

CoNNeCTions

Beads are precious, fragile, easy to lose; as abstract forms, they can be assigned disparate qualities - magical powers, memories, proof of identity; through compact form and long-lived materials beads survive time spans across which larger forms crumble and fade; their size and beauty invite their incorporation into jewelry, enhancing their significance as personal totems; their availability in quantity at low cost allow them to be shared in friendship, as people trade keepsakes, memories and stories.

Intensely personal artifacts, such as images or sounds that have been scanned and digitized, become less real, less accessible, when removed from physical instantiation into the virtual world of disembodied bits. Well-loved family photos reveal their importance in their fragility. An old photograph passed around a room accumulates the gentle deformation of those who touch it. But digital images never wear out, never admit their importance or insignificance, never age, and cannot be shared in the non-virtual world.

Each BEAD on a NECKLACE contains some incomplete fragment of a personal history.

Only the NECKLACE as a whole comprises a complete history. Its storage system is organic, imprecise. It is neither a catalog nor a list of discrete elements. The assembled NECKLACE serves as a personal relic of the collected memories, as jewelry, and as storage and access device for its contents.

Much as the influences one person has on another are continuous and non-specific, the interactions between BEADS from different owners occurs in a non-linear way. As a person goes through life, receiving and giving things from and to others, and influencing and being influenced by others, a NECKLACE evolves over time by the direct and indirect influences of other NECKLACES.

1. Information on a collection of BEADS (a NECKLACE) is distributed. A single BEAD doesn't contain a single event or set of events, but rather a fuzzy version of the whole set of events that exist on the NECKLACE. We want to explore the representation of non-discrete data.

2. BEADS can be traded and given to other people, and connected to other NECKLACES. In doing this, the owner of the BEAD is sharing a representation of their portrait with another person. When connected to the other person's NECKLACE, the BEAD slowly influences, over time, the portrait contained within the NECKLACE and the NECKLACE influences the representation of the owner's portrait contained on the BEAD.

3. Upon returning to the owner, a BEAD shares with the NECKLACE its interactions. These interactions are integrated into the portrait as a whole.

4. The human interaction mechanism for a NECKLACE should be organic: manipulating a NECKLACE with the hands, as one might handle worry beads or a rosary, allows browsing, recording and annotating the portrait stored within.

5. The BEADS themselves should embody the flow of information to and from themselves and their direct neighbors on a NECKLACE. This embodiment should take the form of an organic attenuation of a light that is contained inside the bead (to allow a "glowing" effect) at the point of