

Text + Tech Casebook

Casebook written by Carina Gaspar, Dramaturg at Pat the Dog Theatre Creation

With notes from Lisa O'Connell, Laine Newman, and Myriam Léger

Table of Contents:

The Preface.....pages 3-4

The Players.....pages 5-9

The Tech Toys.....page 10

The Scene.....page 11

Day 1.....pages 11-13

Day 2.....pages 14-16

Day 3.....pages 17-19

The Day-to-Day Recap Questions.....page 20

The Plans for the Future.....pages 21-22

The Further Resources.....page 23

The Preface

The Thank Yous:

Thank you for the generous support from our funders, without which this project would not have been possible:

Canada Council
Ontario Arts Council
City of Waterloo

Also thank you to:

Dr. Jill Tomasson Goodwin and REAP (Research Entrepreneurs Accelerating Prosperity)
Quarry Integrated Communications
Evenholme Estate in St. Jacobs, ON
Jessica Anderson, Editorial Assistant

The Audience:

This document is intended for playwrights and theatre creators interested in using technology. We aim to illuminate questions of technological integration, as well as next steps for this type of collaboration.

We come at this document from a dramaturgical, artistic perspective, so when we use 'we' it is in the voice of all of us as theatre creators.



We're tired of the chandelier falling on our heads, of technological projections in theatre that are merely spectacle and distraction, of the ways we use technology to wow rather than serve. We're tired of getting lost in the shiny objects.

Too often technology becomes an add-on, a design element, as opposed to being threaded into the work. But it needs full integration from the very germ of the idea.

Due to lack of funding, resources and access, we as theatre creators limit possibilities at the outset of our creations. Unwittingly, we dwell upon what we can't do as opposed to what we can. Likewise, tech creators may not have access to or see how theatre creators might enhance their inventions. How can we bridge this divide?

This was not a one-off conversation for Pat the Dog Theatre Creation's (PTD) Artistic Director Lisa O'Connell. It was a deep, reflective discussion that she brought in-house to us. With a desire to see better quality work with technological integration—and advocating that theatre creators deserve access and knowledge to such tools—O'Connell brought her well thought out, theoretical questions into practice.

Pat the Dog invited a select group of theatre creators and tech creators to join this discussion. From March 8 to 11, 2013, Pat the Dog—in partnership with REAP and its FELT Lab—brought together creators of technology and creators of theatre to play and plot in our pilot Text + Tech project. Held in the tech hub of Waterloo Region, this project was the first of its kind in Canada.

It's important to note that we brought in not just tech-savvy people, but the actual individuals who create these tech toys. Like us, these individuals create from a point of inspiration—we wanted to bring theatre and tech creators together at that point of inspiration in their disciplines and not after they have created their play or technology.

Our Text + Tech players

Kyle Capstick was brought into the project because of the way he investigates the land of the poetic and the landscape of the play. His work is emotive and beautiful, and as one of our emerging playwrights he's asking key questions about space. He is a graduate of Cape Breton University and his works have been produced across Nova Scotia. He is a recent migrant to Toronto where he acts as production manager for New Born Theatre and interns for the SummerWorks Performance Festival. His work *I'm Not Anybody* was awarded first place in Pat the Dog's 24-Hour Playwriting Competition 2012. He was awarded second place in the Playwrights Guild of Canada National Post-Secondary Playwriting Competition for his original play, *I Miss, Not Just, Your Eyes*.

Mark Connolly is a user experience designer who helps create healthcare software products at Karos Health in Waterloo, Ontario. He is also the co-founder of Fluxible, a user experience conference. As Designer in Residence at REAP, he has provided design guidance to student teams on a variety of projects. He's excited to have recently joined the Board of Directors of Open Ears, a long-running festival of music and sound in Kitchener, Ontario. At home he plays with his three sons, plays the mandolin and guitar, and sometimes he plays the fool.

Trevor Copp comes from an imagistic, physical-theatre background, where he is interested in the dramaturgical uses of technology in relation to the body, and in devised settings. He founded Burlington's Tottering Biped Theatre (TBT) in 2008, a professional company that emphasizes physical and social issue oriented work. He completed Theatre Studies at the University of Waterloo, a MA at the University of Guelph, and Mime at the Marcel Marceau School in Paris.

As an actor, he performed in TBT's *Thom Pain*, *Home Free*, *The Ends of the Earth*, and *First Dance*. Between MT Space's *The Last 15 Seconds* and *Body 13* he performed in the IMPACT '09 and '11 Festival, twice in the Theatre Passe Muraille season, the Magnetic North Festival, the Canoe Festival, the Grand Theatre, National tours, and a tour of the Middle East.

Christopher Duthie is a hybrid of both classical and physical-theatre traditions, and in his most recent work he is interested in fully integrating technology into the narrative. He is a Calgary-bred actor, playwright and graduate of the University of Calgary's Drama Department. Selected acting credits include: *Smash Cut Freeze*, *Radioheaded 2: It Is The 21st Century*, *One Yellow Rabbit*; *REVERIE*, Ghost River Theatre; *A Christmas Carol '07-'10*, Theatre Calgary; *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?*, Alberta Theatre Projects; *Shoes of Sand*, *Night Light*, Quest Theatre, *Freak Show '07-'10*, Swallow-a-Bicycle, *Henry VI, Part III*, The Shakespeare Company. His solo show, *n00b*, was developed and re-imagined with Vertigo Theatre's Y-Stage Series and is currently touring Canada. He recently moved to Toronto.

Eleanor Fogolin is a recent graduate of Memorial University of Newfoundland, where she received her Masters degree. She is currently employed by the REAP Program of the University of Waterloo, for whom she documents the latest projects and collaborations coming out of the FELT Lab. She is also a freelance creative writer.

Carina Gaspar is a Dramaturg at Pat the Dog Theatre Creation, where her focus is both text-based and also in alternative forms of dramaturgy (technology-based, clown-based). She completed her Masters in Theatre Studies at York University, as well as a Dramaturgical and New Play Development internship at Nightwood Theatre. As an actor, she has trained with Theatre Smith-Gilmour, Leah Cherniak, and John Turner. In 2014, she will premiere her first full-length solo show *Denmarked*, and continue collaborating with key technology creators on a new piece that merges both clown and technology. She is the recipient of the 2014 Dramaturg in Residence grant, awarded by the Literary Managers & Dramaturgs of the Americas.

Matthew Heiti is an analog guy in a digital world. His plays carry with them a lovely sense of nostalgia, so he enters the space with caution towards technology—a necessary quality for this type of investigation.

Born in Sudbury, Matthew holds a BFA in Acting from Ryerson University and a MA in Creative Writing from the University of New Brunswick. He is an award-winning playwright (RBC Tarragon Under 30 Playwriting Competition), a Genie-nominated screenwriter, and his first novel, *The City Still Breathing*, is published by Coach House Books. As Playwright-in-Residence at the Sudbury Theatre Centre, Matthew runs the Playwrights' Junction, a workshop for developing writers. He is also an Associate Artist with Encore Theatre Company. In 2013-2014 he performed in Crestfallen Theatre's production of *Plague*, and his play *Black Dog: 4 vs. the World* will be remounted by STC in the spring of 2014.

Andy Houston is an artist-researcher in site-specific and environmental performance. As an Associate Professor of Drama at the University of Waterloo, many of his student productions explore text and technology.

He and Kathleen Irwin started Knowhere Productions Inc. in 2002, a company devoted to the exploration of site-specific and environmental performance (see www.knowhereproductions.ca). As a scholar, he has published broadly in his field and edited a *Canadian Theatre Review* issue on site-specific performance, as well as a collection of writings on environmental and site-specific theatre in Canada, published by Playwrights Canada Press.

Myriam Léger is part of the Pat the Dog team. Before she received a PhD in German literature from the University of Waterloo, she interned in the culture department at an adult education centre and in museums in Germany and Italy. She approaches

arts administration from a deeply analytical perspective and finds it important to question the status quo.

Glen Mead has worked in the digital content creation field for over 15 years, specializing in interactive media, computer animation, and conference support services. During that time, Glen has created many engaging interactive experiences including web sites, CDs, DVDs, kiosks, mobile apps, and other advanced interactive experiences for numerous local, national, and international organizations. His animation experience includes 2D motion graphics and 3D computer-generated imagery for digital signage, corporate videos, and broadcast television programs such as *Survivorman*, *Golf the World*, and *Extreme Conditions*. Glen has also travelled the world creating and operating on-screen content for high profile speakers, and providing on-site interactive experiences to increase attendee engagement. Glen is passionate about new technologies and continues to remain at the forefront of emerging interactive technologies such as augmented reality, natural user interfaces, gesture recognition, and computer vision.

Laine Zisman Newman is one of Pat the Dog's Dramaturgs. After receiving a MA in Drama from the University in Toronto in 2010, Laine completed her MFA in Documentary Media at Ryerson University in June 2013. In addition to dramaturging numerous productions, Laine produced a Masters Student Showcase in June 2010, assistant directed *The Proust Project* at the Festival of Ideas and Creation in May 2011, and recently directed and edited a documentary short, "You're Not My Target Audience," which has screened at festivals throughout North America. She is currently a PhD student at the Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies and the collaborative program in Sexual Diversity Studies; she has a keen interest in multidisciplinary work and queer women's performance.

Lisa O'Connell is the founder and Artistic Director of Pat the Dog Theatre Creation, the only playwright centre in Ontario open to both emerging and established theatre creators. PTD playwrights' work has been presented at the Magnetic North Theatre Festival, SummerWorks, MT Space Theatre, Sudbury Theatre Centre, Theatre Aquarius, among others. They are Resident Artists at Kitchener's Walper Hotel and also have an office in Sudbury to serve Northern Ontario theatre creators. O'Connell serves on the Advocacy Committee of the Playwrights Guild of Canada, the Artistic Practices Committee of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, and is a member of several Municipal Cultural Plan Steering Committees. She is the recipient of a Waterloo Region Arts Award, and delivered the closing keynote address at the Canadian Association for Theatre Research conference (2013). Upcoming she will direct Heather Majaury's new play *This is My Drum* to premiere at MT Space in February 2015.

Mike Perkins is a System Architect at Christie Digital Systems where for the past 15 years he has been involved with the design of many innovative visual display systems. He is the co-inventor of the MicroTiles. Mike received his degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Waterloo. Originally from London, he

now lives in the KW region. When not inventing new technologies, Mike is an avid (and very amateur) photographer.

Bernie Roehl has a background in interactive media, particularly 3D and virtual/augmented reality applications. He has written four books on the subject. Bernie is a founder of Theatre on the Edge, an improvisation group based in Kitchener. He is a past recipient of the Kitchener-Waterloo Arts Award.

Bob Rushby retired as Chief Technology Officer and VP R&D of Christie Digital Systems in 2011. Recently, Bob co-invented Christie MicroTiles™, an award-winning modular digital display technology. More recently, he led Christie's research into the use of laser technology for advanced projection systems. Bob joined Christie from Delphax Systems (now called Delphax Technologies Inc.) where he was Vice-President of Engineering.

He is also involved with several business incubator and accelerator initiatives including the University of Waterloo REAP program, Ryerson's Digital Media Zone, and the Communitex Hyperdrive accelerator. Bob is also the Vice-Chair of the Ontario Centres of Excellence IT and Digital Media Advisory Board.

Jill Tomasson Goodwin is a co-founder of the REAP initiative, which is housed in the FELT Lab. She holds a MA and Ph.D. in English from the University of Toronto and a BA in English from the University of British Columbia. Her research interests are in communication as it applies to artistic, everyday, and digital expression, particularly theatre and technology, interviewing, visual/textual design and user experience design. She teaches in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Waterloo and is a founding member of the Canadian Centre of Arts and Technology (CCAT). She also headed a team of researchers that mounted the first use of beta MicroTiles in a short theatre production in 2009.

Vincent John Vincent is the co-founder, CEO, and creative force behind GestureTek Inc.—the inventors, pioneers, and world leaders of Video Gesture Control for 26+ years. He and Francis MacDougall invented and patented video gesture virtual reality, where the user's image appears on screen and interacts with the virtual world; and 3D Depth Camera Gesture Recognition, for avatars and off screen point control. He is instrumental in running and growing GestureTek, and creating diverse applications and markets for their various gesture technologies. They have installed 6000+ gesture displays and surfaces, for public entertainment, educational, rehabilitation, etc. They licensed tech and patents to Sony's PlayStation, and Microsoft's XBOX for Gesture Control Cameras like the Kinect, etc. With a Psychology BA (U of Waterloo), he invented Virtual Reality Performance from 1986 onward; received a Canadian New Media Lifetime Achievement Award; the Milan Media Guru Award, and is a DigiFest, Digital Pioneer Hall of Fame inductee. He has keynoted many conferences including TedXWaterloo 2011, IdeaCity2011 in Toronto, and many others.

Bob White has been active as a dramaturg and director in the Canadian theatre for forty years. He has just been appointed Director of New Plays at the Stratford Festival after serving four seasons as a consulting director and dramaturg on several productions.

Prior to his Stratford engagement, Bob spent twenty-two years at Calgary's Alberta Theatre Projects, the last nine as Artistic Director. At ATP, he headed the annual Enbridge playRites Festival of New Plays, widely regarded as one of Canada's premier new play showcases. Other significant attachments include Co-director, Banff Playwrights Colony (1997-2009), Artistic Director, Factory Theatre (1978-87) and Dramaturge, Playwrights Workshop Montreal (1975-78).

Bob has also directed over 75 productions and has received eight nominations and three wins for "Outstanding Direction" at Calgary's Betty Mitchell Awards. Other awards include membership in the Order of Canada, Honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD), University of Calgary, and The Diamond Jubilee Medal.

The Tech Toys:



Technologies Available in the FELT Lab:

For full list and video walkthroughs of technologies available in the FELT Lab, please visit: <http://www.reapwaterloo.ca/felt-lab/felt-equipment>

In REAP's own words, the FELT Lab is a "digital sandbox for serious play." The Lab is equipped with multiple technologies, ranging from display technologies to interactive realities. For this weekend intensive, we predominately interacted with the following technologies:

Christie Digital MicroTiles

- Each tile is a self-contained projector that is able to synchronize with other tiles to ensure that they present a unified image.
- You do not have to assemble them into a rectangular format.
- They can be used to create any arrangement of display canvas and can be scaled from one single tile to any number of tiles in any arrangement.
- The content of the tiles can be designed to match the shape of the tile design.
- RGB tiles, which means you have a full spectrum of colour at your disposal.

GestureTek Cube

- The GestureTek Cube makes it possible for individuals to create their own interactive floor experience. It is also possible to chain a series of cubes to create a long display with projection edges blended together.
- It is very durable, portable and customizable.

Augmented Reality:

- Apps such as Aurasma and Layar.
- Software uses images to trigger a programmed response, using not only animation but also maps and markers of a location.
- Can be used on mobile devices for one-on-one individual interaction or can be used on a larger scale with a projector.

The Scene:

We housed the project in REAP's FELT Lab, located in the Quarry Integrated Communications building in St. Jacobs, ON.

St. Jacobs is already a place of playful collision with its tenets in the Mennonite culture, but also its close proximity to Google, Communitech, and the rest of the tech hub. On one corner you have Quarry, and at the same corner you can have a farmer tying up his horse and buggy. It was the perfect location to bring two seemingly disparate worlds together; it was analog meeting with digital.

The Map:

Being a pilot project, we created an orientation guide of project précis, who's who details, maps of the surrounding area. It was also a mental map of our thought process: we had combed through research on technology + theatre and equipped participants with three particular research articles (listed at the back of this document). One of the articles is simply a vocabulary list, something that seems irrelevant now since technologists and theatre creators didn't have the perceived language barrier we assumed. The other two articles are equally problematic, as they are from the point-of-view of designers and directors, but never the theatre creator and never at the point of inspiration. The articles provided a primitive basis for our conversation, and reminded us there was a lot of pioneering to do. We left that mental map and forged a new one.

Day 1:

Huddled around a roundtable, no one knew where to start day 1. Some of us were stuck in awkward corners, the dramaturgs off to the side, and the skeptics and cautious of the group on their own islands. Who leads whom?

It had been months of pre work and courting the technologists. They were incredibly keen, and voluntarily donated their entire weekend. No one received financial compensation, apart from room accommodations. They came solely out of interest in our project and in making the work stronger. An intense curiosity brought them there, but also frustration. Theatre creators want to see and write better quality work, and tech creators want to see their technologies used to the fullest.

We wanted to break the ice, so we used the old Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas model: we went around the room asking each individual what they were interested in unearthing over these few days, what were their key questions and concerns. These were the responses:

Day 1, The Preliminary Questions:

- Can text and tech creators collaborate?
- Can they collaborate without creating another layer of gatekeepers (technology dramaturgs)?
- Does technology constrain the stories you can tell?
- How can we use technology so it doesn't steal focus from what's happening on stage?
- In which ways are the text and tech processes analogous?
- How do we build trust in the room without full knowledge of each other's processes?
- Could prototypes be tested within a workshop setting without imposing on the artistic process?

Questions focused on our creative process, but rarely asked the technologists about their own. Were we not interested, or was it fear? The same fear that causes us to introduce technology later on in the process?

Differing Values:

We feel that fear laced many of these early questions. There were subtle concerns about value and intellectual property, but larger concerns of economic disparities between us. Given the somewhat personal nature of the weekend—putting our creativity and 'darlings' out there—it's natural that our defenses were up. We entered the space with excitement, but also mistrust.

Defining Vocabulary:

One fundamental question for this project was how do we begin tackling these discussions when there is the fear that we don't have a common language from which to work. We couldn't take for granted that tech creators would already be familiar with concepts like the fourth wall. There was the concern that both groups would miss each other's meanings or that we would need a third-party translator. We were constantly checking our assumptions, but the burden consistently fell on the theatre creators to define our process and vocabulary.

We attempted to bridge this gap by finding common language like how the rehearsal phase of theatre is equivalent to technology's *prototyping phase*. In both cases, this is the time when ideas are tested. *Brainstorming* is a shared language. A *start-up* is also a good comparison to theatre since we all take risks and experiment. Creating something and expecting it to work the first time is uncommon in both technology and theatre. As we uncovered more common ground, we realized early on day 1 that our perceived language barrier did not exist. The more we integrated technology into our vernacular, the more the fear dissipated.

Sacrifices to the Tech Gods:

The deeper fear was a concern about conflicting values between us. The group consensus was that we share an appreciation for efficiency. But what does efficiency mean for theatre? Efficiency forces us to be less precious about our work and churn

it out, even if unpolished, but it also hinders the wonderfully messy liveness of theatre. If we take on these tech tools and language, then we potentially lose the texture of our artistic process.

Facing the Megamonster:

In working with technology—the leading megamonster of the current developed world—it’s necessary to check our reverence. We value technology’s expertise in audience engagement and retention, in creating content for a needy market, but with reverence comes self-doubt and giving over of power. We need to be aware of the dynamic we set up in this collaboration, and who takes the first conciliatory step.

Tech and Theatre: the rich man and the pauper

It’s essential to make things interesting for both parties. Our relationship with technology doesn’t always feel mutually beneficial. Even financially, the artist is making do with the scraps they have while the tech industry pumps money into its startups.

We can share our strengths and resources. The technologists can assist us in finding, adapting and creating technologies, and we can animate their technologies in artistically significant, socially relevant ways. More importantly, technology needs theatre’s greatest asset: human connection.



Poster in FELT Lab

By asking our questions and thinking our big ideas, we’re pushing tech into a space that’s never been considered. Our problems will expand the conceptual limitations of technology and influence the tech products created.

“Theatre is never tech impeccable, but it also can’t settle for the 25 cent budget.” —Bob White

Establish Need and Want, and then Demand:

Technology is for a market and is initially defined by the technologist but ultimately defined by the users. Theatre is a market, but it is also much more than that. We are not a one-dimensional customer; the fear exists in becoming, as Christopher Duthie stated, a “content provider.” The closer we move towards that kind of relationship with tech,

then the closer we are to papering over our craft. If we do accept the role of customer, then we need to be clear with what we need and what we are and aren’t willing to do.

We wrapped up this discussion and retired to Evenholme, the bed and breakfast at which most of the theatre creators were staying. We were exhausted, out of our element, throwing ourselves into a tech world we didn't know, staying in accommodations that we could never afford. The theatre creators congregated in the living room to rehash the day. What worked? What didn't? Dramaturgs had concerns that we hadn't created the proper conditions. How do we go forward? Or, *do* we go forward? There was a creeping fear that maybe we weren't meant to. Maybe this pilot project was meant to show us that we should stay in our own realms, and that forcing a partnership was futile.

Day 2

As we entered the space this second day, we found theatre creator Trevor Copp and tech creator Mike Perkins rearranging the tables. On one hand it was a practical move—we could finally all sit at the same space—but it was also an act that created trust. It was a fresh start.

We needed that act of collaboration. From the outset, we lacked neutral ground to have these discussions. Either we were at the roundtable (the space of text) or in Quarry or the FELT Lab (the space of tech). Our space was flawed from the get go, and we struggled to find common ground both literally and figuratively.

We spent that first day without stepping foot in the FELT Lab. Perhaps we were afraid of being too prescriptive. Perhaps there was the constraint of time, money, resources, and energy. Perhaps there was the pressure to stay at the roundtable and force dialogue. We were waiting on discussion to give us momentum into wanting to go to the lab, and it wasn't coming.

It could only be a cerebral exercise for so long. On day 2 we erred on the side of being prescriptive and forced ourselves to move into the FELT Lab.

The FELT Lab **In flux vs fixity:**

REAP was open to different configurations of the Lab, but they needed our input. Since we hadn't known what we wanted and needed, we hadn't set up the conditions for interactivity beforehand.

We had access to display technology and pre-configured projections, but no way to change them on the fly. It didn't encourage on-the-spot discovery or interactivity. It didn't mirror the flux and fluidity of theatre. Given what we know now, how can we set up these conditions better for future phases of Text + Tech?

Write the Impossible:

Technology's fixity and limitations run the risk of dictating what and how we write, forcing us to bend our process. We can combat this by asserting our own confidence and vision, particularly in the form of stage directions. We found that something simple as strong stage directions can be hugely impactful. In our dramaturgical practice, we often find ourselves empowering emerging theatre creators to use them. We need to place weight over all the words we put into our work, and realize that stage directions are a critical part of keeping our integrity and vision.

Theatre creators are taught to avoid stage directions because directors don't read them. Is a director not reading the stage directions the same as bringing in technology that doesn't serve the theatre creators' vision? We need to write the impossible act, but write it with the impossible stage directions as well.

Case Studies:

We left the lab and broke for lunch, theatre creators frustrated at the lack of interactivity with the technology. The frustration was a welcome motivator because it forced us to refocus our gaze. We quickly adapted and made a dramaturgical decision over lunchtime.

New approach for the afternoon: case studies. We asked theatre creators Christopher Duthie, Kyle Capstick, Matthew Heiti, and Carina Gaspar to speak to the group about their latest projects and technological wishlists. The theatre creators' concrete problems became a practical way for tech and text to collaborate.

Matthew Heiti's *Black Dog: 4 vs the World* incorporates a Twitter feed and audience interaction. Heiti asked, how do you control a live Twitter feed? The simple solution was not to have a live one at all, but instead a projection image made to *look* like a Twitter feed. If you do have a live Twitter feed, then you have to make sure it doesn't distract from what's happening on stage (and questions of filtering and potential censorship also arise). Another suggestion was made that the feed could be projected on the actors' bodies or on a white sheet that the actors would press up against. It would focus the audience's gaze on one particular area of the stage.

Kyle Capstick has a scene in his *Of Shapes Transformed By Love* where humans go through metamorphoses, turning into trees, spiders, birds. Technology can be used to create dynamic animation growing out from the actors' movements and postures like an extension of the body. If we elevate technology out of projections, we can see possibilities with light and shadow.

The Christie Digital MicroTiles seemed fitting for Christopher Duthie's *n00b*, which explores the world of video games. You can configure MicroTiles to resemble any world you want, saturate them with vibrant light, arrange them differently around the stage so the character appears to walk through them.

Carina Gaspar's *Denmarked* is a solo clown show where all lighting sources are onstage and controlled by the performer. From the MYO band to the Pepper's Ghost technique from the 1800s, the tech creators spun out solutions for our obstacles. Not only can we look forward to the future capability of technology, but there is credence to looking to the past for inspiration, too.

Tech creators were eager to offer solutions in their go-go-go efficiency and active problem solving, but theatre has a slower, reflective process. The pace of creation between both parties might be fundamentally different. Technology has the power to push the theatre in intriguing ways, but also dangerous ones if we give in too readily. Sometimes the delight in theatre is when we see an everyday object made into something else, like a red ribbon transformed into a thread of blood. It's as much about knowing how to use technology as it is knowing *when* and *if* to use technology.

Not only if and when to use technology, but who should use technology and why. We wondered if technology had to be used by theatre creators who were really interested in it as an object, or if the technology-cautious creators were better suited to use technology because of their inherent skepticism and questions about it.

We were grateful to eventually find this joint love of problem solving. It revealed that we didn't need to find a shared dictionary of words—that was an outside-in approach. We had been moving from the theoretical and struggling to get to the practical, whereas the problem solving was where we found some commonality. It wasn't the perfect partnership, since now we had concerns over who controls space, content, and pace, but it was at least a stepping stone.

We headed back to Evenholme, which served as our 'water cooler.' The off-site tech creators came over and we shared food and drink, and the ease of the night gave way to more conversation. Without the prescriptive pressure of sitting around a table, the discussion never felt forced. It was that post-show theatre bar talk that felt the most natural. The tech creators understand that world too, as Bob Rushby and Mike Perkins recounted how they thought up the Christie MicroTiles while sitting at a bar, on a business trip, frustrated by lost luggage, in Tokyo; their frustration gave way to time, play and creation. Perhaps our day 1 and 2 frustrations were slowly offering us the same opportunity. How could we recreate a sense of ease and play going into day 3?

Day 3

We ironically created this sense of ease by being prescriptive and forcing process. On day 3 we paired together a tech creator and a theatre creator and sent them off together into a room to tackle practical projects. We called them “arranged marriages.” From the larger, disjointed roundtable we started with on day 1, to these intimate one-on-one collaborations on day 3, Text + Tech played out both micro and macro scenarios. The specificity and attention of these micro partnerships were rewarding.



Arranged Marriages:

Kyle Capstick & Craig Kingston

Trevor Copp & Mark Connolly

Christopher Duthie & Mike Perkins

Carina Gaspar & Bob Rushby

Matthew Heiti & Vincent John Vincent

These were brainstorming sessions, as opposed to practical playtime with tech tools. It was a cerebral exercise, but attached to theatrical projects. The theatre creator introduced ideas or problems concerning one of their shows, and both parties collaborated on potential technological possibilities.

Narrative:

The majority of our discussions focused on narrative. We got into a chicken or the egg debate; is the narrative the inspiration for the technology or technology the inspiration for the narrative? How do we start a story from the place of technology

without the story being about the technology? These were questions of power and again we thought, who leads whom?

Christopher Duthie and Mike Perkins' central discovery became that technology can help us explode our context of narrative. In Duthie's one-man-show *n00b*, the main character of Daniel tells the audience about why he ran away from home and where he went. At the same time, there is a parallel storyline where Daniel is in a video game. Technology has the capacity to show these two dualities—Daniel in forest vs. Daniel in videogame—in a way that demonstrates different perspectives of a single character. Technology can help us address exposition, subtext, subconscious thought, and the real and the memory space.

We need to find balance between how to push the envelope and how to retain our traditional theatre models. Our audiences have certain expectations. We all want narrative completion; it affirms our viewpoint of the world. How will these values evolve and how will technology shape them?

Liveness:

Trevor Copp and Glen Meade wondered if technology breaks the promise we've made to the audience about liveness, immediacy, and flexibility. Kyle Capstick and Craig Kingston were also engaged in similar discussions. Both theatre and technology offer the simulation of the real and immediate, so is liveness the same for theatre and technology?

"The very thing that can make you successful as an artist or a tech creator is the same thing that can break you if you do the same thing for too long."—Bob White

Subtle, but impactful technology:

Theatre and technology are both needy. They have a 'look at me! Look at me!' quality that is integral in their makeup. The challenge is bringing together two attention-grabbing elements and making them work without sacrificing the full potential of either.

We paired up Carina Gaspar, a physical theatre creator, and Bob Rushby—formerly of Christie Digital—in order to discuss possible solutions. In talking about Carina's solo clown show, which involves intimate sources of light like flashlights and floor lamps, they discovered that tech can be subtle but still impactful.

Sometimes it's the small pieces of technology that provide the broadest range of dramatic possibilities. Like wiring conductive lighting through a costume or how body heat affects technology. It brought us back to the basics of technology and its impactful simplicity.

On that basic level, Bob says we need to stop thinking of projections as video and start thinking of it as light:

“There is light everywhere. If we could do with light what we do with projectors in terms of modulating the light and controlling it, we could make light alive. We could paint the world around us in a really interesting way in terms of content and information.” Bob Rushby speaking at Ignite Waterloo, June 15, 2011

Bob also touched on the fact that light will be normalized in the future. Mundane surfaces will be easily illuminated, pixels everywhere. “You’ll know it’s successful when they stop calling it digital light and just call it light.” This idea of normalization might be key in integrating technology and theatre.

Audience’s Tech Toys:

Audience members come in with their own subtle but impactful technologies, too. Beyond identifying and involving their technological gadgets, we need to incorporate the contemporary audience’s ability to multi-task and split focus.

The obstacle becomes creating an experience for audiences of different generations and different technological access and prowess. Technology could become a tool of isolation instead of integration and shared ritual since it frames whether or not the audience’s experience is an individual or collective one.

Technology opens the door for an immersive audience experience: a choose-your-own-adventure that hands over control to the audience. Vincent John Vincent and Matthew Heiti spoke about how technology might help us in rocking that roller coaster car that theatre is on—that the theatrical experience is often a linear, one-way track that the audience must follow. How can technology actively, playfully disrupt that?

Play and the Embracing of Failure:

Given the tight resources, play is not often possible. We usually do not have unlimited access to technology until late into the process. How can we work within this restriction?

With this sense of play comes the necessity to embrace failure. Failures in the attempt to integrate technology with theatre can lead to possibility, but often they can discourage a theatre creator from ever using technology again. We need to give ourselves permission to fail and not fall into the trap of perfect, seamless technology.



*Christopher Duthie and Jill Tomasson
Goodwin play with bot.*

Day-to-Day Questions and Recap:

Day 1 Key Questions and Thoughts:

- What is the shared vocabulary between technology and theatre?
- How much are text creators willing to change the way they work?
- How do we make things interesting for both parties?
- What kind of customer are we to tech?
- Both sides are creative and passionate—tech creators have their own darlings too, and they just want to see the potential of their creation used.

Day 2 Key Questions and Thoughts:

- We need to be firm and clear with our stage directions. Write the impossible.
- Can tech be dynamic and in flux just like theatre, or is it too much of a static medium?
- We need to be aware *how* to use technology, but also if and when to use it.

Day 3 Key Questions and Thoughts:

- ‘Arranged marriages’ (pairing a tech and text creator together in a room to brainstorm) can be a way of pushing process that is effective and fun. Technologists and theatre creators have a shared love of creative problem solving.
- Technology can be subtle and still impactful.
- How do we address and incorporate audience technology?
- How will the shape and structure of narrative evolve as tech becomes more present onstage?

Plans for the Future and What's Next:

Write the impossible: We need to empower ourselves to lay out the vision we want in our stage directions and be firm about it. Dictate what we want technology to do for us, rather than allowing the technology or director to do so.

Hacker Spaces: We would create a devised room where there would be a technologist in the room at all times, who is able to change the aspects of technology on the fly; the technologist would be able to code and adapt alongside the theatre creator. The technologist and theatre creator would collaborate on concrete projects, engaging in the practical problem-solving that worked so well during our intensive. Spaces like the FELT Lab are a good place to start. In such spaces, creators of theatre and technology can meet and play, functioning as resources in each other's process of creation.

Lab Play Days: In the next phase we will open up a playground for theatre creators to come and interact with the lab's technologies. This will be open to both emerging and established artists.

Fluid Space: Tech needs to flow through space and not be anchored in space. Find ways in which to create more dynamic and flexible technologies that are more appropriate for the stage.

We need to negotiate who owns the rehearsal space. How can theatre creators control the rehearsal room, and keep control?

Should I Use Tech?

Text and tech can conspire, but we need to be clear on what we want, how we want to work, what we need. There's a delicate warning to be careful not to get swept up by tech. Work closely alongside it, but don't let it steamroll. We have to be prepared that this collaboration might not always be harmonious or mutually beneficial. And, problematically, the onus is currently set on us to bend and adapt. In such an early partnership, we need to go forward with assertiveness and to check our reverence at the door.

Vocabulary & Process: In addition to setting up playgrounds that are adaptive, we need to be aware of each other's language and processes. Set up the conditions in the room that align with those processes. Identify if there needs to be brainstorming sessions, prototyping phases, etc. Acknowledge how to blend both theatre and technology's processes without overly-bending our own.

Face-to-face collaboration: Dialogue and creation has to happen in person.

List of tech toys: We will link theatre creators to the ongoing, updated list of technologies available at the FELT Lab and how they can be used for theatrical purposes.

Online Forum: Opportunities to post articles, share resources, continue discussions. As well as letting each other know about new technologies and upcoming productions.

Inviting the Public: Offer opportunities for the public to contribute to a project, and then have the resources and technologies in the public domain.

Low-to-high Scale: As much as we look forward to the future capability of technology, we should look at reinventing older technologies. Also be aware of what quality, grade of technology works for our creations. As well, to consider whether or not to use technology at all.

Text + Tech Resources and ‘Mental Map’:

Luber, Steve, et al. “In Media Res: Why Multimedia Performance?” *PAJ* 87.29 (2007): 15-29.

A roundtable discussion between PAJ Production Manager Steve Luber and theatre creators Eric Dyer, Brooke O’Hara, and Alex Timbers about the (often misguided) use of multimedia in creation and its complex relationship to text.

Poissant, Louise, Leblanc, Suzanne, and Lou Nelson. “New Media Dictionary: Part VI: Telematics.” *Leonardo* 35.4 (2002): 439-43.

The New Media Dictionary project was born out of the desire to name and define the many and varied forms of art that have developed in conjunction with technology. A whole lexicon is being created to describe the many processes, techniques, instruments, and critical and aesthetic concepts used in this field.

Saltz, David Z. “Live Media: Interactive Technology and Theatre.” *Theatre Topics* 11.2 (2001): 107-30.

This article examines the connectivity between performers and interactive technology as they are linked to the concept of ‘liveness.’ It interrogates how incorporating interactive technology into theatre opens dynamic new possibilities for theatre artists.

Bob Rushby’s talk at Ignite Waterloo, June 15, 2011:
<http://youtu.be/8iYY-WcxwDc>

REAP: www.reapwaterloo.ca

Pat the Dog: www.patthedog.org