

MAPS April Summary 2003

This month I spent several hours fixing the GUI. First of all, we had to shrink the overall size of the form to fit in a smaller resolution screen(1024X768) than that which it was currently (1280X1024). This was fairly easily accomplished by just shrinking the size of most things on the form, and then squishing things together more. We also got rid of the small picture preview box because it was no longer necessary with the Picture Select Display box. We also wanted to expand the size of the sound name box so that it would be obvious when the list was full of sounds. Previously, only about three could be seen at a time, and it was hard to tell from the small scroll bar that there were more.

I attempted to make some help videos this month for the gui but continued to find bugs that needed fixing before I could make a video I was satisfied with. A short list of some of the bugs that I found included ones with the database, including how a script was being saved. I also implemented using a global variable the functionality so that the gui would only ask to save if changes had been made. This got rid of the unnecessary question of do you want to save the script being asked when nothing had been done to the script. Previously, if you just opened the gui and then went to load a script, it would ask if you wanted to save the blank one, and this just wasn't necessary. I did succeed in making help videos for how to use the device using the emulation that Stefan created, however.

We discussed adding a pop-up box in the future that would show the picture that someone wanted to add. This was Stefan's idea, and I think it might be annoying and unnecessary. Although, it could easily be turned into an option that the user can turn on and off.

Another bug/feature fix that I made was to get the time step data to be added and refreshed from the database properly. I noticed when experimenting with some short scripts that if you loaded and longer one, then one that was less than 5 nodes, the old time data would still be in the extra boxes. I also had to re-realize a problem in saving scripts to the database. When experimenting sometimes, I would have nodes that only had a picture or a sound. These nodes are not properly added to the database, in fact, they are not added at all. Since I had run into this problem before, for now I made it so a box pops up letting you know which nodes will not be added. This is not a fix for the issue, but merely a reminder so I knew what was going on, since several times before I had had the problem and not known what was happening.

One of the most exciting things we did this month was to do some test runs of the device on real users. Thanks to Anja and her connections, we were able to test the device on some people at Broomfield High School with cognitive disabilities, particularly in the special education department. We were really impressed with our results. This user testing helped us to identify particular problems (none of which were too bad!) that needed to be fixed for optimal use with a person. We were also lucky to have a wide range of test subjects.

Next month I plan to have all of the bugs fixed so that I can go ahead and create the help videos for the gui. There is still some features that eventually I would like added to the gui, but those we will put off until we've done some user testing.