARAMCO, the Saudi oil company, at public relations events during the merger of the French energy groups Suez and GDF and when the new mobile phone HTC Diamond Touch was introduced to the market. The cosmetics firm Clarins has also used the Virtual Stage to showcase its products.

Besides such unique projects, there is a simple, turnkey version of the Virtual Stage for ongoing use at the point-of-sale, making shopping an experience for the customer, whose attention can be drawn toward new products, offers or brands.

The Virtual Stage is an example of how the clever use of digital image-processing can help advertisers get consumer’s attention in an information and advertising glut and differentiate themselves from their competition. This application is also impressive proof of how industrial image-processing is increasingly opening new growth markets outside of manufacturing - in this case for marketing, advertising and sales.



Allied Vision Technologies in France

Mobidium received support in developing the image-processing system in the Virtual Stage from IMASYS, a company in the Stemmer Imaging Group and a leading provider of image-processing solutions and Allied Vision Technologies’ distribution partner in France:

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