| Jason M. Reizner | *Installation:* **Walls Have Ears** |

Topic:
Synthetic Literacy

Authors:
Jason M. Reizner
Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Fakultät Medien
Germany
http://reizner.org

References:
[1] Babbage, Charles. *Passages from the Life of a Philosopher.* Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green. London. 1864.

[2] Lyons, John. *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics.* Cambridge University Press. 1968.

[3] Rothstein, Adam. *"City of QR Codes."* http://rhizome.org/editorial/2011/sep/15/qr-code-city/

Abstract:

The recent onslaught of QR technology has meant that the occurrence of visual signifiers which only machines can read and write is becoming increasingly commonplace in areas once solely the realm of the human-readable. Designed to operate for the duration of GA2011, *Walls Have Ears* is a generative installation that gently prods this brave new world of synthetic literacy by also engendering the machine with the ability to listen. Continuously overhearing human presenters' speech direct from the lectern, this environment exploits the highly subjective nature of realtime artificial speech-to-text transcription to distill a dynamic, if not somewhat idiosyncratic, living document of the proceedings. Displayed on a subtle wall-sized QR video assemblage, the system's understanding of what is happening is both a compelling visual abstraction, as well as a reasonably faithful account, provided, of course, one has a machine that will graciously serve as an interpreter.

On two occasions I have been asked, — "Pray, Mr. Babbage, if you put into the machine wrong figures, will the right answers come out?"
... I am not able rightly to apprehend the kind of confusion of ideas that could provoke such a question.

– *Charles Babbage*

info@reizner.org

Keywords:
Eavesdropping, Procedural Linguistics, Visual Grammar