

The University of Texas at Dallas
The Institute for Interactive Arts and Engineering

ART & TECHNOLOGY

The University of Texas at Dallas intends to seek approval, beginning in the 2003-2004 academic year, for a set of new undergraduate/graduate degree programs in Art & Technology.

Educational Rationale:

The arts and technology have a long history of mutually productive interaction. Technological advances create new opportunities and audiences for artistic expression. The imaginative visions of art, in turn, invite translation into objects that transform society. The interdisciplinary program, Art & Technology, is devoted to studying and fostering this interaction, with specific emphasis on the interplay of visual art, music, and narrative with the new media that have emerged from the convergence of computing and media technologies. The program will offer both undergraduate (B.A.) and graduate (M.A., M.F.A.) degrees.

The educational objective of the undergraduate major is to prepare students generally to understand and succeed in the media-rich, technologically sophisticated world of the 21st century; moreover, it will prepare students for a wide range of careers that involve digital content design and development. The graduate programs will offer advanced training and the opportunity to create and/or discover new practical applications for technologically based creativity. The doctoral program is designed to produce a new generation of scholars in an emerging field likely to have an impact on 21st-century culture and education analogous to that of film and Film Studies in the 20th century.

The degree is based on collaboration between the School of Arts & Humanities and the Erik Jonsson School of Engineering & Computer Science. The core knowledge in this degree program draws from the convergence of research in the humanities, the creative and performing arts, visual communications design, computer science, and engineering. The curriculum will focus on a wide range of interactive content design, user-based development, and the interface between human beings and the computing environment. Students may select between or combine two tracks within the curriculum. One track will focus on AGames and Interactive Narrative. @ The other will focus on AVisual and Design Studies. @ Students will acquire knowledge of computer programming and computer systems, as well as the principles of information design, computer graphics, animation, and interactive game design. The aesthetic and technical aspects of the major will be studied in the context of a rich selection of course work in the humanities.

The creation, delivery, and interpretation of digital content already play a significant role in many fields, including entertainment, education, and communications. That role will grow ever more important. For example, interactive electronic games, which have emerged as a major form of entertainment, have considerable potential for a wide range of educational use. In sum, the digital revolution in entertainment, art, education, business, and even warfare requires a new curriculum; for current educational programs deal, at best, partially and inadequately with this vital development. The new degree, with its fusion of engineering and the arts, addresses that need. Graduates will be prepared for a wide range of current and future, as yet uninvited, careers that demand the ability to fuse visual images, verbal communication, creative thinking, and technological expertise.

Finally, UTD is a uniquely appropriate and advantageous site for this innovative complex of related degrees. The new program will foster the realization of the University mission while advancing the commitment of the School to promote meaningful education that blurs academic boundaries and promotes productive interaction between critical and creative thought, theoretical with practical endeavors, and the arts with other modes of knowledge. Complemented by the newly established Institute for Interactive Arts and Engineering, which is already engaged in collaborative research with industry, the new program will bring both immediate and long term economic and cultural benefits to the School, the University, and Texas.