

Jerry Rees

On The Autonomous Illusion of Life

But first...

How do we move past the current challenge of “monitoring” a subject, which the Legal Privacy teams are freaked out about?

## Likely Resolution:

Treat this “personal data” like other personal/PII data... that IT and Security groups know how to handle and protect.

Build “Consent” into the framework of the interactions (like the ticket/agreement to enter a theme park)

Make the “magic” amazing, where the subjects willingly participate  
(aka: Google)

And now, we look into the future

starting in 1937...

# Dec 21, 1937 Carthay Circle Theater

An audience watched the first animated feature  
(aka: a cartoon!)



# They cried!

Which disrupted history and gave many of us careers and ongoing indelible experiences



Why did they cry?

Walt Disney and his team were not satisfied  
with the illusion of motion.

They had used motion  
as a way to convey *emotion*

They had created the *Illusion of Life*

# The Illusion of Life

Each character behaves as if having its own thoughts, feelings and *individual* personality

Once they seem alive, you care about them and forget they are a drawing or avatar or robot

It is the key to unlocking story, character and emotion in all emerging technologies

# Our Mandate

# The Illusion of Life

Disney Animation

Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston

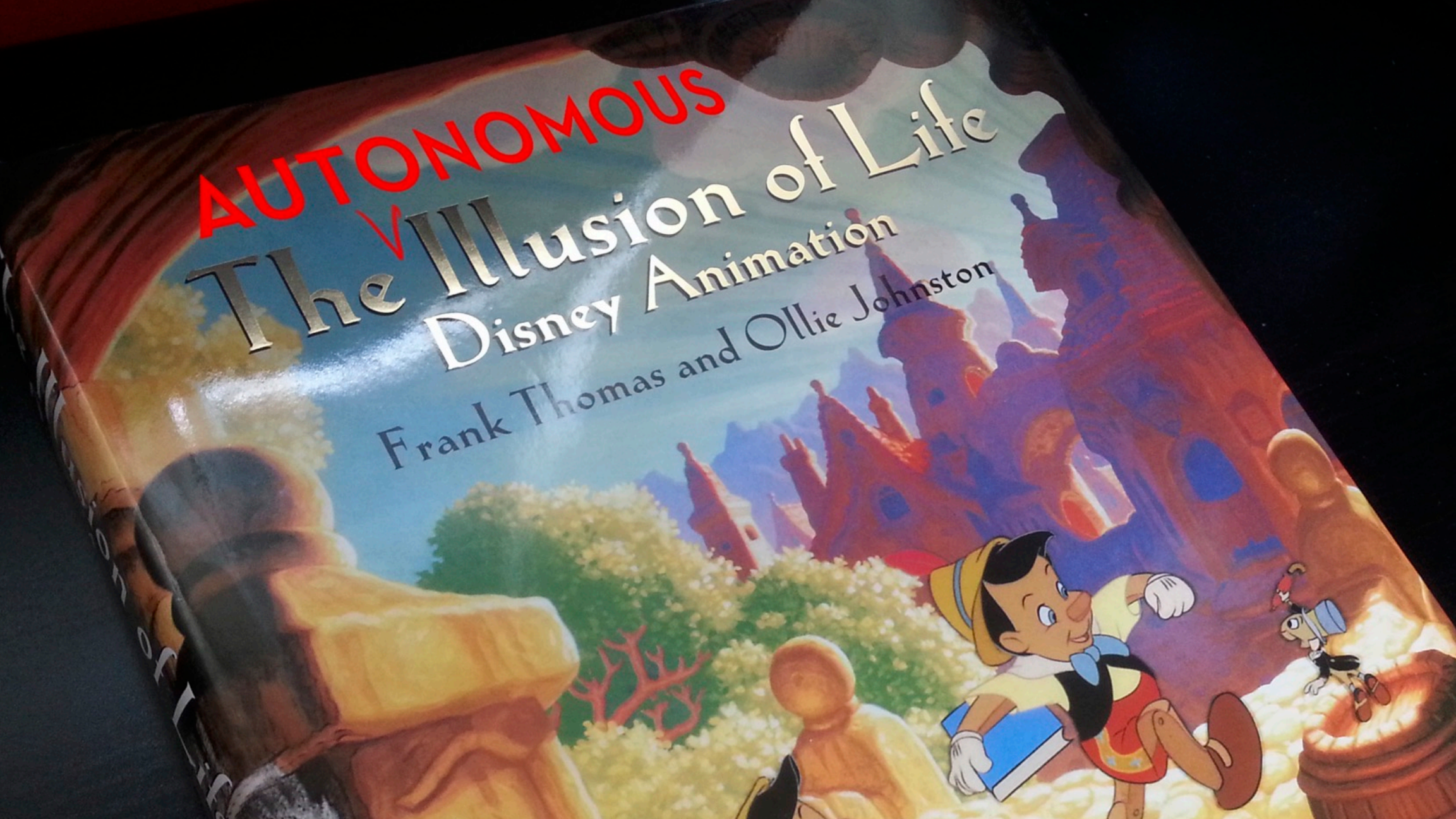


**AUTONOMOUS**

**The Illusion of Life**

Disney Animation

Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston



# Beyond Archetype to Eccentric Individual

the same script, same lighting, same angles, same direction, same archetype



same input – different outcome

## Keeping your Autonomous character "in character" while improvising

interactive dialog reflects its individual world view

active listening in appropriate emotional ranges for both of you

dynamic 2-way interruptions to vibrantly connect ideas

physical interactions, including subconscious mirroring

true reactions to your actions informed by rapport

eccentric fidgets that are a tell for what they don't say

...plus what they are doing  
when you aren't doing anything...



Keeping the character alive moment-by-moment

EXAMPLE: how many sparks of thought & feeling in a simple greeting?

## engaged in an activity

1. sense approaching interruption
2. how does the interruption make you feel?
3. discover who is doing the interrupting
4. how does that person make you feel?
5. retreat to activity, or let go of activity
6. greet based on rapport

# Bridging Worlds Chapter I















# Bridging Worlds Chapter II

Imagine you're in a theme park and you come across an animal...

A BIG ONE

























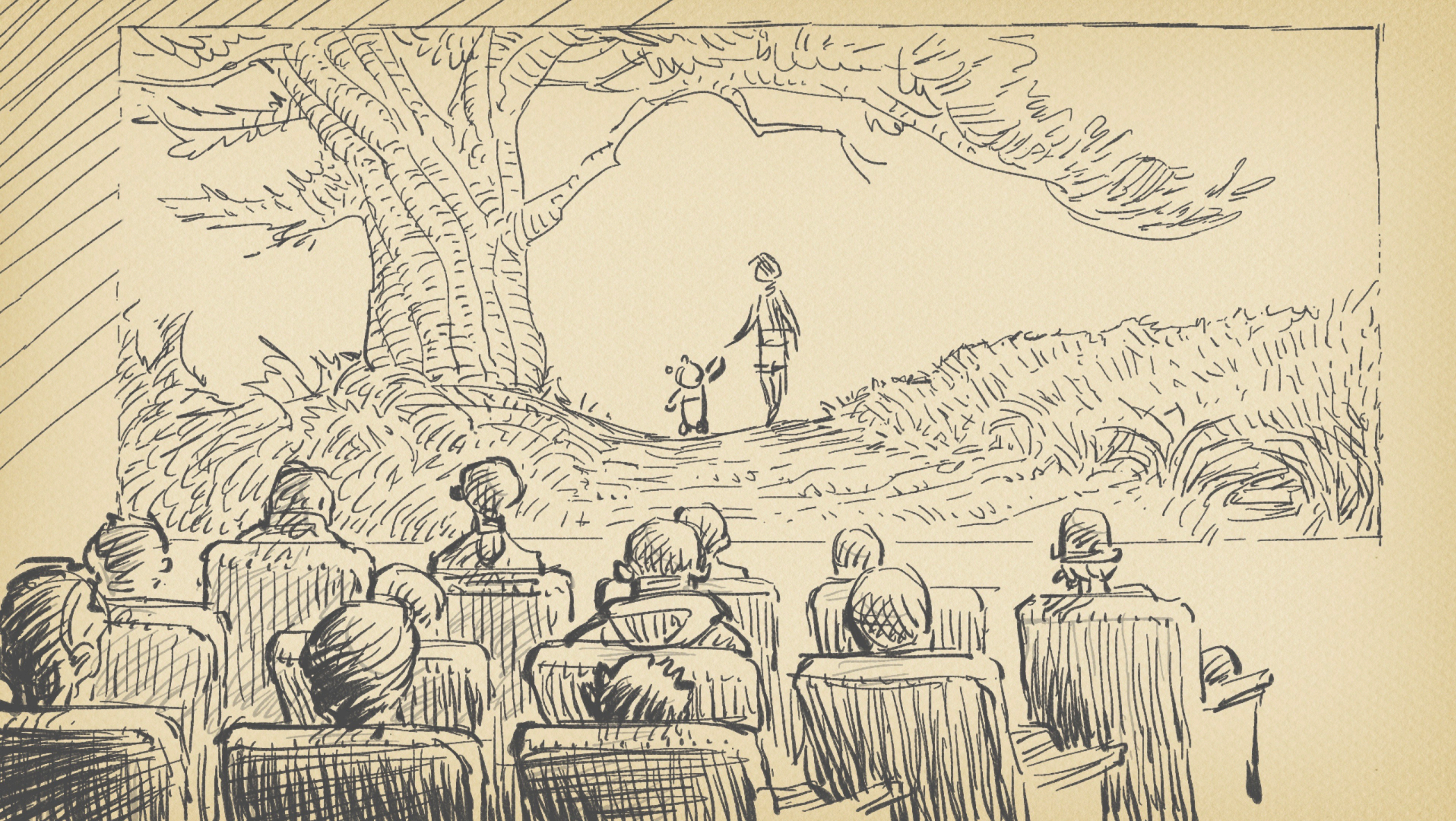
# Bridging Worlds Chapter III

Stepping entirely into their world















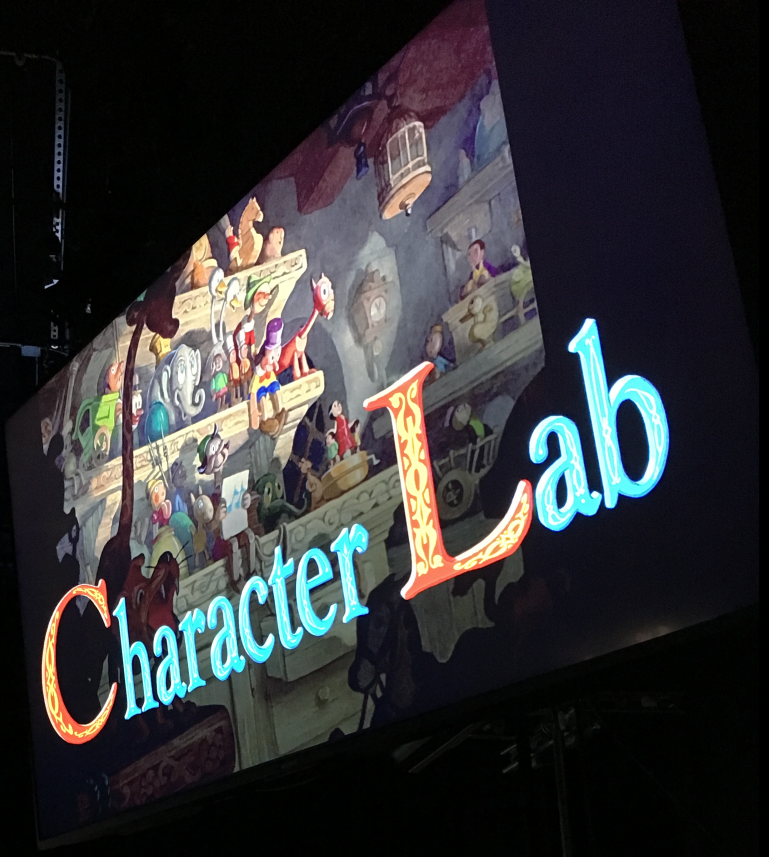


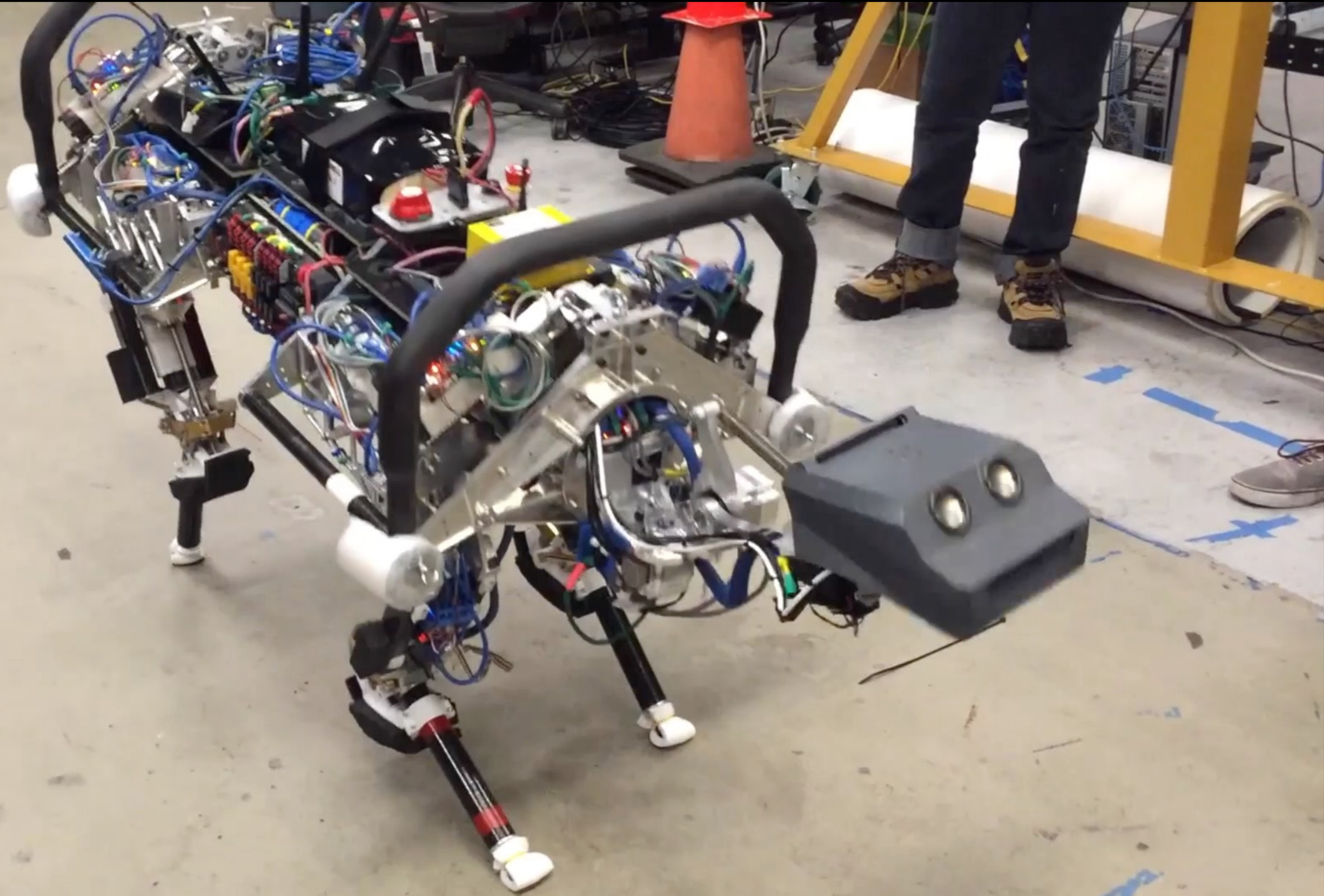


# Engineering for Range of Emotion

So you can build a capable actor







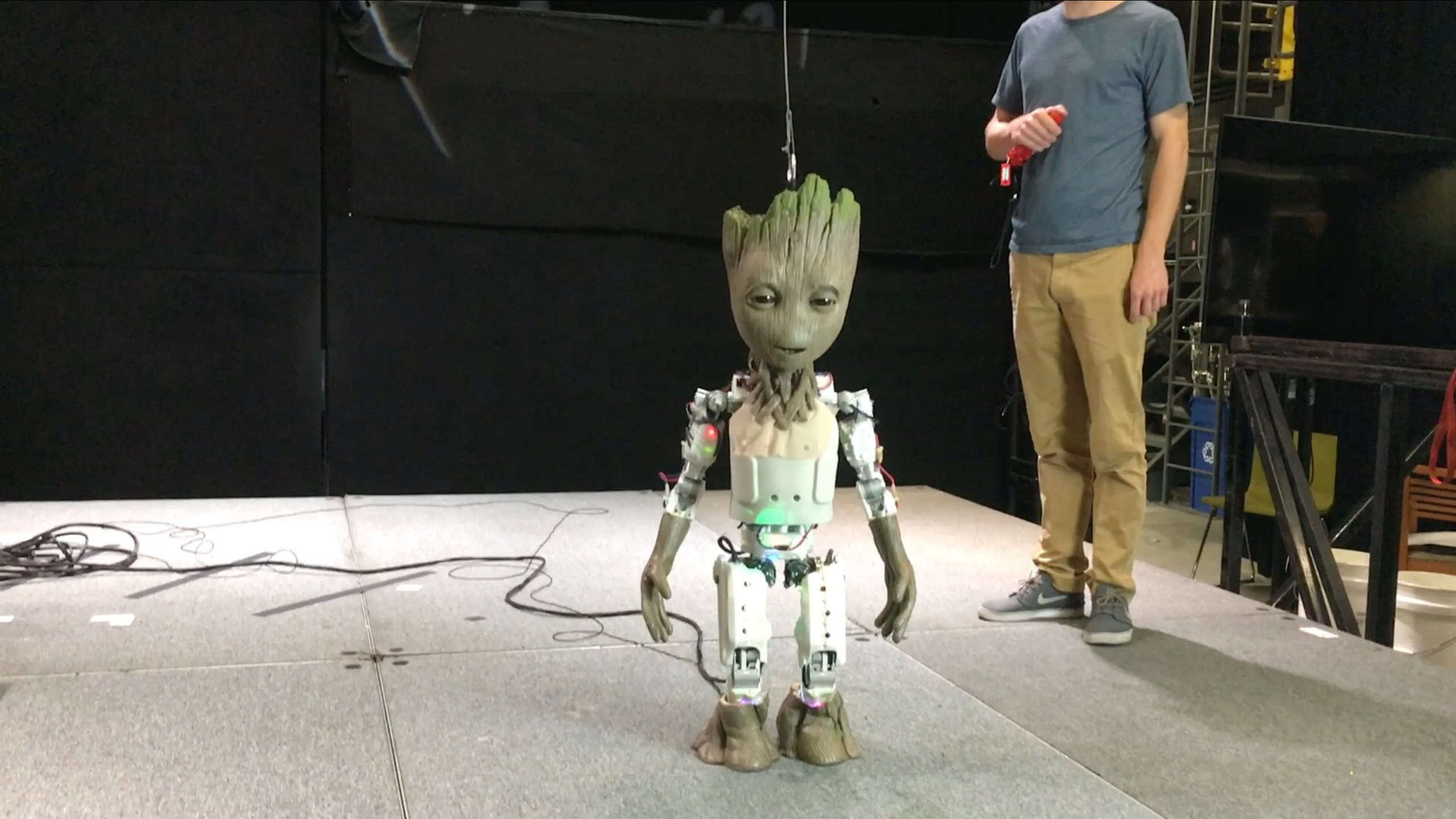
# The Eyes Have It!

If the eye movement betrays real life, the character will seem dead



The moment in the lab when Groot went from THING to BEING

We all wanted him to stay alive!



**TechCrunch's Matthew Panzarino wrote:**

With a series of tweaks in the software the changes become evident immediately, with Groot's "mood" becoming immediately evident in his walk.

One moment he is bouncing along swinging his arms jauntily, clearly happy to be there. Then the next moment his arms are slumped, his head is hung and he is slowly plodding — clearly sad to be leaving the fun behind. It's a remarkable bit of performance software.

And even though the expressive eyes are already impressive — the team is not done. Up next on the agenda is a sensory package that allows Kiwi to more fully understand the world around it and to identify people and their faces. This becomes important because eye contact is such an emotive and powerful tool to use in transporting a participant.

Even without the sensing software, I can tell you that the experience of this 2.5ft Groot locking eyes with me, smiling and waving was just incredibly transportive. Multiple times throughout my interaction I completely forgot that it was a robot at all.





WALT DISNEY Imagineering Research & Development, Inc.  
Early Concept Exploration, Only.



# The Illusion of Life

The principles that bloomed in “Snow White” continue to empower emotional connection in all future tech

thank you