First of all, I would just like to state that I am very surprised to see that someone actually went forward and tried to accomplish something that was stated in a future work section. It seems that so many times people will mention a work in their future works area just for the sake of having something to write about. I have always felt that the future works sections of papers were a joke. I think that this is the first time that I have seen somewhere actually do something that they said they would do. In the readings from last week, Hertzmann said he would look into real-time non-photorealistic rendering of video, and here it is. Even though the paper is pretty short, I am very impressed.

The related works section still seems awfully short. This paper was published two years after the first one. One would think that after two years, one would have had enough time to do more research and figure out what other people were doing with this area.

Hertzmann and Perlin go on to describe that painting over video is a difficult process. They mention that small changes in the input can create a sort of flickering effect in the output. However, I have no idea of what they are talking about. Where is this flickering coming from? Is the video feed itself flickering? Or is a flickering effect created when the “paint” is applied to it? Hertzmann and Perlin do not explain what they are talking about and the reader of this paper is left confused and bewildered. I can see that they had a short amount of space to describe the issue, but they should have figured out a better way to describe it then.

I also wish Hertzmann and Perlin went into more detail about the paint over effect they were creating. In the paper, it says that the video has an appearance of being repeatedly painted over and then photographed. Does that mean as we watch we are seeing the painting happen and then it pauses for a little bit of time so we can see the final product before moving on to the next frame? I am also not sure of what the authors mean by calling the work of Alexander Petrov. I am pretty sure there should be a citation there; something to refer the reader to so one knows where to look up Petrov’s work, in case one is not familiar with it already.

It was surprising to read that 10-15 fps turned out to be the ideal frame rate. That frame rate is very low; in fact, it is so low that one should be able to detect each frame separately. That is, the video would look more like a slide show than streaming video or animation of any kind. Did the authors perform user studies to see if this what the ideal frame rate or did they just choose themselves?

The experiments section seems to be pointless. Hertzmann and Perlin just describe very installations of their system. However they do not give the reader any useful information about what people thought about the installation, or other ways in which the system could be used. In the beginning of the paper, the authors mention using the system to create a compelling interactive visual experience; however the authors provide no support to show that this is in fact true.

I was more impressed with Hertzmann’s Siggraph paper. At least that paper seemed to have substance. This paper seemed more like a joke. It was a sad attempt at showing another direction of the work. I would have been much more interested if the authors had done some user studies to show that people did feel that the system could be used as a compelling interactive experience.
I have read this paper many times before, but I do not think I have ever truly understood what was meant by the term “sociable spaces” until after seeing the William Whyte videos. I have understood the concept of wanting to make an area more encouraging towards interaction, but I do not think I knew what went into doing that until seeing the William Whyte videos. It makes so much more sense now, having seen them.

With these videos in mind however, I am really curious as to why the spaces that were chosen for this study were the ones that were chosen. People were only around the elevator space for a couple minutes at most, one would think. Were people expected to gather around the elevator? Were people expected to forget the elevator and wait for the next pass to ride if they were interacting with the video? In regards to the William Whyte videos, there was no sunlight, or it does not seem like there was. There were also no, or little, options for seating involved. These were two major aspects of sociable spaces in the videos, but Karahalios and Donath do not explain why those aspects were ignored. There is some description in general on why the spaces that were chosen were used, but it did not explain why they felt it was right to ignore Whyte’s findings.

It seems interesting that the speech recognition is described as being added for comic relief. Let me note that this was not the only reason for adding in the speech recognition. Karahalios and Donath explain that it was also added for the sake of giving users feedback. My own work has speech recognition in it. I am in the process of doing users studies right now. I wonder if my users believe that the speech recognition is there to supply comic relief. It will be interesting to see how my participants’ reactions to the speech recognition compare to the reactions from Karahalios and Donath’s participants’ study.

It is interesting that the researchers kept changing the time the system was running. It went from two hours a day for two days a week, to two hours a day everyday of the week, and then finally went to twenty-four hours a day. The authors explain that when the system was up for a shorter period of time, it became like an event, so more people would be around to use it. If they were going to restrict usage like this, I would think that a lounge area, some where people can easily gather would increase the “event like” atmosphere versus being near elevators or in a hallway. When the system is on twenty-four hours a day, then I can understand the locations being places where there is a lot of traffic. When people are walking by, people can interact for a little while, but then continue on their way if need be. Since it is a public space, people can stay longer if they wish to, as well. It would have been interesting to see further study based on the location of the installation and whether that had any effect on the usage of the system.

The last issue I have with this paper is that the authors claim to do an ethnographic study, but there is little on the results overall. Instead of reading about people’s reactions, I feel that we are just getting an overall summary of the authors opinions are of what they had observed. It would have been interesting for the authors to describe some events that occurred and then offer up their observations, leaving room for the reader to also form some ideas on what had transpired.

Overall this was a good piece of work. I wish the paper was longer. I do not feel that eight pages is enough to describe the results for ethnographic studies.
After reading the abstract, this paper makes it sound like their system is the ultimate solution for non-photorealistic rendering techniques. They claim that almost any mark that can be made on paper can be imitated. Then they go on to talk about how the effects are customizable through a user editing interface. From this, it basically sounds like the system can do anything a user would want it to do. Either this means the authors are being too optimistic, they are lying, or their system really does do everything a user may want it to do.

The authors also go on to say they want to find out more about how artists portray the “meaning of a scene”. Right by that same area, the authors have an image of the Venus de Milo in a painterly rendering, which looks decent. Then right next to it they have the image with a fur texture applied to it. I am not sure if they were trying to show how texture can create a different “meaning” for a piece of art or if they just were having fun with that the textures, but I thought that these two images next to each other was a good example of how different techniques in an image can portray different meanings to the viewer.

I am not quite sure I understand what the authors meaning by graftal. They continue to use the phrase, but they do not explain what a graftal is made up of. The authors make an attempt to explain what it is used for, but for someone who has not worked in graphics for a few years, I do not completely understand what the authors are trying to do with these graftals. Are they like sprites? Or are they components of sprites? Based on the image, it seems that a geograflal is a single element of a texture. Does this mean that a collection of geograflals actually creates the textured surface? As in figure 2, if there were many leaves/fur, would the quadrilateral look furry?

I thought it was really cool how the geograflal textures can mimic Dr. Suess’s work so well. When I first started reading the paper, I wondered if this system was used to create images from Dr. Suess’s works. I am very impressed on how good it looks.

After reading the shading section, I noticed that the authors do not describe how long it may take the shading algorithm to do its work. While the algorithm might be a very good one, I would like to know if it seems like it works almost immediately or if it takes ten minutes to do shading on one image or frame. This also makes me wonder how long it takes to apply the textures to images. I imagine that it would take some time to render depending on the size of the surface in comparison to the size of each texture graftal. This system could very well be completely useless to most or all users if it takes too long to render any one scene. Another issue that this brings up is that, it does not seem like any user studies were done to see if this system is useful to others. I would have liked to see some data from what users think of the system and how users employed its functionality.

Overall, I thought this was an interesting work, especially since it does seem to be able to mimic many types of techniques. But as someone in HCI, I would have liked to see more about how users felt about the system, versus how the system worked in general.