



# The Future

**Human, Brand & Interface**

Cannes Lions Festival June 21, 2013

Aegis Media + Oblong + MIT Media Lab

Hiroshi ISHII

MIT Media Lab



**The Future**  
is not to predict,  
but to invent

**Alan Kay 1971**

This is the century in which you can be proactive about the future; you don't have to be reactive. The whole idea of having scientists and technology is that those things you can envision and describe can actually be built.



变化

changes



An aerial night photograph of a city in complete ruin. The ground is covered in a thick layer of dark debris, including twisted metal and charred remains. A road with a few cars and streetlights winds through the wreckage. In the background, some buildings and hills are visible under a dark blue sky. The overall mood is one of devastation and desolation.

破壞

disruptive changes

變化

[http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/03/12/world/asia/20110312\\_japan.html?ref=asia#68](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/03/12/world/asia/20110312_japan.html?ref=asia#68)

# 視點

perspective





情報

information = running water

流水





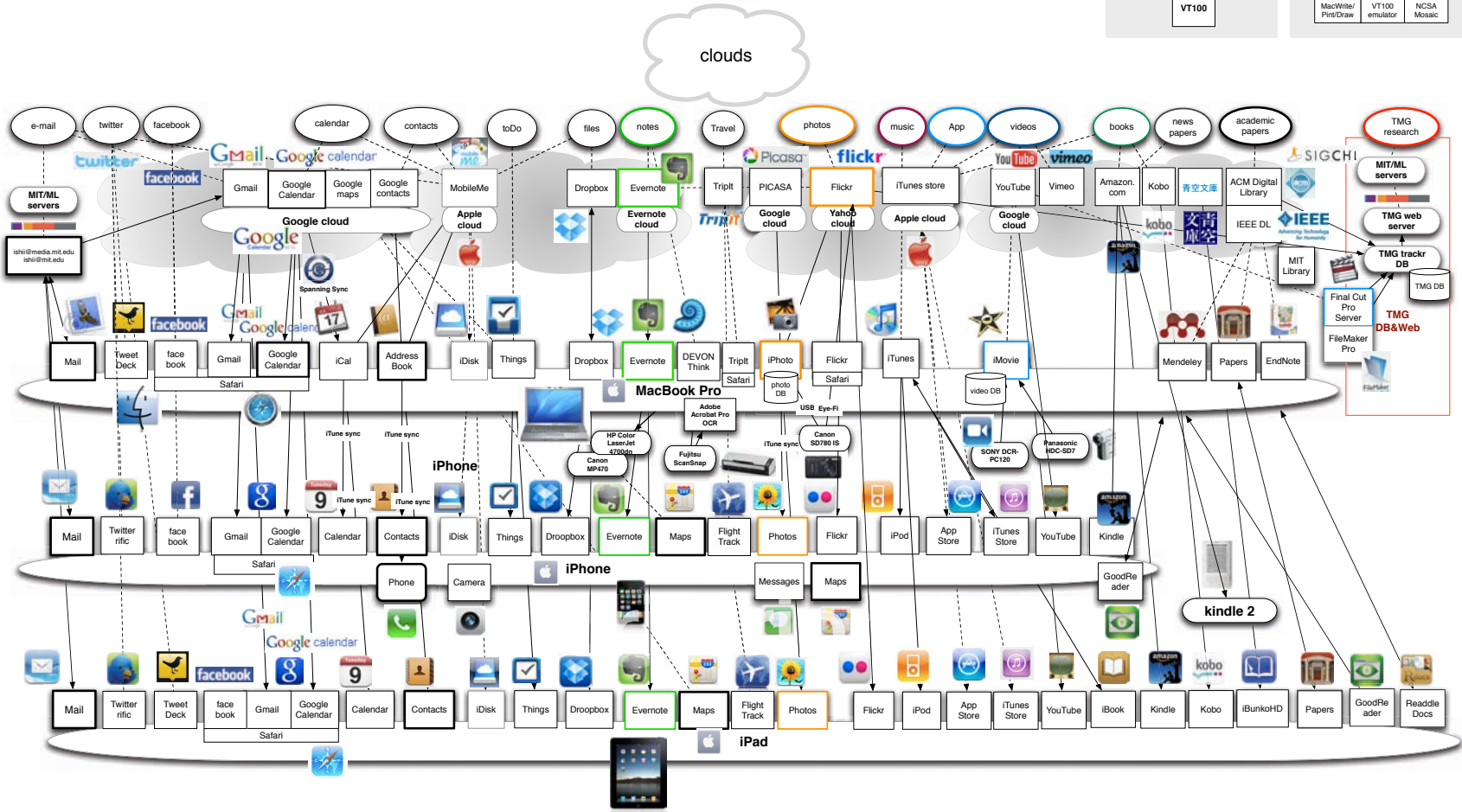
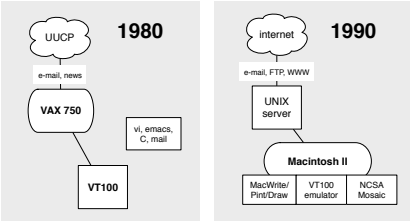


**Hiroshi ISHII's Digital Life**  
**Information Ecology 2010**

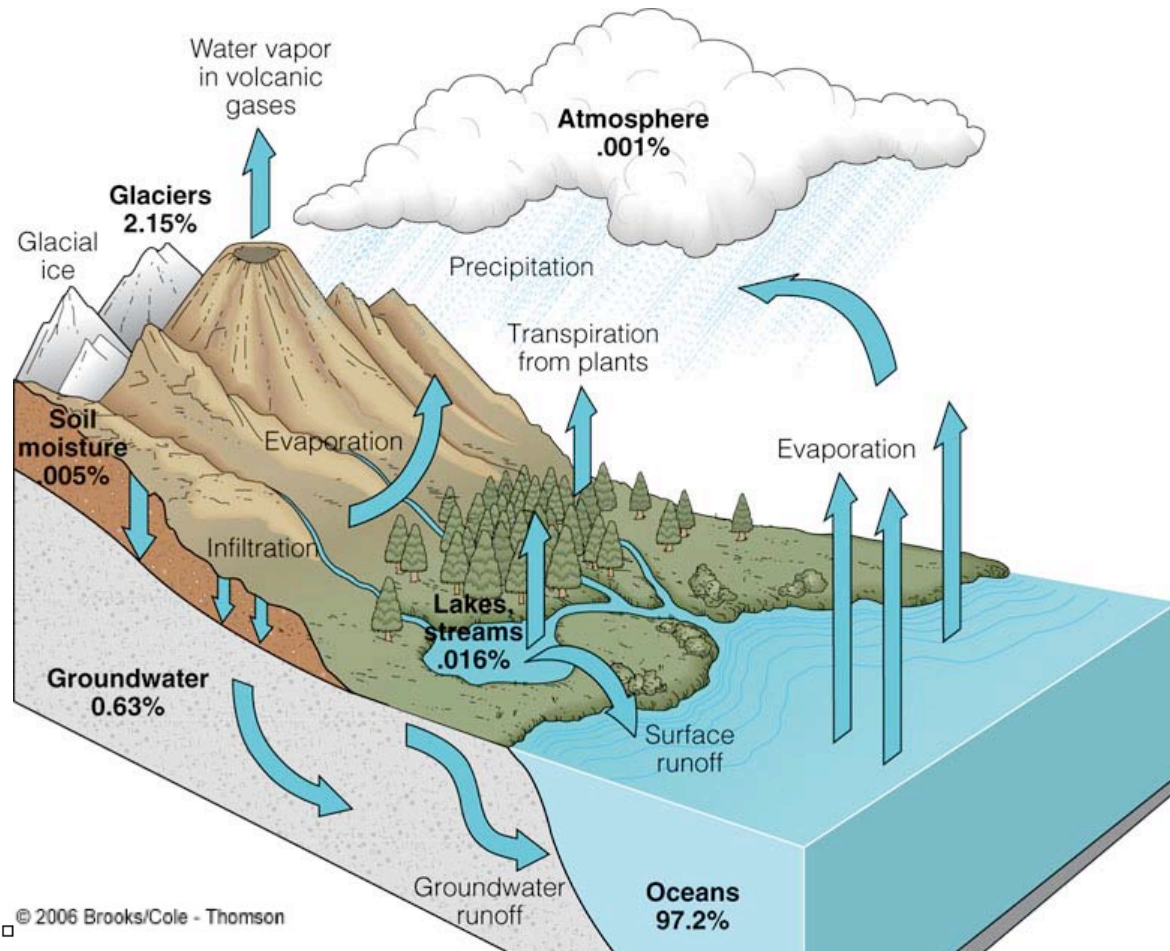
June 12, 2010 Tokyo  
 January 9, 2010 Cambridge MA

(c) 2010 Hiroshi Ishii (Please do not distribute)

# eco-system



# eco-system





# 循環

**cycling**

Flow Clouds <http://www.flickr.com/photos/mjohnsphoto/6801328985/>



telescope







[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Grand\\_orrery\\_in\\_Putnam\\_Gallery,\\_2009-11-24.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Grand_orrery_in_Putnam_Gallery,_2009-11-24.jpg)





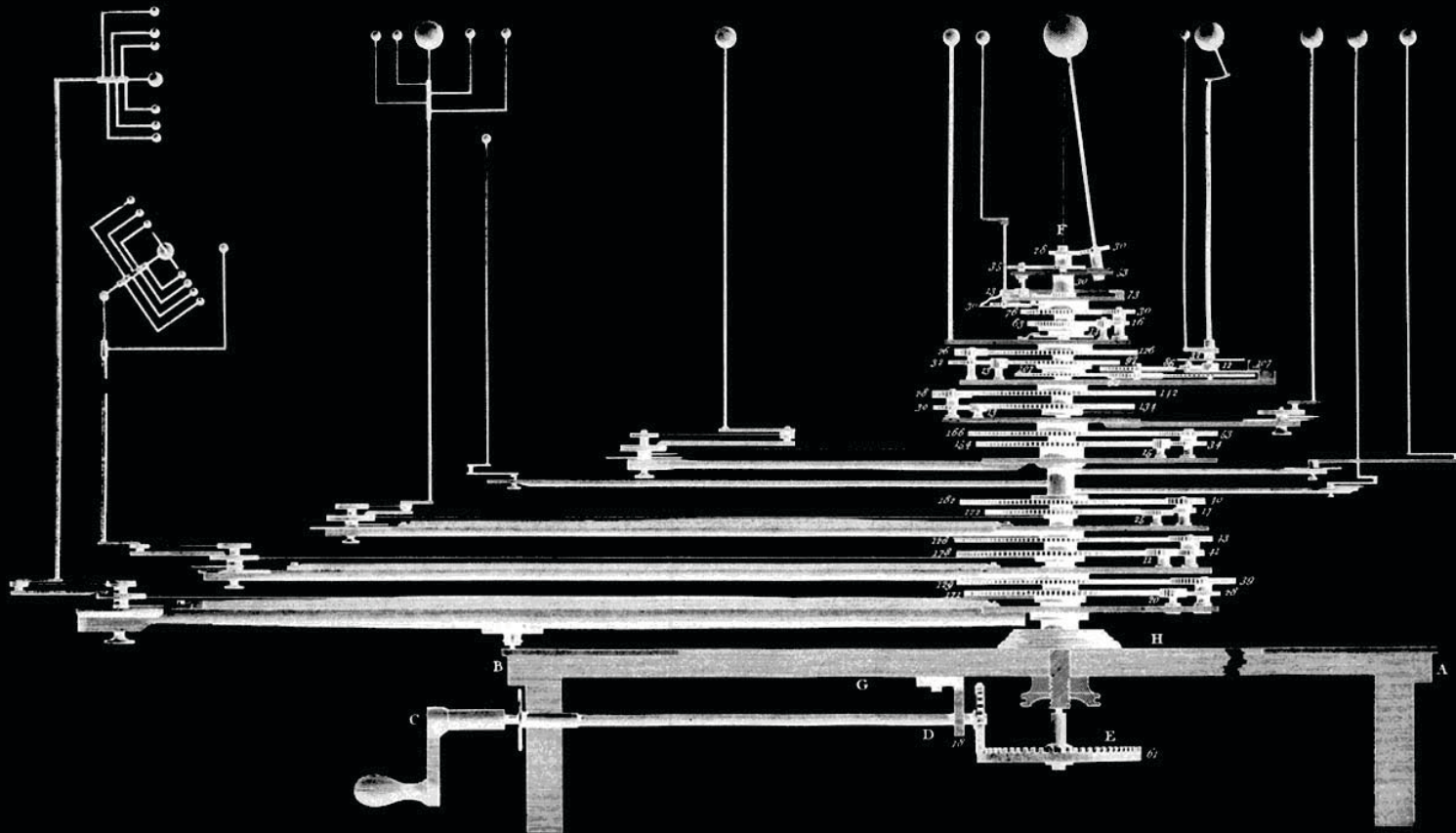
表現

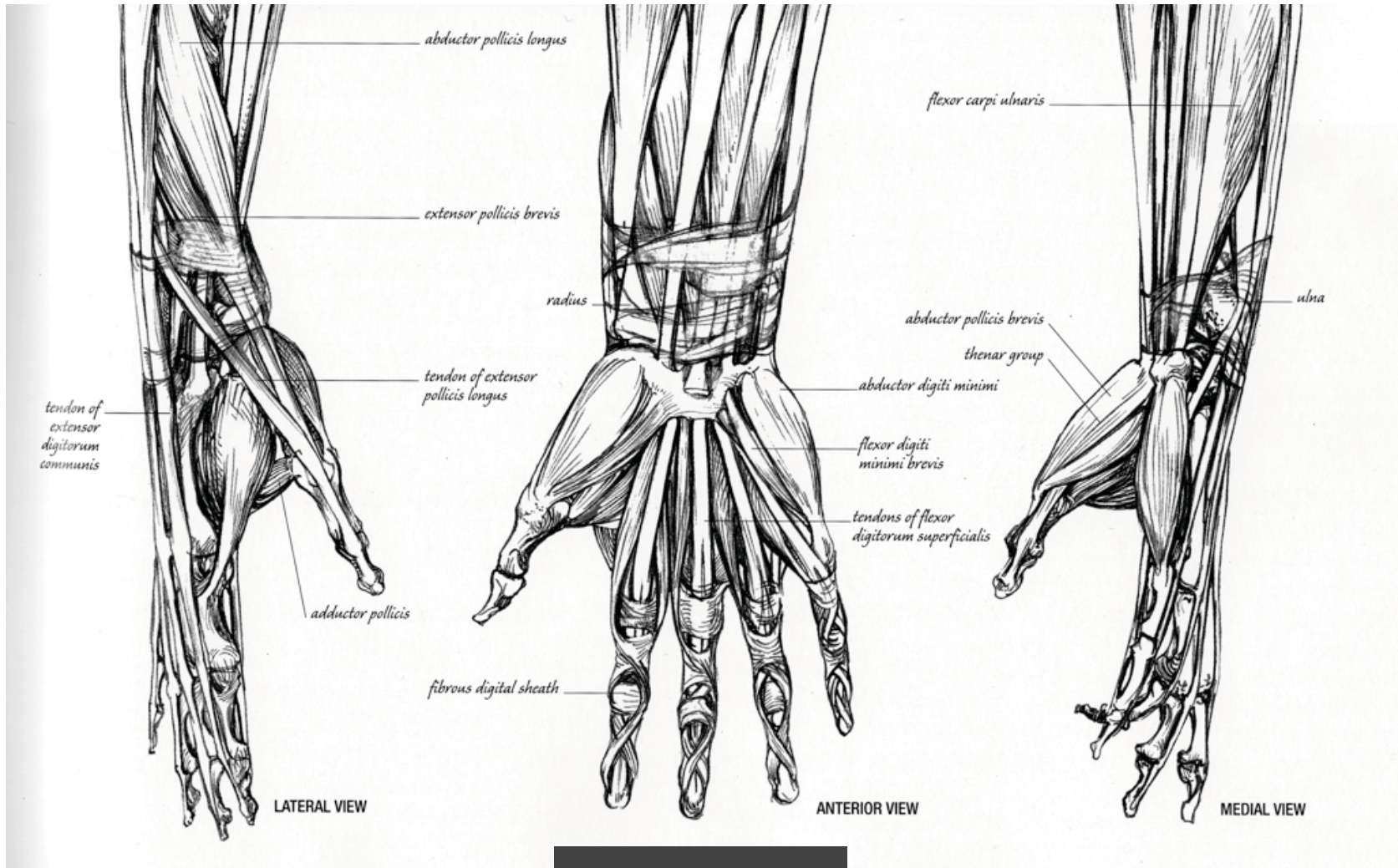
representation

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Grand\\_orrery\\_in\\_Putnam\\_Gallery,\\_2009-11-24.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Grand_orrery_in_Putnam_Gallery,_2009-11-24.jpg)

# Orrery

Tangible Representation of Knowledge





**hands**





[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wright\\_of\\_Derby,\\_The\\_Orrery.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wright_of_Derby,_The_Orrery.jpg)



理念

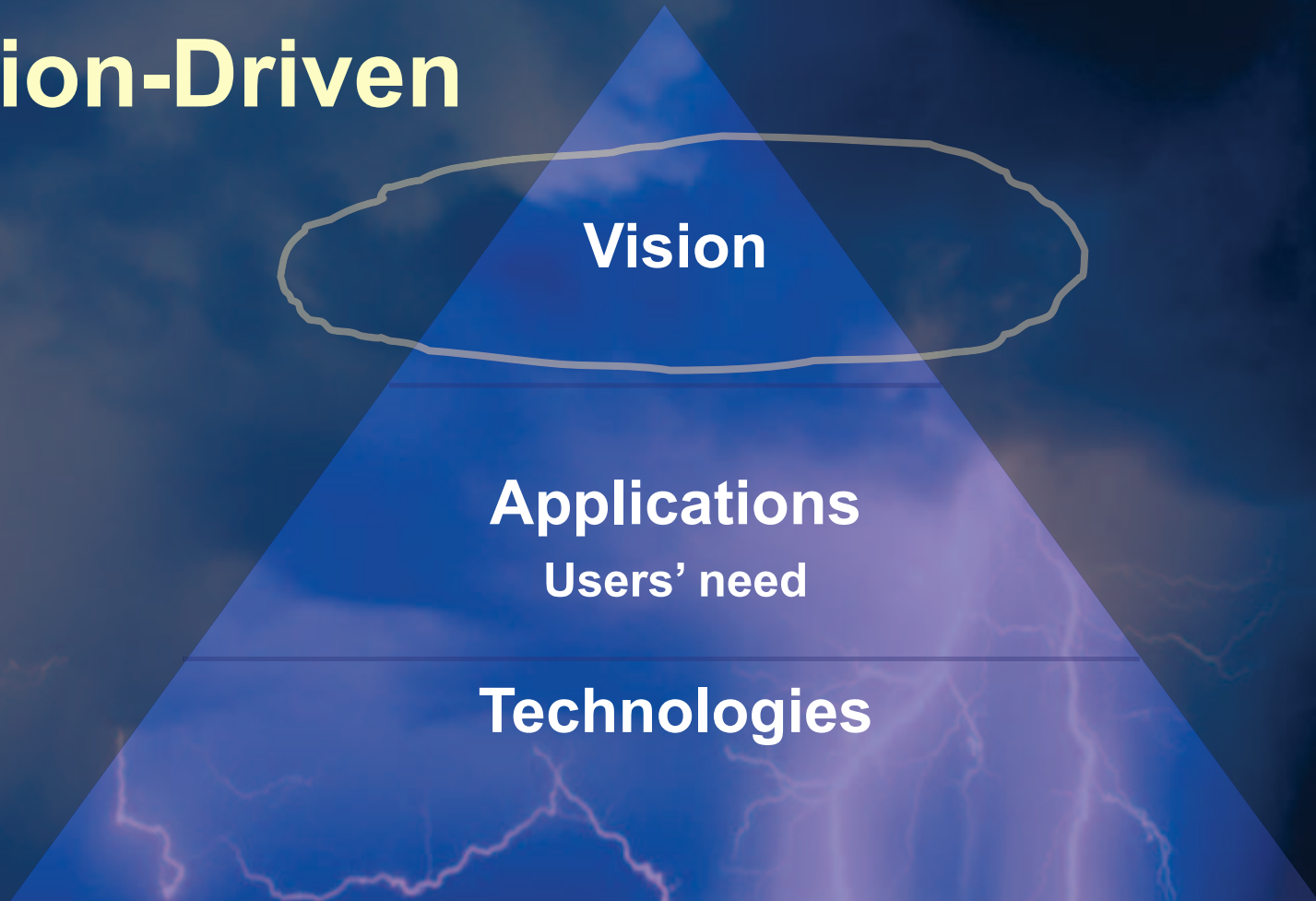
vision

 NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC

Photograph by Kara Swanson, My Shot

© COPYRIGHT KARA SWANSON. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

# Vision-Driven





**Why?**

**Life Span**

**Vision**

**Applications**

Users' need

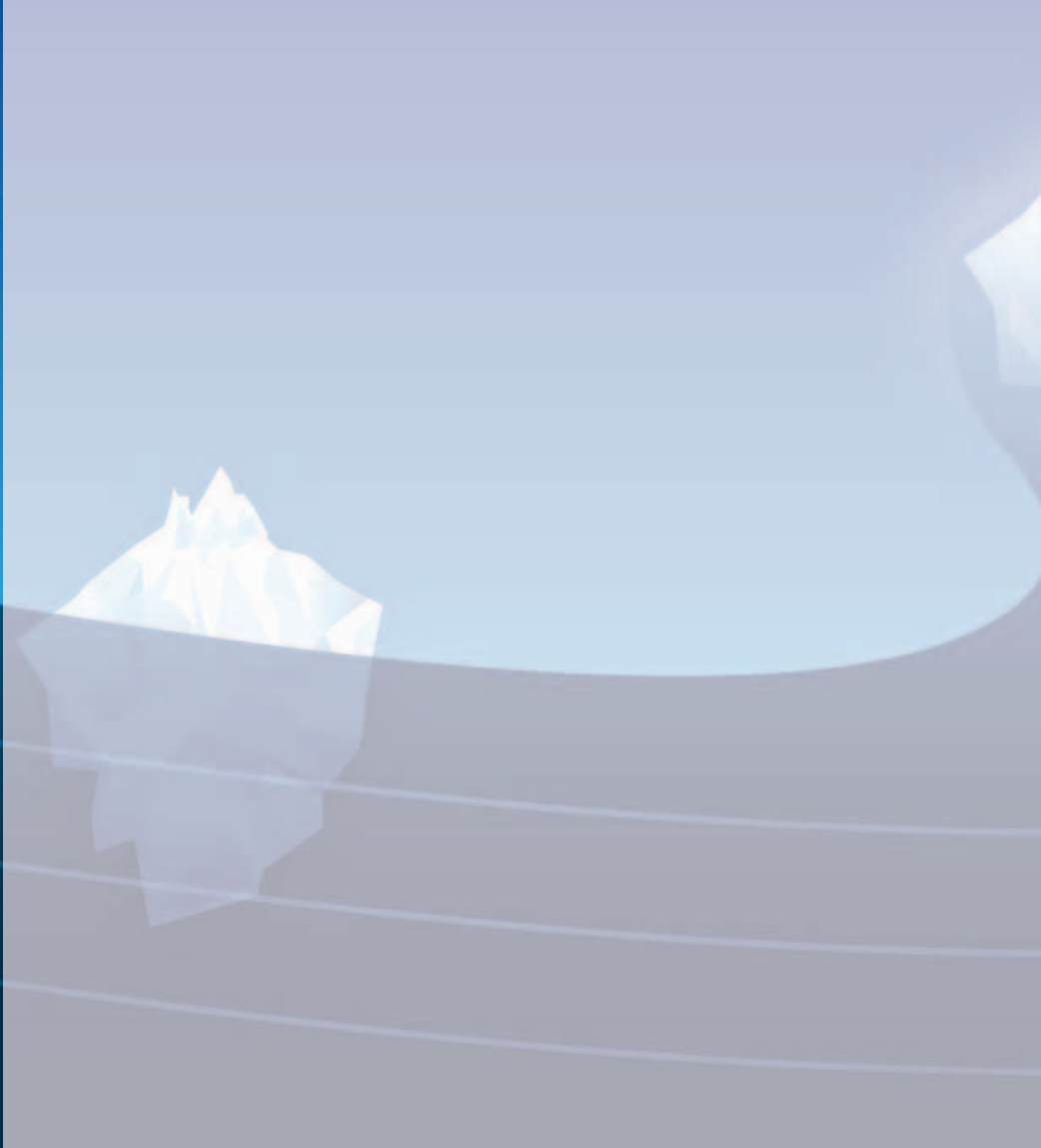
**Technologies**



painted bits

d

digital



physical

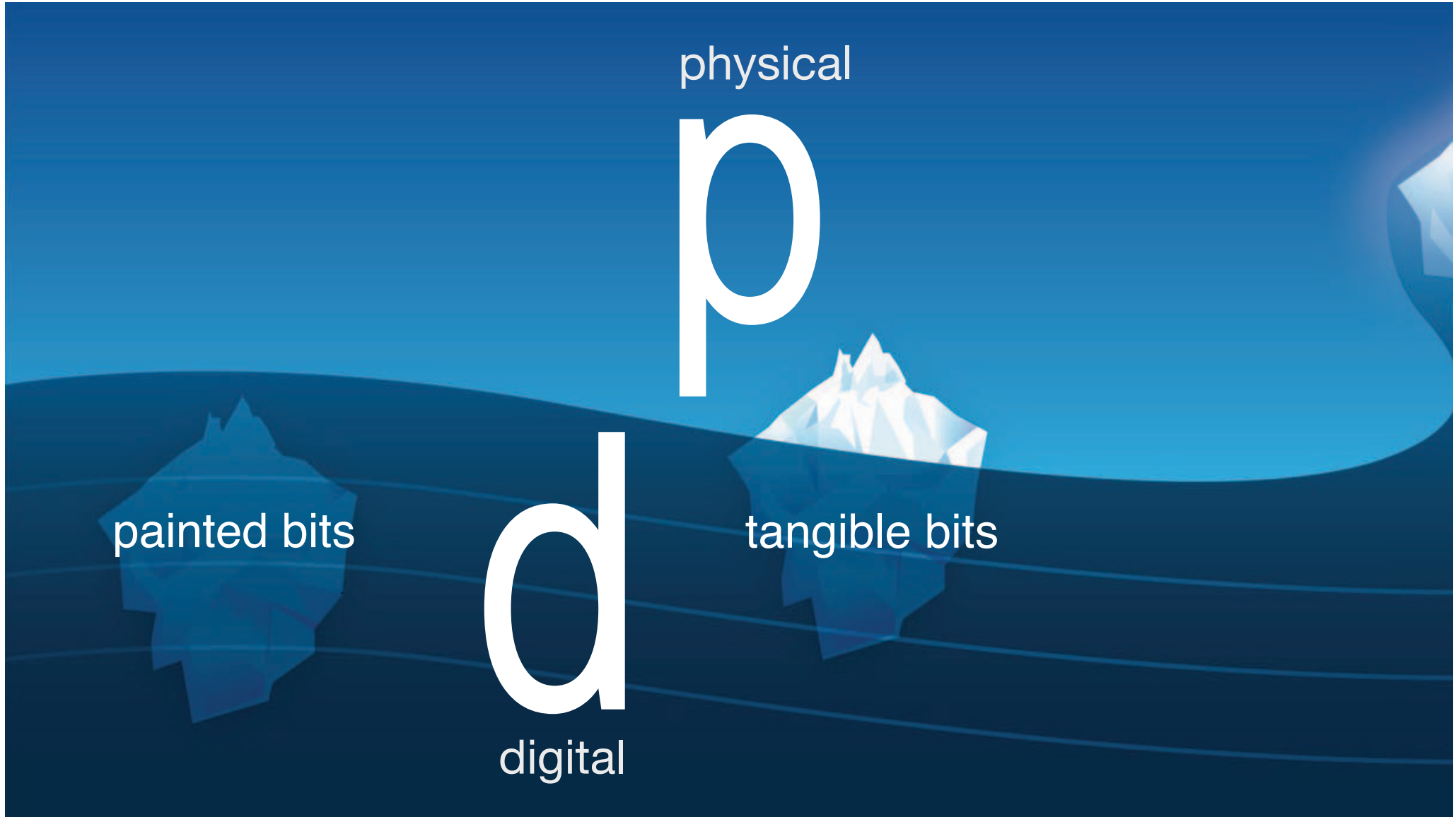
p

painted bits

d

tangible bits

digital





# Embody

digital information to  
interact with directly



The image features a dark blue background with a white horizon line. Two icebergs are depicted: a smaller one on the left and a larger one on the right. The smaller iceberg is labeled 'painted bits' and 'GUI' below it. The larger iceberg is labeled 'tangible bits' and '1997' below it. The text 'Embody' and 'digital information to interact with directly' is positioned in the upper right quadrant.

painted bits

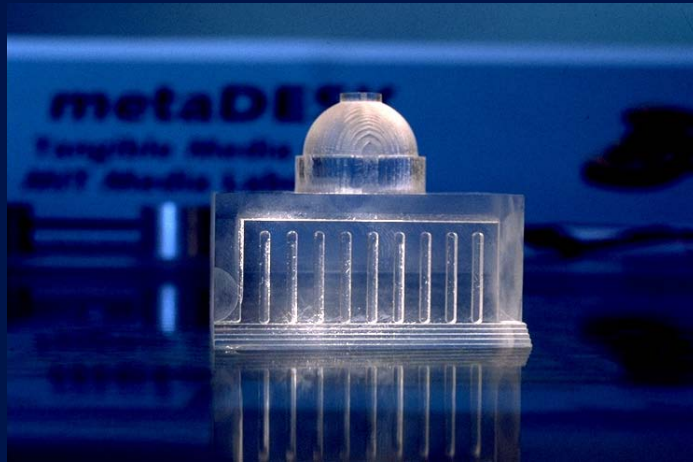
GUI

tangible bits

1997

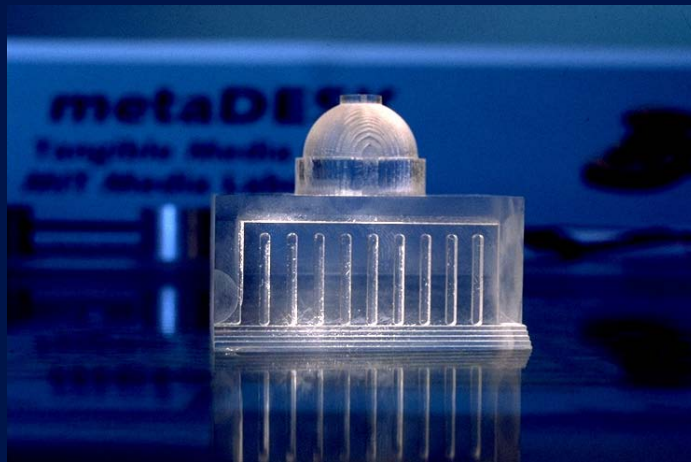
TUI

# Tangible Bits



**Physical embodiment of  
digital information and computation**

# Tangible Bits



March 1997  
“Tangible Bits” paper  
presented at CHI ‘97 in Atlanta

Published in the Proceedings of CHI '97, March 22-27, 1997. © 1997 ACM

## Tangible Bits: Towards Seamless Interfaces between People, Bits and Atoms

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### ABSTRACT

This paper presents our vision of Human Computer Interaction (HCI): “Tangible Bits.” Tangible Bits allows users to “grasp & manipulate” bits in the center of users’ attention by coupling the bits with everyday physical objects and architectural surfaces. Tangible Bits also enables users to be aware of background bits at the periphery of human perception using ambient display media such as light, sound, airflow, and water movement in an augmented space. The goal of Tangible Bits is to bridge the gaps between both cyberspace and the physical environment, as well as the foreground and background of human activities.

This paper describes three key concepts of Tangible Bits: interactive surfaces; the coupling of bits with graspable physical objects; and ambient media for background awareness. We illustrate these concepts with three prototype systems – the metaDESK, transBOARD and ambientROOM – to identify underlying research issues.

### Keywords

tangible user interface, ambient media, graspable user interface, augmented reality, ubiquitous computing, center and periphery, foreground and background

### INTRODUCTION: FROM THE MUSEUM

Long before the invention of personal computers, our ancestors developed a variety of specialized physical artifacts to measure the passage of time, to predict the movement of planets, to draw geometric shapes, and to compute [10]. We can find these beautiful artifacts made of oak and brass in museums such as the Collection of Historic Scientific Instruments at Harvard University (Fig. 1).

We were inspired by the aesthetics and rich affordances of these historical scientific instruments, most of which have disappeared from schools, laboratories, and design studios and have been replaced with the most general of appliances: personal computers. Through grasping and manipulating these instruments, users of the past must have developed rich languages and cultures which valued haptic interaction with real physical objects. Alas, much of this richness has been lost to the rapid flood of digital technologies.

We began our investigation of “looking to the future of HCI” at this museum by looking for what we have lost with the advent of personal computers. Our intention was to regain the richness of the physical world in HCI.

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CHI '97, Atlanta GA USA  
Copyright 1997 ACM 0-89791-802-9/97/00 \$3.50

### BITS & ATOMS

We live between two realms: our physical environment and cyberspace. Despite our dual citizenship, the absence of seamless couplings between these parallel existences leaves a great divide between the worlds of bits and atoms. At the present, we are torn between these parallel but disjoint spaces.

We are now almost constantly “wired” so that we can be here (physical space) and there (cyberspace) simultaneously [14]. Streams of bits leak out of cyberspace through a myriad of rectangular screens

into the physical world as photon beams. However, the interactions between people and cyberspace are now largely confined to traditional GUI (Graphical User Interface)-based boxes sitting on desktops or laptops. The interactions with these GUIs are separated from the ordinary physical environment within which we live and interact.

Although we have developed various skills and work practices for processing information through haptic interactions with physical objects (e.g., scribbling messages on Post-It™ notes and spatially manipulating them on a wall) as well as peripheral senses (e.g., being aware of a change in weather through ambient light), most of these practices are neglected in current HCI design because of the lack of diversity of input/output media, and too much bias towards graphical output at the expense of input from the real world [3].

### Outline of This Paper

To look towards the future of HCI, this paper will present our vision of Tangible Bits and introduce design projects including the metaDESK, transBOARD and ambientROOM systems to illustrate our key concepts. This paper is not intended to propose a solution to any one single problem. Rather, we will propose a new view of interface and raise a set of new research questions to go beyond GUI.

### FROM DESKTOP TO PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

In 1981, the Xerox Star workstation set the stage for the first generation of GUI [16], establishing a “desktop metaphor” which simulates a desktop on a bit-mapped



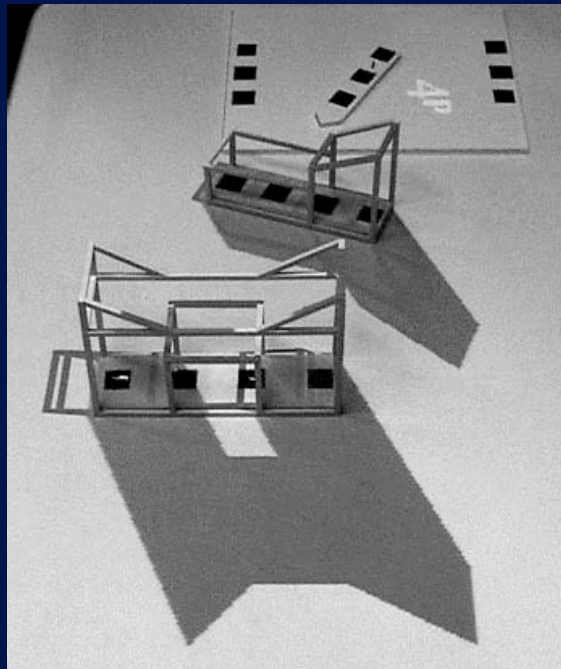
Figure 1 Sketches made at Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments at Harvard University



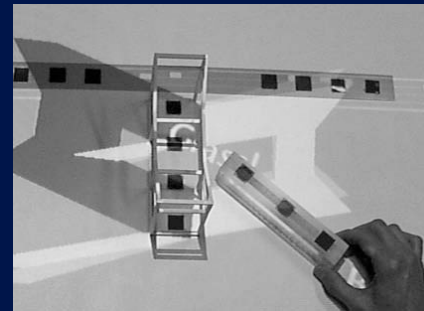
# Urp:

## Urban Planning Workbench

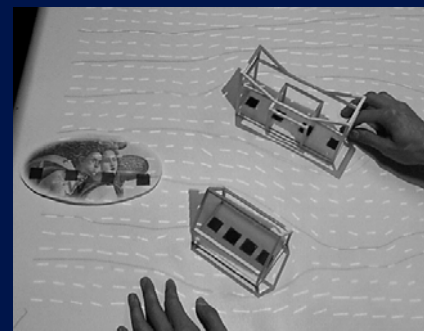
John Underkoffler and Hiroshi Ishii, 1997 - 1999



digital shadows



light reflections



wind

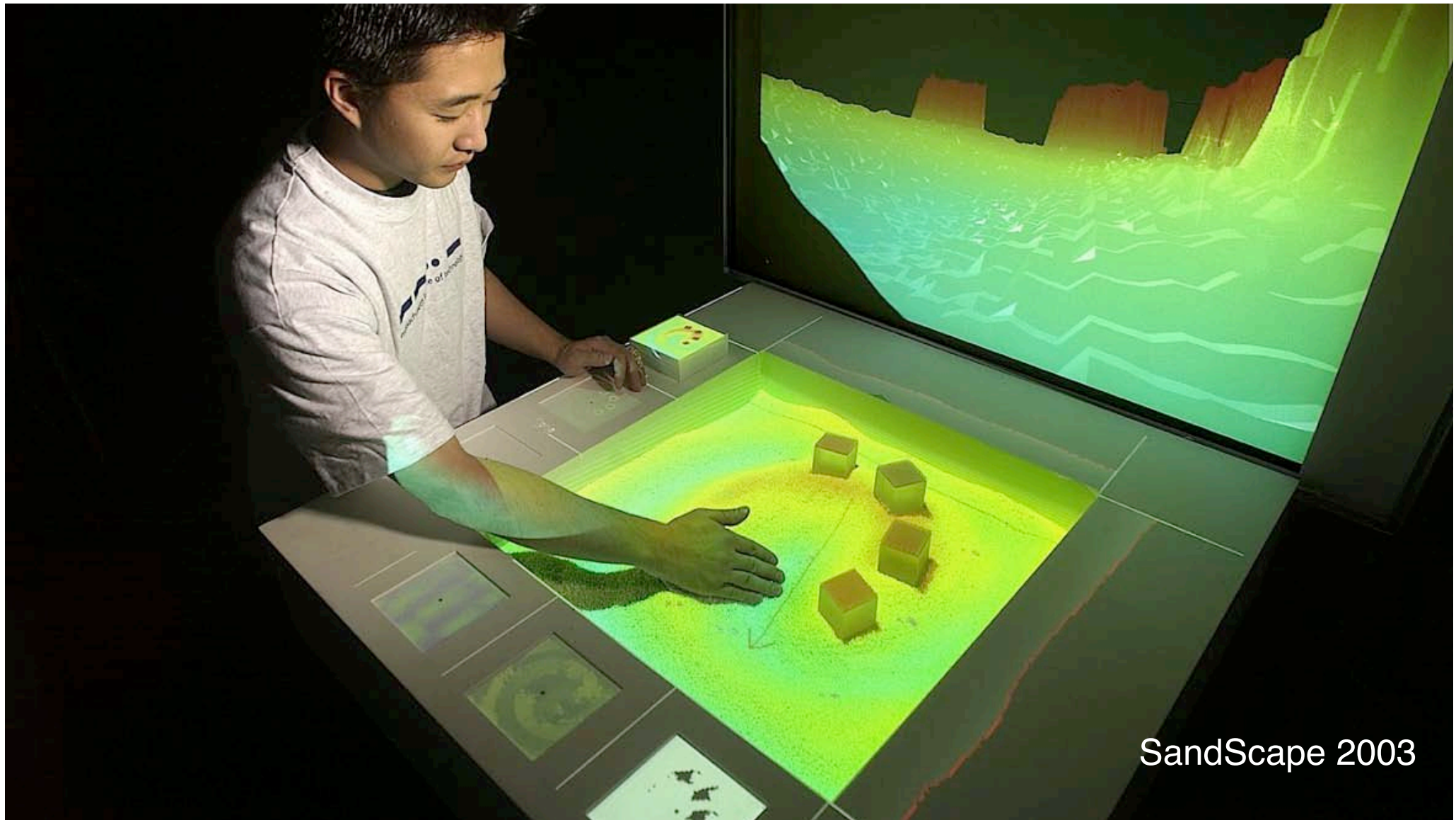
**Eyes are in charge,  
but hands are underemployed.**





**bottles**





SandScape 2003



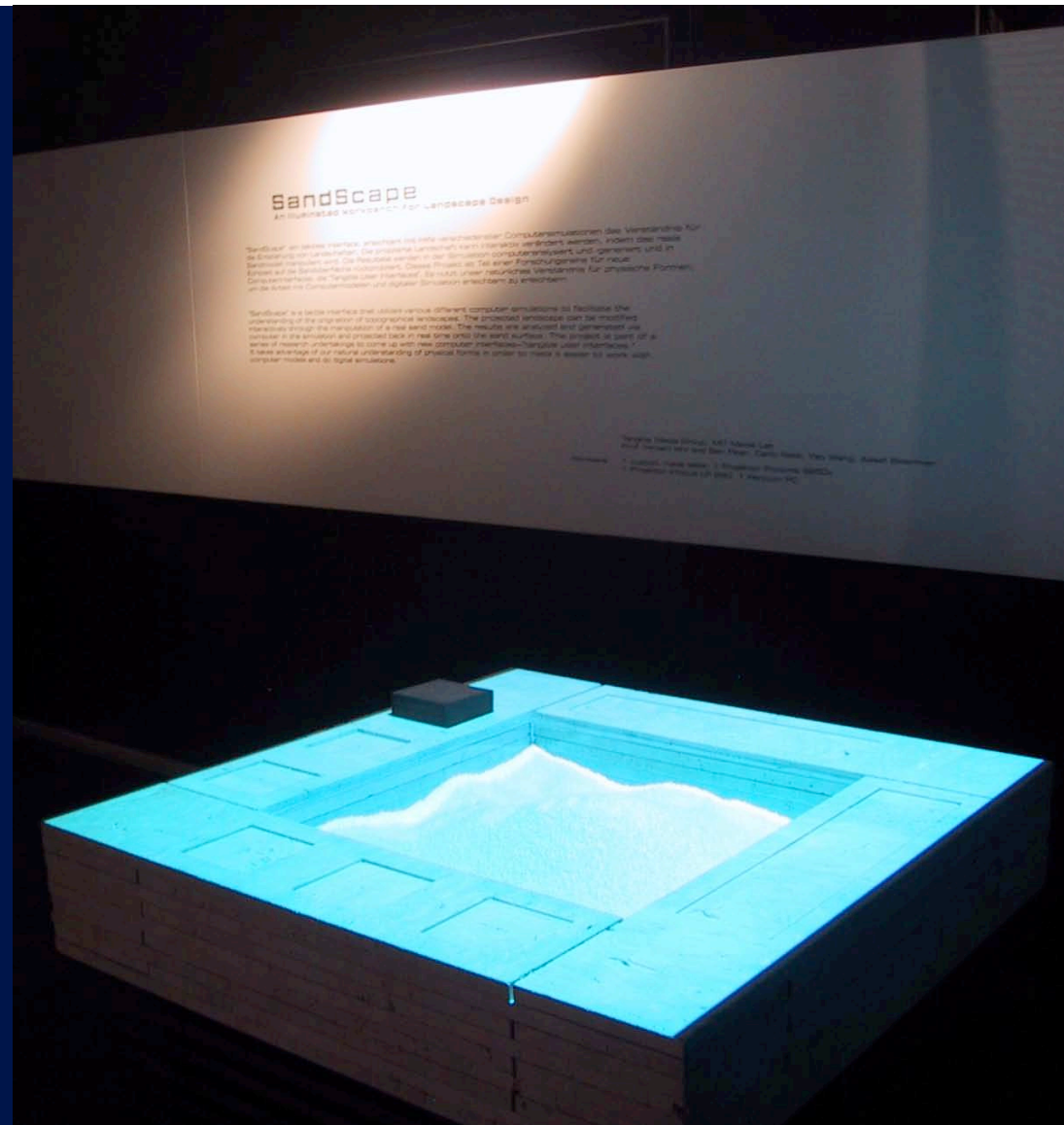
# Clay & Sand

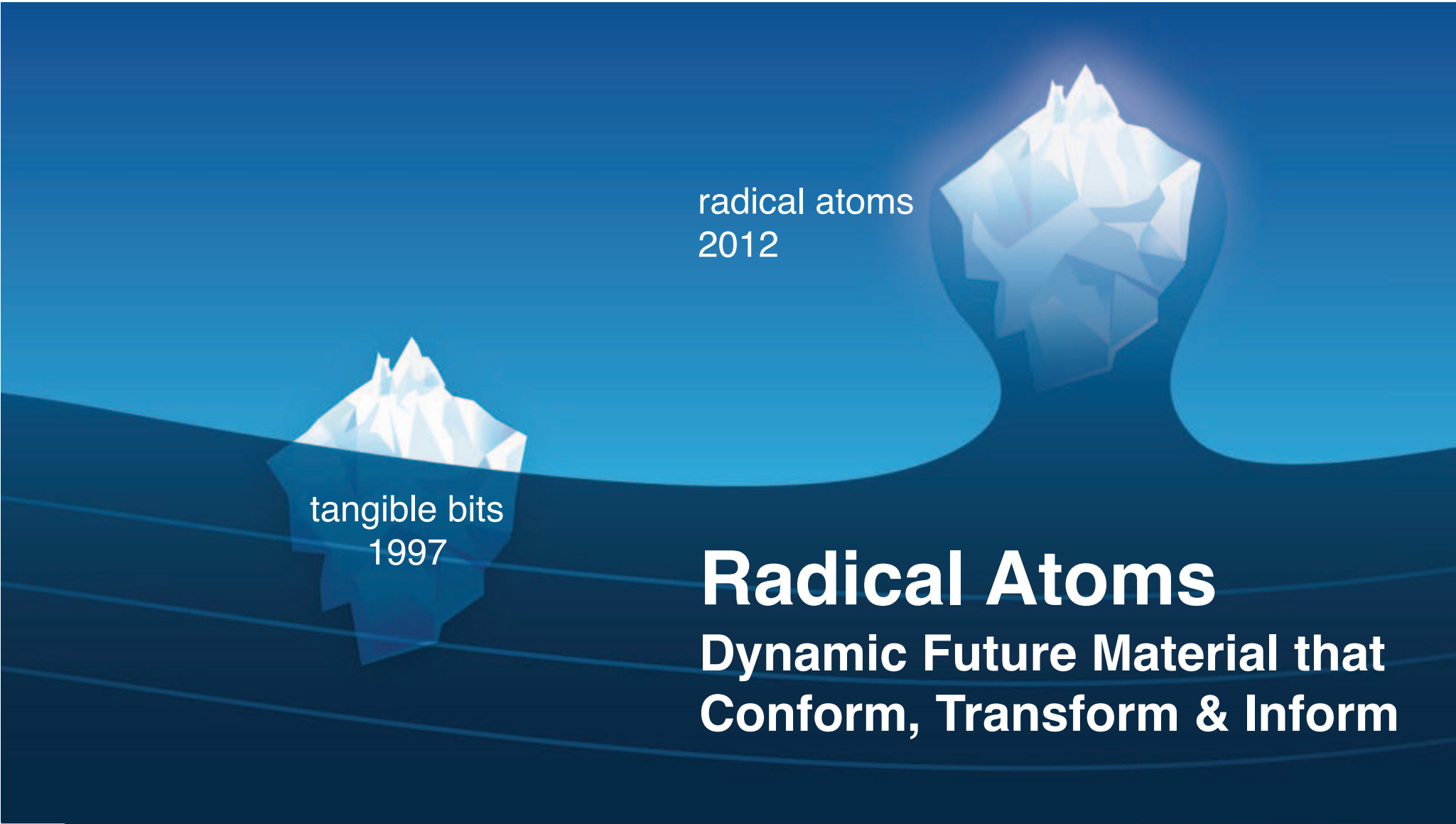


# SandScape

Hiroshi Ishii,  
Carlo Ratti,  
Ben Piper,  
Yao Wang, and  
Assaf Biderman

Tangible Media Group  
MIT Media Laboratory



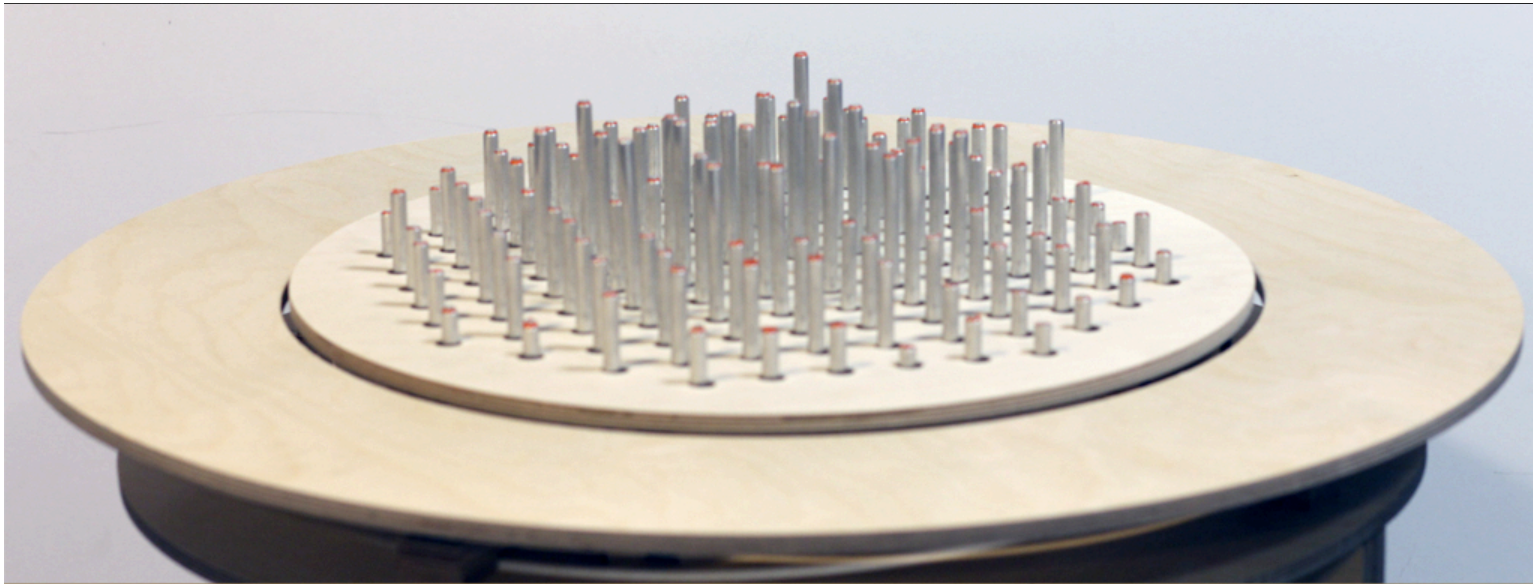


radical atoms  
2012

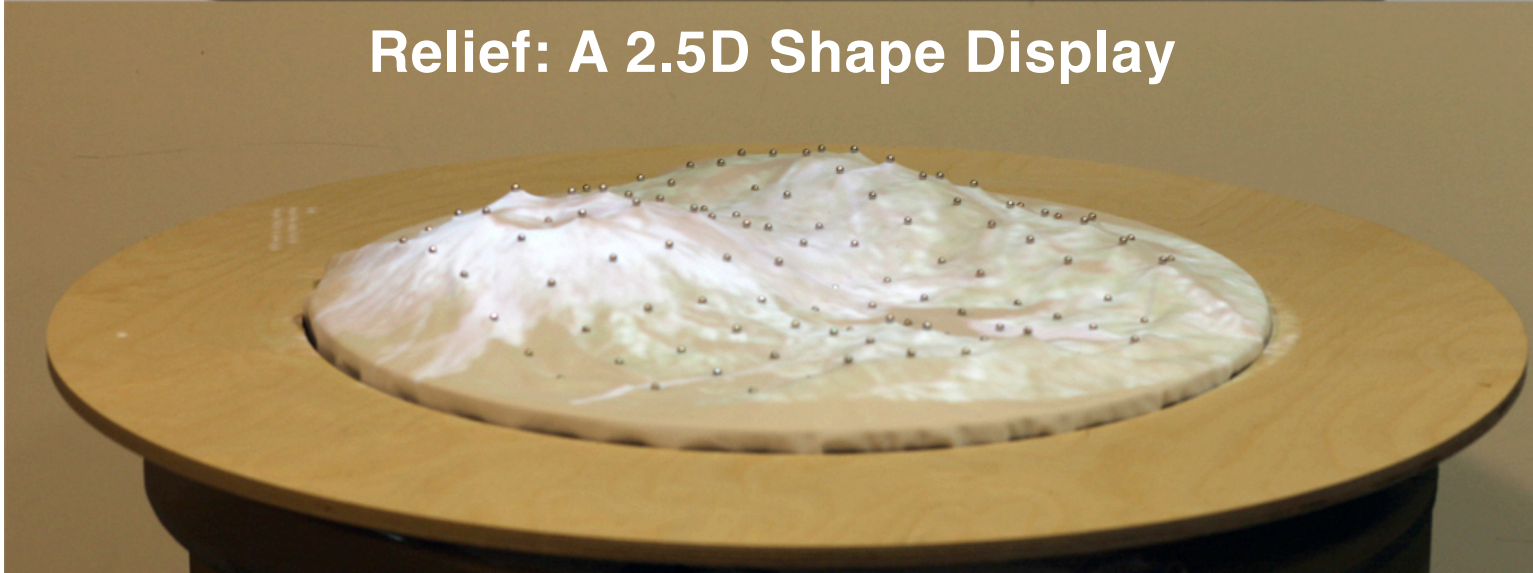
tangible bits  
1997

**Radical Atoms**  
**Dynamic Future Material that**  
**Conform, Transform & Inform**



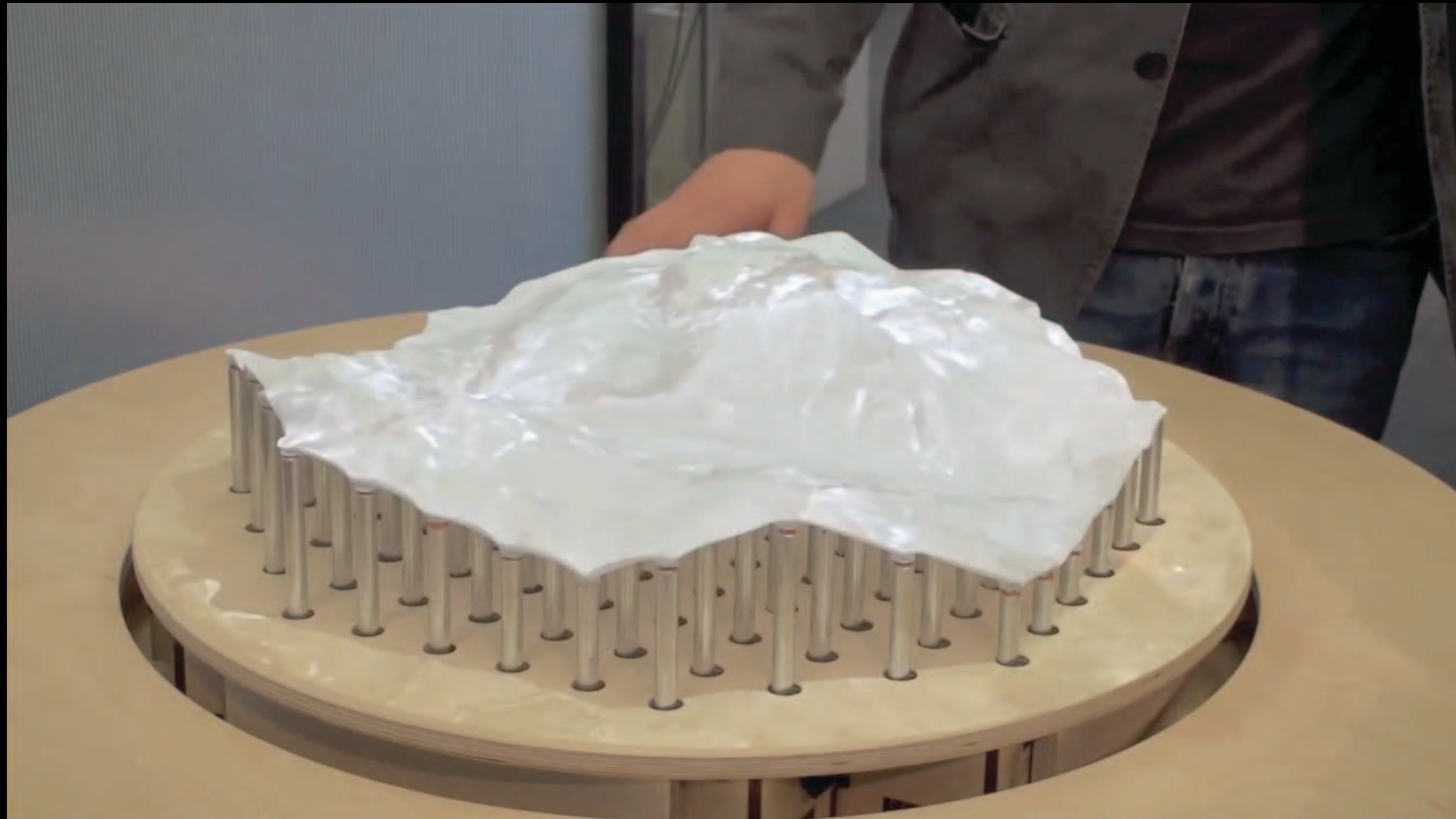


**Relief: A 2.5D Shape Display**



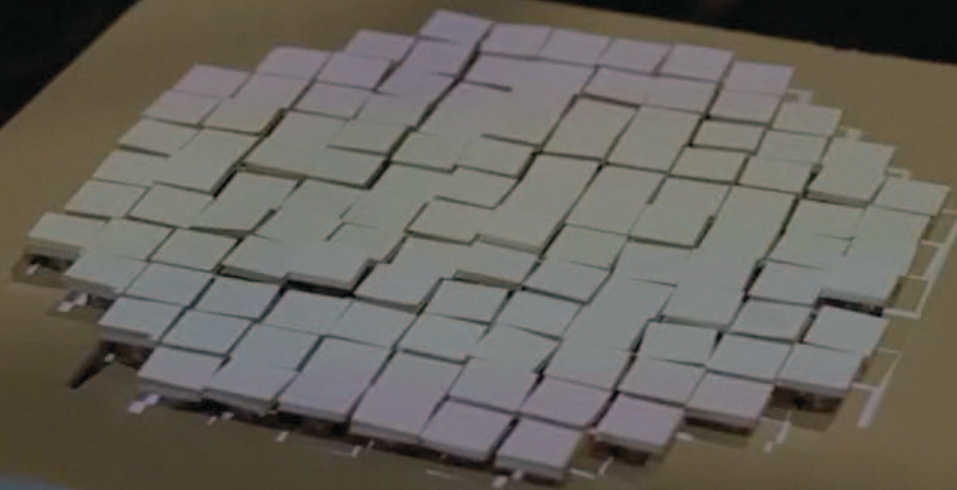
# Relief

Daniel Leithinger and Hiroshi Ishii



# Recompose based on Relief

UIST 2011



Anthony DeVincenzi, David Lakatos,  
Matthew Blackshaw, Daniel Leithinger & Hiroshi Ishii



# TimeScape

based on Relief

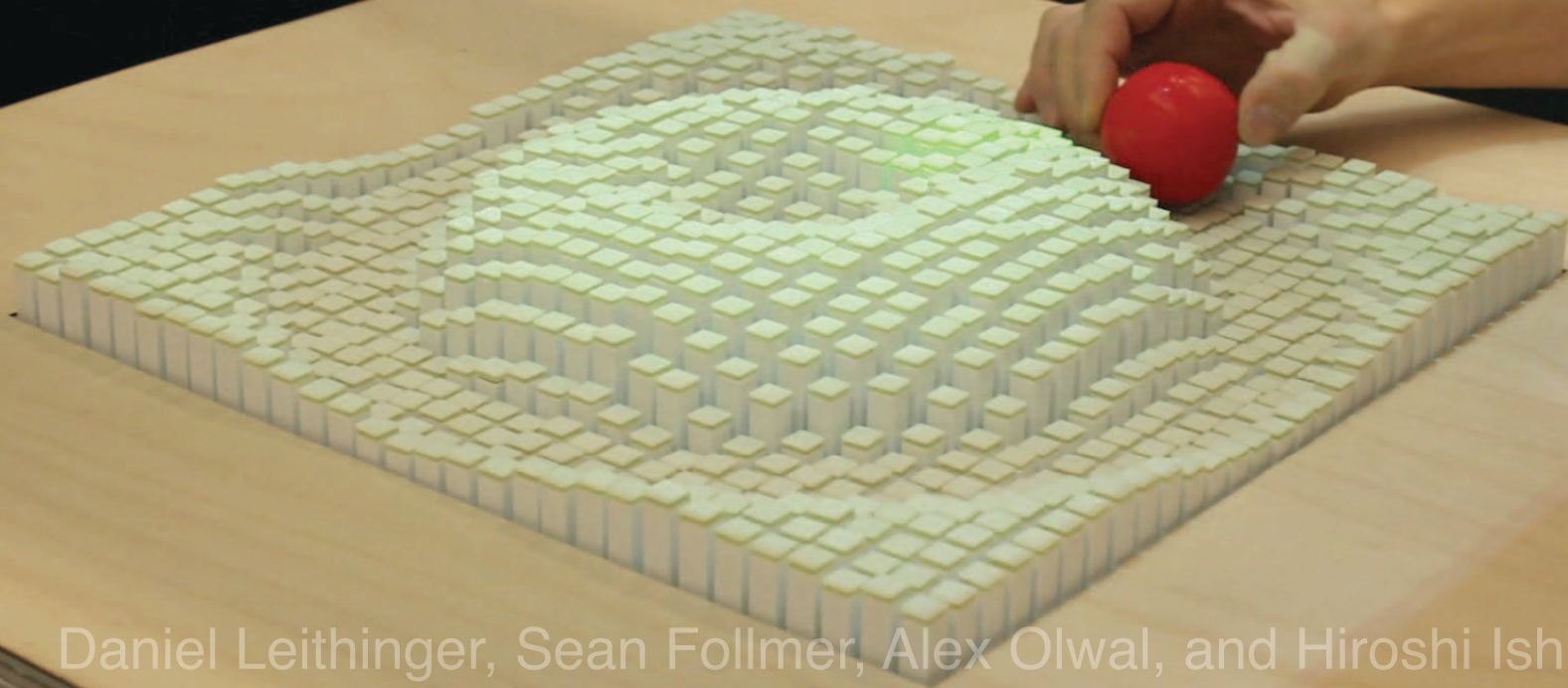


Daniel Leithinger, Jinha Lee, Sean Follmer, Austin Lee, Matthew Chang & Hiroshi Ishii



# inFORM

Tangible Media Group



Daniel Leithinger, Sean Follmer, Alex Olwal, and Hiroshi Ishii

# ZeroN

Jinha Lee, MIT Media Lab

Rehmi Post, MIT Center for Bits and Atoms

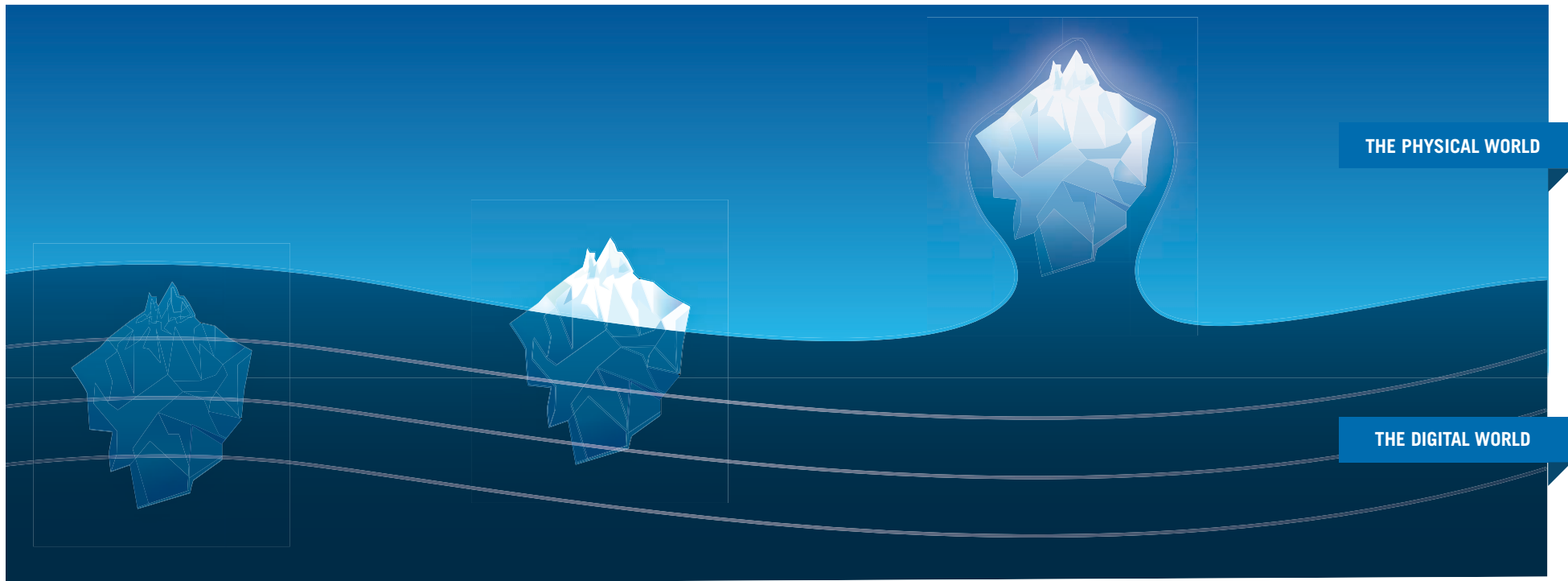
Hiroshi Ishii, MIT Media Lab



**GUI** PAINTED  
BITS

**TUI** TANGIBLE  
BITS

**RADICAL ATOMS**



*A Graphical User Interfaces only let users see digital information through a screen, as if looking through a surface of the water. We interact with the forms below through remote controls such as a mouse, a keyboard or a touch screen.*

*A Tangible User Interface is like an iceberg: there is a portion of the digital that emerges beyond the surface of the water - into the physical realm - that acts as physical manifestations of computation, allowing us to directly interact with the 'tip of the iceberg.'*

*Radical Atoms is our vision for the future of interaction with hypothetical dynamic materials, in which all digital information has physical manifestation so that we can interact directly with it - as if the iceberg had risen from the depths to reveal its sunken mass.*



理念

vision

 NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC

Photograph by Kara Swanson, My Shot

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**Envision & Embody**  
**Invent & Inspire**

**▶ The Future**



# Thanks!

June 21, 2013  
Cannes Lions Festival

Hiroshi ISHII  
MIT Media Lab

# The Future

June 21, 2013

Cannes Lions Festival

Hiroshi ISHII

MIT Media Lab

