Throughout my childhood and adolescent years I have been a huge fan of cartoons. For this reason, the article Illusion of Life was really fun to read. The article goes into great depth explaining the animation process and the advancement in the field. I was intrigued to discover how important the stretch and squash elements are to the animation process. These two elements were crucial in making Abner Mouse chew properly.

The half-filled flour sack guide was a very interesting approach to animation. By looking at the flour sack, depicted in all its various emotions, I felt like I could tell the emotion being depicted without reading the description below the sack. The idea behind the sack is intended to allow the character to be squashed or stretched in any way without appearing deformed because it maintains volume.

Before reading this article I never knew how much animation has evolved over time. Moreover, the amount of detail that goes into giving a cartoon character, human-like qualities is staggering. The article mentions a great deal about giving a character ‘Appeal’. This is a quality that makes viewers fix their gaze on something and not look away. I found it interesting to analyze the shapes of characters with such ‘Appeal’. Their shapes are based on those found in nature. They are not symmetrical, but still contain a natural balance in form and shape. Furthermore, these characters have charisma. It seems strange for a two-dimensional stationary object to have any sort of charisma. However, a character with ‘appeal’ is able to demonstrate their charisma through an expression, an action or a sequence of events. It is interesting how people behave the same way in real life. A charismatic person usually captivates a person’s attention. Ironically, we would say, someone who is animated captures our attention. From this point of view, it seems strange to state, but people are drawn to animated characters that have more human appeal and humans who are more animated. This might just be an ironic way of phrasing a simple sentence, but it is quite interesting to note.
Pad++: A Zoomable Graphical Sketchpad
For Exploring Alternate Interface Physics

From the introduction this program Pad++ seems really promising with a few innovative features. I am impressed by the feature that allows you to zoom and view features of a particular section of the huge sheet of rubber. Although this work is unique because it was conducted on this massive screen made of rubber. Contemporary screen sizes will limit the widespread adoption of this idea. As personal computers are becoming smaller and smaller, with 13 inch being the new 17 inch laptop, people might not want to use this idea.

With this infinite zoom feature, I can see myself getting lost in the vast amounts of information. I may not be able to navigate to the precise detail that I am searching for. However, the authors did try to account for this problem with the search feature, and bookmarks.

Overall, Pad++ is not very aesthetically pleasing. This is one of the areas that the authors really have to work to make it more popular. Furthermore, I do not really understand the focus on semantics. How would semantics be used, or particularly defined, in this context?

The idea reminds of a current Firefox add on called “Cooliris”. Through this Firefox add on one is able to view a collection of pictures or videos as a grid, a bird’s eye view, and then zoom in on a set or one particular image or video. Pad++ offers a similar platform allowing users a broad view of their information, and then helping them identify a particular piece of information that seems interesting. It is pretty impressive that system was able to process over 600,000 pieces of information. Furthermore, that it allowed a user to zoom into any of one of these pieces. This type of processing and graphical power was unheard of in 1996. Therefore, this program must have been something revolutionary at its time.