HALLMARK CHURNS OUT NEARLY 20,000 cards annually. Paper cards, that is. So when the Kansas City-based company decided to investigate digital greetings, it turned to Mizzou for help. “Hallmark was interested in involving digital natives to provide some fresh vision to their greeting card industry while we were interested in the documentation of a creative process that involved interdisciplinary collaboration and New Media,” explains Dr. Newton D’Souza, assistant professor of Architectural Studies.

And so the Hallmark-Mizzou Creativity Workshop was born. The project was conducted with the support of the Creative Convergence Network (CCN), an interdisciplinary team of MU faculty representing creative areas in which New Media is having a profound impact. “Our goal is to try and facilitate convergences between diverse disciplines, which include departments of architecture, art education, textile design, theatre, film studies, instruction technology, museum, psychology, graphic design and computer science,” D’Souza says. “Our work will culminate in a symposium named Mizzou International Symposium on Creativity and New Media scheduled for April 19-20, 2013.”

As a part of this symposium, in July 2012, seven Mizzou students and the Creative Collections Group at Hallmark worked together to design a 21st century birthday celebration that goes beyond the old Hallmark model of “send a card” and instead responds to the new digital age user. This week-long process took place in the iLab (see page 18) on the MU campus and will be the subject of analysis at the Joint Creativity Assessment Workshop at the symposium.

“We were fortunate to have a strong Architectural Studies team including my colleague Dr. Bimal Balakrishnan and graduate students from Design with Digital Media who worked tirelessly, putting in 12 hour workdays on the preparation and documentation of this project,” D’Souza says. The documentation included 20 hours of video feed to capture facial and body gestures using four video cameras, screen captures from seven computers, journaling and nightly diaries, and survey questionnaires.

“The students benefited by interacting with a world-class creative team including studio directors, business managers, editorial directors, multimedia professionals and archival personnel,” D’Souza says. “The project helped them think like professionals and gave them a rich experience for advancing their future creative careers.”

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