



# From Immersion Art to Fusion Art: Watch-Out! The Eyes of the City in Athens 2004 Olympic Games

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## Introduction

Many applications in cinema, industrial design and architecture were realised through the so called hybrid systems integrating audiovisual and virtual imagery in a new mixture, mixed reality (Kyriakoulakos, 1992).

Important enhanced reality systems were implemented in the field of Archaeology and Tourism (Vlahakis et al., 2002). This trend was applied also in medical and scientific topics during the decades of 1990s and 2000s with significant success (Azuma, 2004).

In fact, artistic installations and systems preceded this trend. Numerous indoor mixed reality installations are described in the literature (Laurel, 1999; Druckrey, 1999).

The next step should seamlessly integrate Art installations in the everyday outdoor environments.

## Watch-Out! The Eyes of the City

“Watch-Out!” was first implemented in Seoul, Korea.

We will describe hereafter the version implemented during the Athens 2004 Olympic Games for the Organising Committee.

For the works discussed earlier and other works of Maurice Benayoun one may visit with profit the site of the artist (<http://www.moben.net/index.html>)

### Athens 2004 Specifications

The installation was part of the 9 interactive Art projects ordered by the Athens 2004 Organising Committee in order to enhance the festive ambiance during the Olympic Games. All projects were installed in pedestrian areas in the city’s centre.

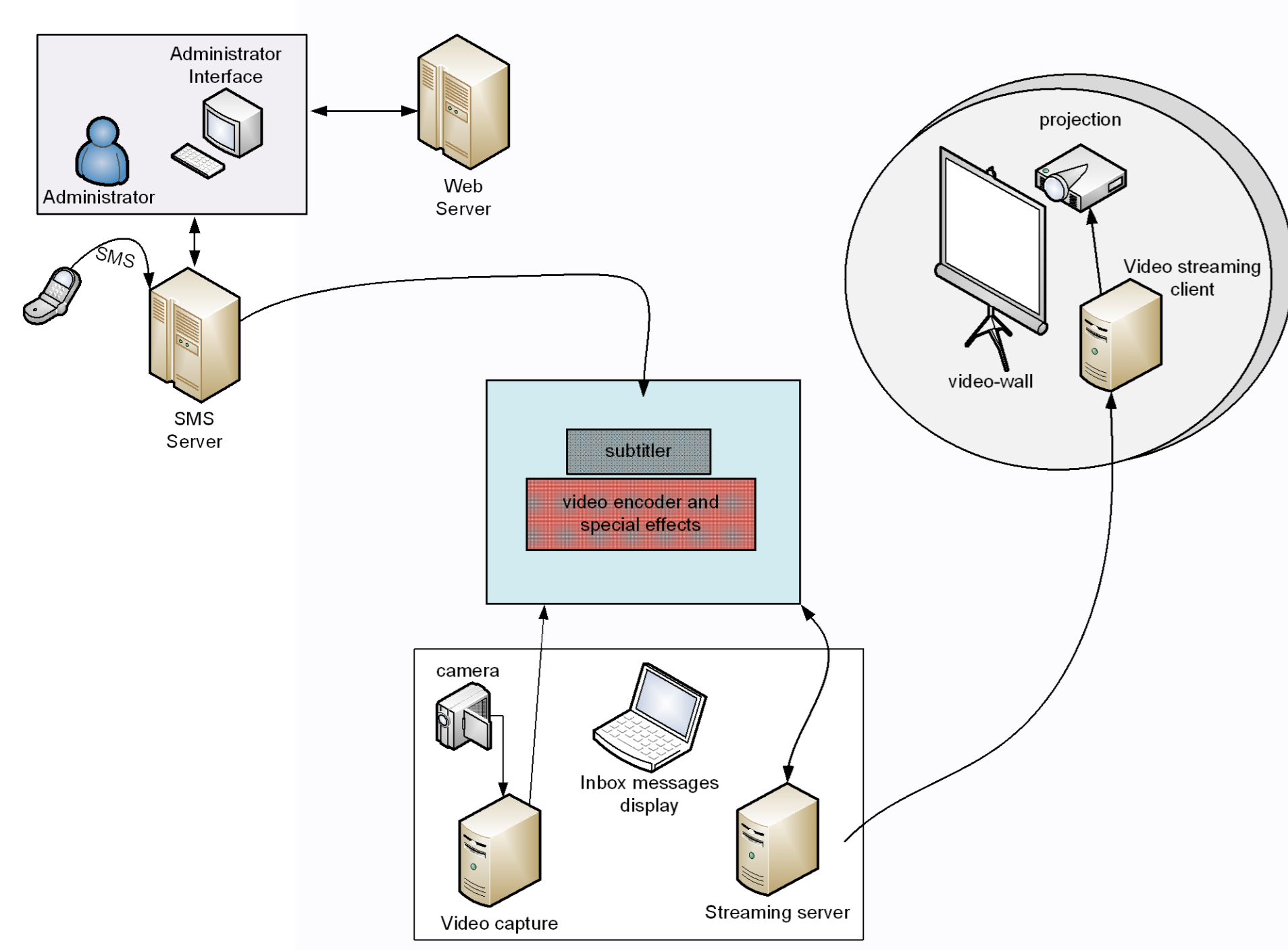
On Kapnikarea place, close to the church, a big box, covered with black and yellow stripes with a tiny rectangular hole on one side. Coming to watch inside the hole, a participant user can see these words displayed on a screen: Send a warning message to the World! to [www.watch-out.net](http://www.watch-out.net) or send a free Cosmote SMS to 1256 starting with : WO <space> Previous messages are displayed on the same screen.

On the Ermou Street, the passers-by seem to be observed by transcendental watchers. Big eyes are displayed on different shop windows as if they were scanning the World. They are actually the eyes watching inside the box.

## The user interfaces

Several technological innovations have been achieved for the development of this project. These include the design and implementation of a number of software systems that provided the infrastructure of this project. In terms of user interaction these include: user interfaces (participant, onlooker and system administrator), video streaming, subtitling system, video encoding and special effects system, video projecting system, SMS-server, web-server.

The user interfaces provide the means of interaction for all the users of the system. These include the “curious” participant users that interact with the box or send SMS messages, the onlookers or passers-by that intentionally or accidentally observe the wall-screens and the system administrators that control the overall project by the use of several networked tools (remote access to the enclosed/boxed system, front-end to the SMS/subtitle database, publishing tool for the subtitles, special effects controller). The video streaming engine was responsible for a server- client data exchange for the transmission of the video footage that was produced by the video encoding and special effects system in cooperation with the subtitling system. The subtitles were supplied by the sms-subtitled system to the encoding engine and later on passed to the streaming server. The streaming server was responsible for supplying the client video-walls with video footage.



System Architecture

Watch-Out! The Eyes of the City in Athens

