



GALA (Gathering of Animated Lifelike Agents)

At IVA 2009, 14-16 September, Amsterdam,
<https://irgen.ncl.ac.uk/gala/>

Call for Participation

GALA IN A NUTSHELL:

GALA is an annual festival to showcase the latest Animated Lifelike Agents created by university students and academic or industrial research groups.

GALA was launched in 2005. GALA provides:

- The GALA Final event, to demonstrate the state-of-the-art in the technology of virtual humans.
- The GALA Jury Award for student projects and the GALA Public Award for any entry.
- The permanent GALA Gallery on the web with the best entries exhibited for further study.
- **New for 2009** – an optional short paper (2 pages), for publication in the proceedings of the annual IVA conference, published by Springer.

An international jury will select entries for the GALA Gallery, to be presented live at the GALA Final. An award of €350 will be presented to the best entry.

GALA is the major event for demonstrating your interactive virtual humans, exploiting techniques in real-time graphics, animation, multi-modal interaction, agents, emotion modelling, dialog management and related areas. The quality and interactive capabilities of the animated lifelike agents are to be presented in a short movie (see Submission details). GALA is different from, and complementary to, scientific conferences where demonstrations are at most illustrations of talks, often not included in proceedings and thus hard to reproduce. GALA specifically encourages university students at all levels to submit their work prepared in a shorter time, preferably as a project related to their university curriculum, unlike the output of larger-scale research presented at conferences.

PARTICIPANTS TRACKS:

1. Student

Students from any university, individually or as a group, may submit in this track. For each student submission a supervisor should be named, who can be contacted should the jury want to clarify some issues concerning originality of the work or status of the authors. The works submitted in this track must be prepared within a year prior to submission, preferably as a student project related to a university curriculum. However, animated lifelike agents created in the context of a larger research project or industrial application are welcome too, as well as ones made on their developer's own initiative, i.e. without any background context. In the first case, the contribution of the student to the project as well as the earlier results built upon should be specifically emphasized.

2. Other

In this track work from academic institutions and industry, as well as from multi-party national or international projects, is welcome. All submissions are candidates for the short list of entries, to be presented at the final show and to be included in the repository. Submission categories and formal requirements (see below) are identical for both tracks.

SUBMISSION CATEGORIES:

1. Tennis Spectator

The Tennis Spectator is an animated character watching a tennis match. The challenge is to produce a believable and engaging spectator that reacts realistically to the events in a tennis match, conveying a sense of what is happening in the match and the increase of tension. The Tennis Spectator should be able to react in real time to any annotation of a tennis match supplied. The annotation format is available from the Materials section of the gala website. Candidates should consider the following:

- The spectator can be a full body or talking head character.
- The camera should focus on the character, the "live" tennis match may be shown separately at the event, but should not be represented in the submission.
- The spectator should react in synchronisation with the events shown in the annotation (ANVIL) file, using (where applicable) voice, facial expressions, gesture and posture (if the Virtual Human is full body).
- The spectator should be as expressive as possible, whilst still being a believable virtual human.

2. Animated Lifelike Agent Application

The animated lifelike agent is developed for an application. The movie shows the animated lifelike agent in the application context. The points of interest are novelty of application, smoothness of interaction, appeal, general design, consistency, etc.

3. Animated Lifelike Agent Creation

In this category, a special feature (e.g. lip-sync, body design, facial animation, hand gesturing) of the animated lifelike agent is to be presented. The points of interest are modules or tools used to create certain aspects of animated lifelike agents, in an easy way and convincing quality.

In the last two categories, the embodiment (head/full body, realistic/cartoon-like), the cast of role (e.g. Information provider for the user, actor in interactive drama, educator, chatbot) and the media (e.g. Virtual reality, PC, palmtop, mobile phone) are open. Novel application domains, designs and media are encouraged. The only restriction is that the animated lifelike agent must have reactive and/or interactive capabilities, as opposed to virtual characters animated for a single purpose (e.g. CG animation for a film, direct usage of Motion Capture).

Physical robots are not eligible for GALA.

SUBMISSION FORMAT:

The animated lifelike agent is to be described (to be included in the IVA09 proceedings), followed by a movie (to be shown at the GALA Final) of 2-4 minutes, in the first round. The international jury will invite the entries for the second round, to be demonstrated at the GALA Final in public, as well as a high quality version of the video for the GALA presentation.

The submission deadlines are:

- 1st May 2009 - (GALA short paper deadline)
- 1st June 2009 - GALA flash video submission deadline.

CONTACT:

Event Chair: Phil Heslop (gala09@ncl.ac.uk).