SECRET BASE

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FACULTY OF COMPUTING AND INFORMATICS
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
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We hereby declare the project entitled "Secret Base" submitted to University Malaysia Sabah International Campus Labuan for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Multimedia Technology, is a compilation of original work except for quotations, excerpts, and paraphrasing, which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This project is a 2D-animation that discussed the love and caring of teenagers towards parents and commit gratitude for living in a peaceful country. Nowadays, issues on neglecting parents at nursing home are arising and it is rational to put a full stop to it. Furthermore, some teenagers do not have a sense of gratification in life such as feeling obliged for living in a peaceful country whereas conversely there are many people out there suffering from chaos everyday. These issues will be further discussed in literature review. This project focuses on the relationship between the main character, Ah Shin and his father Mr Fu and the illustration of wars and chaos which bring affliction to them. The purpose of this project is to arouse love and caring from teenagers to their parents to avoid regrets and dependents after losing them. To deliver the message to target audiences, we developed the story about Ah Shin and his father to encourage audiences to cherish the time spent with their parents before it's too late and have a certain level of awareness about war. To conclude, this project is developed not only just for entertainment purpose but also act as a medium to convey the message to our target audiences.

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ABSTRAK

2D Animasi: "Secret Base"

Projek ini merupakan animasi 2D yang membincangkan tentang kasih sayang seorang anak terhadap ibu bapa mereka dan rasa bersyukur dilahirkan di negara yang aman. Pada masa kini, isu-isu seperti menempatkan ibu bapa di rumah kebajikan orang tua kini semakin berleluasa di kalangan masyarakat. Projek ini adalah satu cara untuk menghentikan perlakuan tersebut. Tambahan pula, sesetengah daripada kalangan remaja tidak bersyukur tinggal di negara yang aman, padahal masih ramai lagi yang sedang mengalami penderitaan di negara mereka. Isu-isu tersebut akan dibincangkan dalam kajian literasi secara mendalam lagi. Projek ini memberi tumpuan terhadap hubungan antara watak utama, Ah Shin dan bapanya Encik Fu dengan ilustrasi peperangan dan keadaan huru-hara yang membawa penderitaan kepada mereka. Tujuan projek ini adalah untuk menimbulkan perasaan kasih sayang seorang anak terhadap ibu bapa mereka bagi mengelakkan penyesalan selepas kehilangan mereka. Untuk menyampaikan mesej kepada sasaran penonton, kami menghasilkan sebuah cerita yang mengisahkan tentang kehidupan Ah Shin bersama bapanya untuk mengingatkan penonton supaya menghargai masa bersama ibu bapa mereka sebelum terlambat. Sebagai kesimpulan, projek ini bukan sahaja untuk tujuan hiburan tetapi juga berperanan sebagai medium untuk menyampaikan mesej kepada sasaran penonton kami.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to chapter

In this chapter, a brief introduction of the project "Secret Base" and also the intentions behind the story are listed down. The description of the storyline, problem statement, objective, project scope, target audience, project timeline are all well-planned beforehand as a guide to the next phrase.

The duration of this animation is maintained around five minutes to a maximum of six minutes to be presented as the finalised animation.

1.2 Problem statement

In this technological era dominated by electronic gadgets, teenagers in Malaysia isolate themselves from the society and even their family members. They do not spend much time with their parents. Some of them neglected their parents and do not treasure their time spent together. Department of Social Welfare declared that the number of elderly neglected by their families increased by 1 percent per year from year 2008 to 2011, based on the number of admissions to nine "Seri Kenangan" Home (Mstar online, 2012).

In addition, some teenagers nowadays do not have the sense of contentment in life. They have forgotten to cherish bliss and commit gratitude whereas there are many people still live in fear because of war and chaos in their countries. They do not realise that they are really blessed to live in a peaceful country like Malaysia.

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In order to combat these negative social phenomenon, our group intended to create a 2D animation which can brought out the message of caring and love towards parents. Nothing is more devastating than the loss of people who have been an integral part of our lives, especially parents who raised us up.

On the other hand, through illustration of war in the story, hopefully teenagers can realise how blissful they are and treasure what they have. At the same time, understand the importance of peace.

1.3 Project Goal

Arouse love and caring from teenagers to their parents to avoid regrets and dependents after losing them.

1.4 Objectives

There are three objectives of this project:

1) To encourage teenagers to cherish the time spent together with their parents.

2) To illustrate the sorrows and sufferings war causes to those whom it does not kills – the widows and the orphans.

3) To encourage teenagers to commit gratitude that they are blessed to live in a peaceful country.

1.5 Project scope

The main scope of this animation is to illustrate the strong relationship of father and son during the occupation of Japanese in Malaya. Anime style in designing all the characters were implemented in the production of this animation. Most of the characters and environment background contain the features of local lifestyle and images, illustrates the experiences and activities happened in Malaya during World War II. Human character's animations and facial expressions skills were also used to achieve the realism of anime scene.

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1.6 Target audience

The target audiences of this 2D animation are teenagers, aged ranging from 13 years old to 19 years old. We targeted audiences from this age range because at this stage they have the ability to develop their own thinking skills. According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2013) in the online article "Ten Tasks of Adolescent Development," an adolescent gains the ability to develop and try hypotheses, understand philosophies and plan ahead as he matures. They start to shape their own personality and characteristic. In this transitional stage from childhood to adulthood, there should be guidance like "Secret Base" to educate them to care for their parents and commit gratitude for living in a peaceful country.

1.7 A brief of project description

The Secret Base is a 2D animation regarding a story about separation of a little boy from his father during occupation of Japanese in Malaya. The storyline visualise something that is inspirational and thrilling towards to audiences, which is the pain of loss. During the World War II, citizens of Malaya were confronted with suffers and separation from their beloved families. Based the history background, Secret Base has been created to illustrate the miserable situation happened among fellow citizens to convey the message of cherishing parents among teenagers. Secret Base inspires people especially teenagers not to neglect their parents and must treat them as a treasure in family. Additionally, this animation intended to convey the message that war is destructive and brings sorrows to the family members.

1.8 Project methodology

Conceptualization, Analysis, Preproduction, Production, Postproduction and Documentation are the six general procedures, which are included in order to accomplish all the phases in a multimedia project.

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1.8.1 Conceptualization

The concept and theme of the project was generated via brainstorming session among the two group members. The idea was generated during conceptualisation process. We redefined our ideas into a concept. Subsequently, we integrate the concept into a storyline. We refine the storyline again and again until we satisfied with the final one. We continued with establishing minor aspect in our animation. For example, we planned to use a flashback technique for the premise of the story. Figure out the characteristic of main characters, exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution of the story is very essential. Plotting of storyline is outlined in detail in black and white. It was done before we proceed to the next stage.

1.8.2 Analysis

Specifying problem statement, the goal of project, objectives and defining target audience are the initial phase in this stage. Survey was conducted on the target audiences, which are teenagers aged from 13 to 19. The questionnaire-based survey is used to obtain information and data. The data will enable us to produce a 2D animation that is appropriate for the majority since we can know well about target audience's savor beforehand.

1.8.3 Pre-production

Pre-production processes are very crucial to determine the success or failure of a multimedia project because every single detail has to be defined thoroughly in advance to avoid overrun of budget.

Right after the analysis process, pre-production was executed as early as possible for further preparation of the animation. Pre-production processes consist of planning, Gantt chart scheduling, character designs, environmental design,

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storyboarding and script writing. The planning part is vital to depict tasks systematically to ensure smooth work flow. Gantt chart is developed to outline the entire project's schedule. This makes sure that every task can be done before deadline. Afterwards, we moved on with the character designs and environmental designs. Character designs must be unique and have their own visual style. We decided to penetrate some Japanese anime element into our character designs to enhance the uniqueness. While environmental designs are set to be in village or local "kampung" style since the story background is during intrusion of Japanese Military in Malaya. Storyboarding and script writing were perpetuated to visualise every scene of the animation in black and white. These two processes are essential for the two group members to reach a consensus before production phase to prevent misunderstanding and miscommunication. The storyboard and scripts consist of the camera angle, movement of characters, dialogue, sound effects and location of scenes. Other than that, animatic storyboard in the form of video is also formed during this phase. This method assists us to have a rough idea on the approximated duration of every scene. Besides, some sound effects and background music are inserted in the animatic storyboard to test on the mood conveyed to the audience. The last step in pre-production is modelling and tracing. We used Toon Boom Animate Pro 2 to trace main characters, environment and props. The modelling process is finalised by setting the pivot points on the characters.

1.8.4 Production

Right after the pre-production phase, the process of production is conducted without further ado. The production phase is divided to two parts, animation by using Toon Boom Animate Pro and special effects by utilising Adobe After Effects CS6. For production of animation, the development of animation, sound recording and

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selection of sound effects are proceeding simultaneously. The final piece is rendered out and combined using Adobe Premiere Pro CS5.

1.8.5 Post-Production

Post-production is typically the final phase of production stage. Editing the minor defects of the animation is taking place. Additionally, we utilise Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 software to enhance the quality of the final video. For example, we used nostalgic or retro colour tone for the flashback scenes in the animation to bring out the actual mood.

Eventually, addition of soundtrack and background music is to further improve the visual enjoyment of audiences. The opening intro and ending credits are added as well. After the video is completely edited, the project is tested to detect further flaws before the project is distributed.

1.8.6 Documentation

Documentation phase is a phase where developers are required to file up everything from Conceptualization to Post-Production in an organised sequence to present the project to the audience.

1.9 Project timeline

A detail Gantt chart is developed by using Microsoft Project. It acts as a guideline to accomplish the project's milestones on time.

*(Please refer to the Gantt chart in **Appendix A**)*

1.10 Report structure outline

There are seven chapters in this report which cover different aspects:

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- **Chapter 1: Introduction**

  A brief introduction to the project is provided to give readers a clearer vision about the project. Chapter 1 outlined the introduction to chapter, problem statement, project goal and objectives, project scope, target audience, project methodology of the entire project. Besides that, a detail Gantt chart is provided in the project timeline.

- **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

  The authors covered research on the history of 2D animation and further elaboration on the development of 2D animation in Malaysia. Other than that, history background of Japanese occupation of Malaya (1941 – 1945) is being discussed in this chapter. Nevertheless, comparison between the existing application and the project is also included in order to identify the strength and the weakness of the project.

- **Chapter 3: Analysis**

  As for this chapter, it is more on collection and interpretation of data based on the survey. The target audience of this project is analysed in this chapter. The collected and analysed data provides the authors on the practicability and achievability of the project itself before the actual production is conducted.

- **Chapter 4: Design**

  It is the initial planning phase of every single detail related to the appearance of the 2D animation, from character modelling sheets to environment setting. Furthermore, this chapter also outlined the storyboard. Each page of storyboards contains detail scene descriptions, sound effects and movement of camera.

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- **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

  Conclude entire project into a short summary by including an introduction, listing out findings which leads to an objective reflection of the project.

1.11 Summary

This chapter is about the concept and ideas behind the story. Problem statements, objectives, target user, project scope, project methodology and project timeline is clearly stated for future reference. Through this project, audiences will get to know the importance to cherish the time spent with parents to avoid repentance after losing them all of a sudden. The target users of this project are teenagers ranging from 13 to 19 years old.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to chapter

With the purpose of strengthening problem statements and objectives of our project, we analysed it based on the following categories in this chapter. We go further into categories such as the occupation of Japanese in Malaya and neglect towards elderly to strongly support our objectives. The categorisation is made to allow the team to explore more on the regarding topics specifically. This can avoid discrepancy especially on history of the Japanese occupation period.

2.2 Anime (Japanese Animation)

2.2.1 Brief Introduction to Anime

The term 'anime', was written as アニメ in the Japanese and pronounced as "ah-nee-may". It is abbreviated from a Japanese word, アニメーション (anime¯shon), which is a direct transliteration of English word "animation" (Cooper-Chen, 2012). Osamu Tezuka, the 'God of Manga' and the 'Father of Anime' (Power, 2009), whose influence in Japan could be seen as equivalent to that of Walter Elias (creator of Walt Disney), Georges Prosper Remi, Will Eisner and Jack Kirby mingled into one, but even this comparison falls short (Gravett, 2004). According to Fred (2004), Osamu Tezuka admired Disney's work so much that he watched Bambi for more than 80 times. He started the anime-style by taking his inspirations from Walt Disney's creations. He was credited with applying those large Bambi eyes to anime characters (Okabayashi, 2007). The style has significant big eyes and hair colors ranging from blondes to exaggerated pink, green or blue. Anne Cooper Chen (2012) also mentioned about

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emotion in anime character's eyes is shown in the form of tingling, scintillating sparkles in anime. Japanese's faces are flatter than Westerners and their noses are less prominent. Consequently, artists were capable to draw faces from the front, just with simple line and color. Anime colors are applied in blocks and there are no shadows in anime. The elements of anime will penetrate deeply into "Secret Base" and hence we will focus more on our characters' eyes and face features. Unnecessary shadows will be avoided as well.

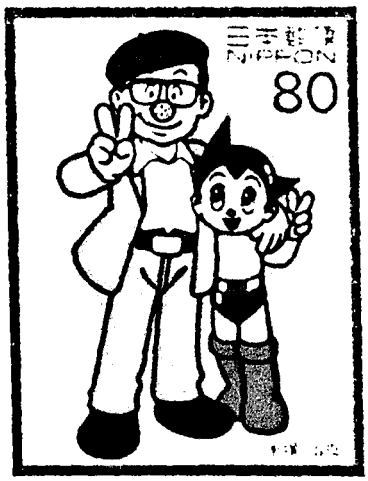

Figure 2.1 Japanese postage stamp memorialising Osamy Tezuka and Mighty Atom[1]

2.2.2 The study on Anime

On account of implementing anime elements in our 2D animation, the "Secret Base", we specialised on studies related to anime especially its trend in recent years. Anime has become a worldwide recognized style, or more precisely, a generative platform for creativity (Condry, 2013). Cooper (2012) indicates that Japan's animation products have a diversity of topics covering modern trends rather than monotonous and boring immutable cartoons. Since our target audiences are adolescents ranging from 13 years old to 19 years old, cartoonish character might not able to arouse their interest to watch our animation.

[1] Source: Schodt, F.L. (2007).The Astro Boy Essays: Osamu Tezuka, Mighty Atom, and the Manga/anime Revolution. Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge.

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You might be wondering the divergence between Japanese anime style and Malaysia culture, but just as media can no longer be defined by what happens within a specific technological platform, so, too, can culture no longer be defined solely by boundaries of nation or ethnic (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997). For example, Hetalia, a Japanese anime which taking place around World War II. Referring to Hetalia official website, each character characterises modern day countries, such as Kiku Honda represents Japan whereas Feliciano on behalf of Italy. Additionally, all the characters are the stereotypes of their origin countries. Some of which are Feliciano (Italy) is pasta paranoid while Alfred (America) is a cheeseburger fanatic. From this, we can say that there is no boundaries and limitation for anime-style. It can be applicable for every distinct continents and regions globally.

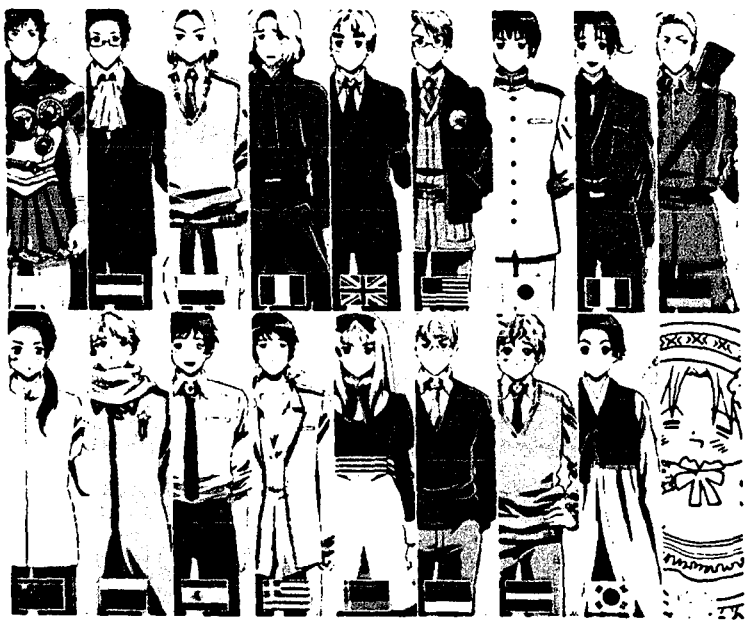

Figure 2.2 Characters of Hetalia[2]

The anime phenomenon is not only just great mass fervour in Japan but also very popular in many other countries. Otaku (fans of anime and manga) are estimated around 2.4 million people in Japan alone. They spent nearly 2.5 billion dollars on anime and manga. This is meaning that the potential market for anime and manga is relatively huge and profitable. Google search result for anime and manga

[2] Source: Wordpress.com

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