Definition: animation from Philip's Encyclopedia

Illusion of motion created by projecting successive images of still drawings or objects. Drawn cartoons are the most common form. Each of a series of drawings is photographed singly. The illusion of motion is created when the photographs are displayed in rapid succession. Computer animation programs have advanced to a point where the drawings themselves are no longer a necessity.

Summary Article: Animation
From The SAGE Glossary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences

The illusion of movement created by means of an inanimate object. This illusion is created by what Peter Mark Roget referred to as persistence of vision—after seeing an image, human beings retain it through the afterimage, which creates the appearance of continuity and movement. Traditional animation involves a frame-by-frame drawing—each one called a cel. These cels are then photographed onto adjacent pieces of motion picture film. Today, these processes have been replaced with computer animation.

Early technologies such as flipbooks in the 16th century were followed by the phenakistoscope, the kinematoscope, and the zoetrope, which were used throughout the 19th century. The basic principles of automation used in these devices, combined with the experiments and techniques of filmmakers in the emerging cinema, resulted in the development of cartoon films. In 1906, J. Stuart Blackton created a short film called Humorous Phases of Funny Faces, which was composed of a series of blackboard drawings of crude faces changing expressions. Only 30 years later, Walt Disney dazzled audiences with the beautifully animated Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. By the turn of the 21st century, digital imaging techniques used in movies such as The Matrix were blurring the line between animation and live action.

Animation is now being used with tremendous effect in multimedia computer applications. Three-dimensional animation techniques and digitized graphics have produced incredibly realistic characters and scenes in video games. So much so that certain uses of animation have come under legal scrutiny. A 1993 joint hearing examined the perceived negative impact of games such as Mortal Combat, Night Trap, and Lethal Enforcer because of their use of digitized human beings engaging in violent activity. Other games that were being marketed at the time were not emphasized during the hearings because, although they contained equally or sometimes even more violent content, the animation used was not as realistic. As the result of the hearings, the industry adopted a video game-rating system. More recently, animation techniques used to depict minors engaged in sexual activity were deemed as violating the Child Pornography Prevention Act of 1996 and became the subject of a U.S. Supreme Court Decision (Ashcroft v. The Free Speech Coalition, 2002). The Court upheld the lower court’s decision finding the ban overbroad and therefore unconstitutional. For more information, see Ashcroft v. The Free Speech Coalition (2002) and Auzenne (1994) in the bibliography.

See also
CD-ROM Games

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