

Janet Murray discusses digital narrative as being “spatial.” She uses the text based game Zork as an example of how the user can navigate around a virtual space by typing go North, go South, and so on.

She points out that this “spatial” property is not due to the computer’s ability to process and display three-dimensional models. Zork didn’t even have graphics. The spatial quality of the game arises from the user’s interaction with the interface and painting their own environment from the clues the computer feeds them. The Zork code never held any actual model of what the environment looked like or how it worked, it only had blocks of text (“you are in a dungeon”) that were connected a system of textual commands (“go north”.)

On a lower level, this illustrates the same process that occurs with soundscapes such as Ruttman’s “Weekend.” The work is a series of sounds spliced together, which does not hold a model or map of a city. Through the listener’s interaction and imagination with the track, an entire city can be illustrated.