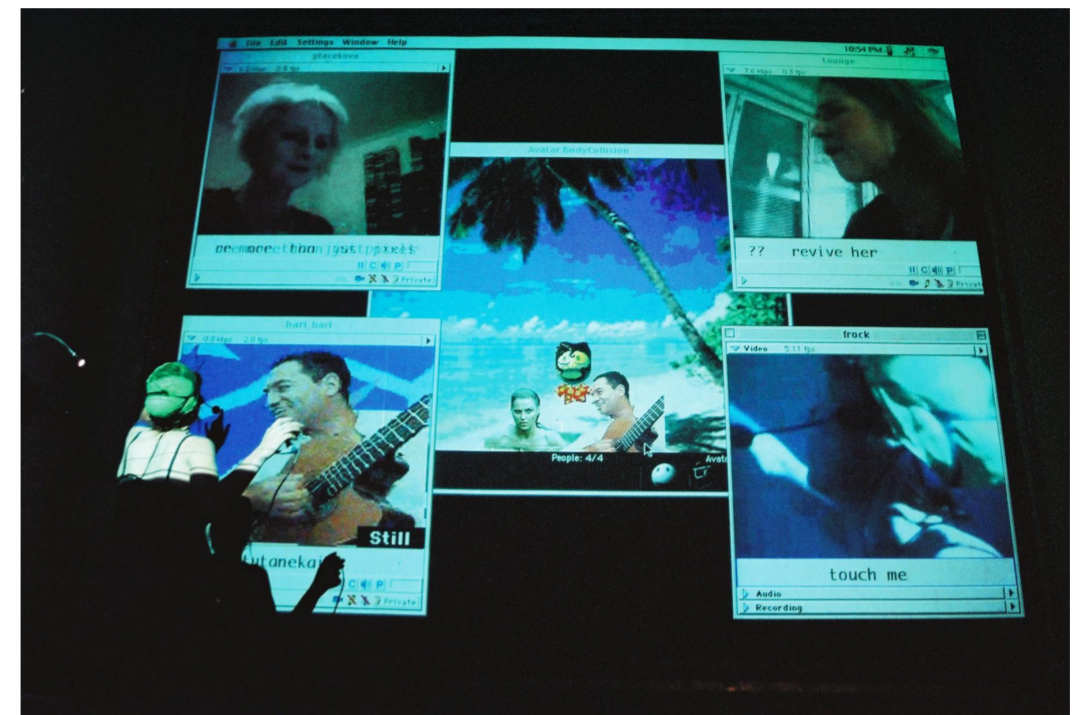


UpStage

The idea for UpStage grew out of the work of cyberperformance troupe *Avatar Body Collision*.

Helen Varley Jamieson and Vicki Smith (Aotearoa/NZ), Karla Ptacek (UK) and Leena Saarinen (Finland) had been making live theatrical performances on the internet together since 2001, using free chat software with web cams and graphical avatars. They dreamt of an application that could combine the best features of the softwares they were using in a single, purpose-built and accessible interface.



swim - an exercise in remote intimacy, by Avatar Body Collision
Galerija Kapelica, Ljubljana 2003; photograph by Nada Zgank

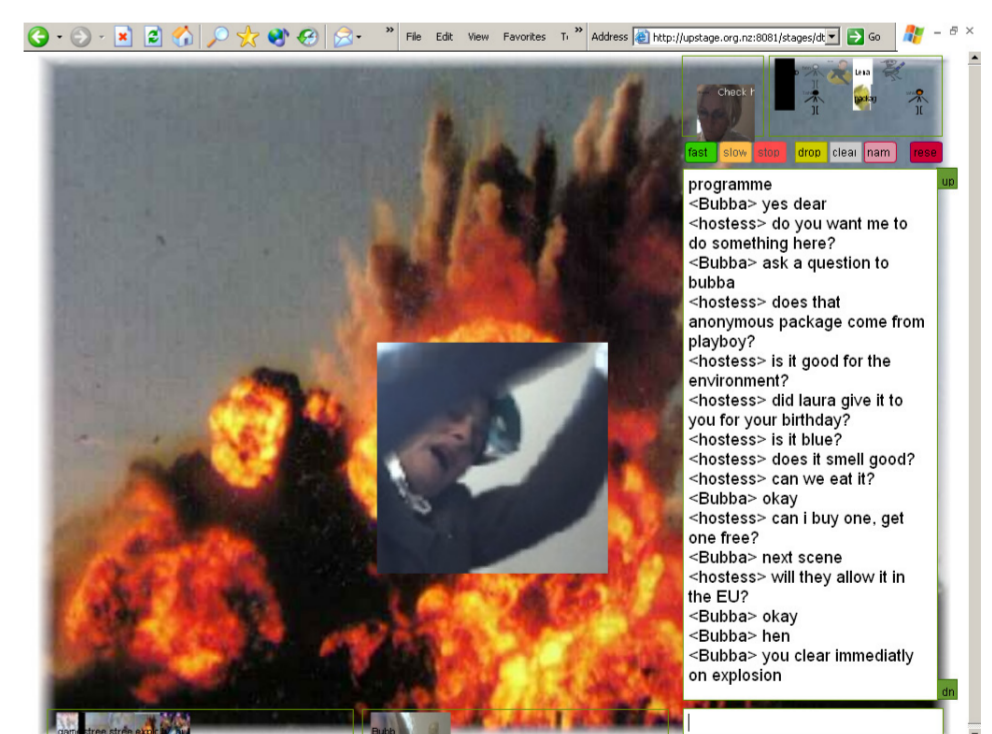


Lagging With the Lololols, by Avatar Body Collision
Virtual Minds Congress, Bremen, 2004

In 2003, a grant from the NZ government enabled them to employ programmer and artist Douglas Bagnall to build the first version of UpStage, launched in January 2004. UpStage began to be used by people all over the world, as well as by *Avatar Body Collision*.

UpStage V2 was released in 2007,

thanks to another NZ government grant. Today, students at Auckland University of Technology continue to develop the software along with volunteer open source programmers; the software is now at version 2.4.2. The annual UpStage festival, presenting performances by artists from around the world, is in its 6th year.



DTN2, by Avatar Body Collision, Machinista Festival 2004: the first performance made using UpStage.

www.avatarbodycollision.org

