This paper is about the artifacts of the Presence Era. This means that people in general will be able to or should be able to find a personal souvenir that is a result of an “evolving audio and visual history of a space.” The problem that they had was that people wanted to see a visualization of a social space, and it should both reflect the old space that was being visualized but also be able to include the new space. The solution that was reached was a history flow visualization that showed a history of the last building and also along side, showed the current video of what is going on in the space. The second part of the visualization is the audio part which is utilized when a series of audio visualizations are run in the background of the screen. The main image is a FFT transform and the minor images are data points. The other cool thing is that the sound wave is averaged out over a five minute period and placed on top of the previous image, so the difference between compressed layers will not only have the visual average of what’s going on, but also the audio component, so you get more of a real feel for how the space is used.

The history flow visualization was invented to show the history of a wikipedia page, and display which parts of the article were new, deleted, or added onto. This visualization is interesting, not only to look at, but also because of its naturalistic background. I like visualizations that have to do with nature because I find that often, these types of images not only represent data well, but are also familiar to the user’s eye. This particular visualization looks like a cut-out of a section of rock, where you can view the different layers of sediment and see what happened at which time in history and where different ideas came and went from the article.

The diagram on the 4th part of the paper shows clearly how the audio and visual components were exactly composed and brings up interesting questions about the limitations of such methods. The audio parts are used, but when placed over previous layers, we lose a sense of how that exact segment relates to the whole, and instead see the total result more immediately. In addition, the visual snippet that is taken may not be covering the important part of the picture and in fact, is most likely not even centered on the middle part of the image unless the process has been running for some time, and also cannot be near the end of the simulation. The people using the exhibit also found it very interesting that the display showed what went on after hours as well and let them look into a time in which no one was ever allowed into and were able to see things, like janitors cleaning, which while not exceptionally interesting, were forbidden before, so seemed much more interesting.
Paper #2 Critique

This paper is about using images as a basis to create more images that look like they have been painted. Personally, I don’t really understand the fascination with these sort of modifications. If you have an image that is already photo quality, I find it irritating to go back and create a certain look that appears as if it has been painted. This is something lots of people seem to like and often people do similar things with their cameras.

If people have webcams, they are likely to play around with the settings and make images appear distorted in some way, and I really don’t understand why this is. Some people are really good at taking pictures, and I understand that there is a difficulty in displaying exactly what you want to display when developing it, and since that developer step is much less necessary in today’s society, this is something that is missing from today’s photographers. The artistry needed to turn a simple negative into a complicated image through the use of techniques such as burning and dodging the image are what made photography challenging, and now that digital cameras do all of this for you in a few seconds, the urge is to mess with the image in another way. The same goes for painted images, if someone spends time learning how to paint and spends time actually making a painting, I can respect that, but if you take a photograph of something and then change it so that it’s not at all realistic looking, then there’s really no talent in that. And if you are painting something, your goal is to make it as realistic as possible, or to show some certain mood or feature of the image, usually. This is interesting if it is hard to do, or if you spend lots of time on it, but taking an already very realistic image and then making it less accurate is something that I don’t understand.

Regardless, this is what the paper is about, and they discuss the differences between different brush widths and sizes and determining between different stroke lengths to see how a picture will turn out. This is useful in image programs such as photoshop, and while I still don’t see what applications this could have in the real world, it is important to be able to have the ability to do this if you wanted to. This could be twisted into something interesting if you were able to do the reverse I think. I would like to take famous paintings and be able to use the computer program to convert them into actual images and see what the results are. That would be interesting, to see which artists were closest to real life even if they had broad brush strokes, or maybe if there are hidden subtleties which are hard to see in a painting, but easier to view when viewing a more photographic image. I think that could and would be an interesting exhibit if someone wanted to do that.