

RESEARCHING VIRTUAL WORLDS

- analytical strategies and methodologies



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Researching

- Making sense of virtual worlds
 - Working title

Analytical foci

- The actors' decision to move in and settle in a virtual world and with that the choice of world(s)
 - the questions are: What is it that makes the actors of this study choose a virtual world like Second Life, or EverQuest? What creates the conditions for being in the virtual world, and what makes the actors remain in the world, or stop?

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Analytical foci

- The choices made by the actors in the process of designing their chosen avatar(s)
 - the questions are: What is it that made the actors of this study choose their avatars? What leads them to develop just these avatars, and how do they do it? How come that they remain faithful or leave their avatars?

Analytical foci

- The different ways of being together and interacting with other avatars and actors of the world(s)
 - the questions are: How do the actors of this study communicate in various practices and with the use of their avatars as mediators in battle, business and competition as well as in grouping, guilds and networking? What leads them to act and communicate the way they have chosen? How do they do it? How come that they continue or quit?

Analytical foci

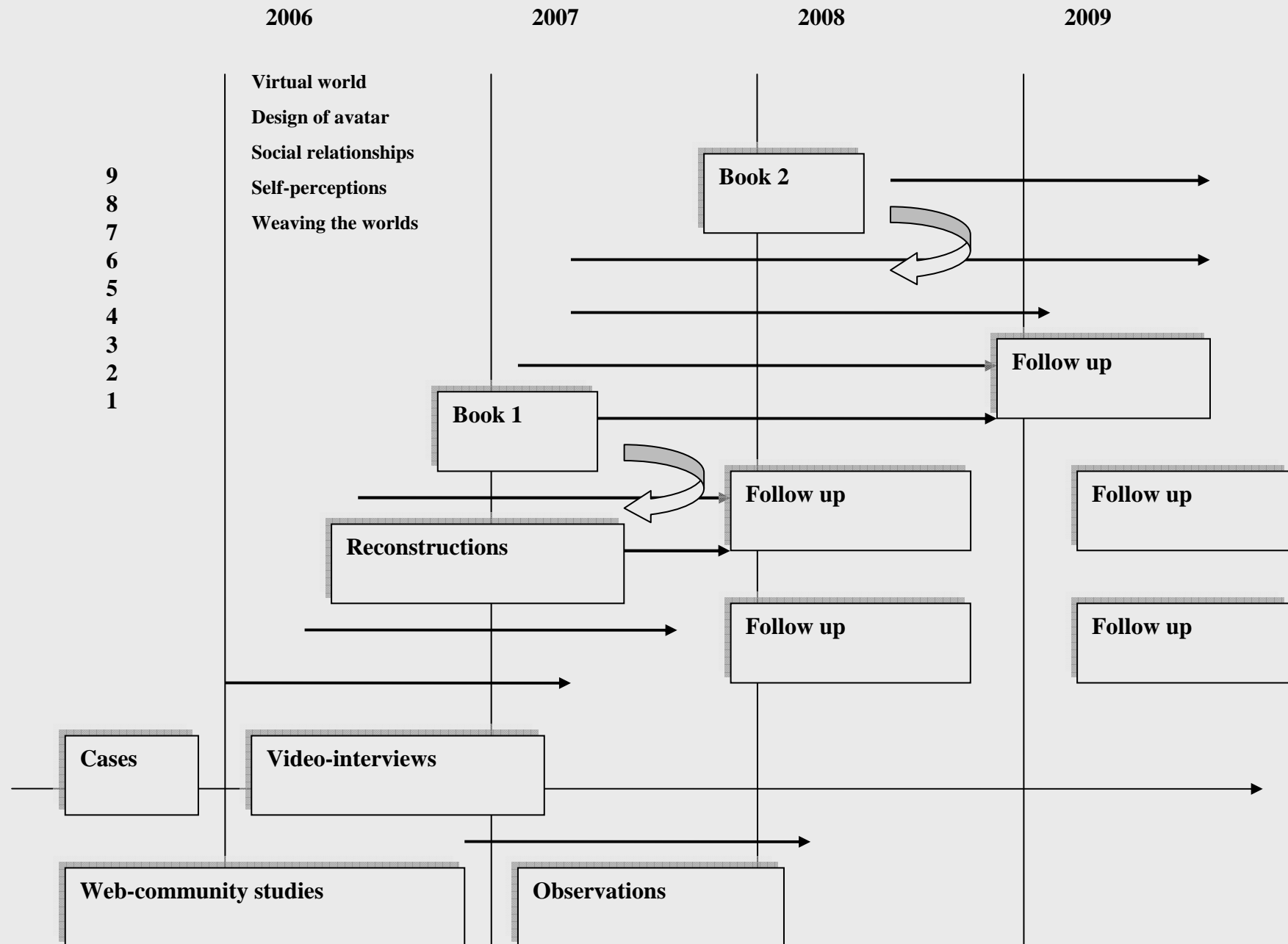
- Perceiving the self in the light of the chosen avatar(s) and the ways of being in the world
 - the questions asked are: How do the actors of this study describe the way their chosen avatars present themselves in-world? How do they view and understand the figure they have created and the interrelations of self and avatar?

Analytical foci

- The movements back and forth between the actors' in-world virtual lives and the lives they live in the outside world
 - the questions are: How do the actors move and navigate between their in-world life and the outside world? What is it that makes the actors continue or want to stop?

Methods

- Pre-understandings, inference and abductive reasoning
- Theory: actor-network theories, sense-making methodologies, (cyber-semiotics), new media theory
 - Trajectories of human and non-human actants, chains of connections, transformations, movements, intermediaries, mediators, assemblages, gapinesses and bridgings, situation movement states, remediation, immediacy and hypermediacy.
- Empirical data are produced rather than collected
- The two modes "online and off-line" are part of the case studies
- Literature studies
 - EverQuest and MMORPGs websites
 - Web communities
- Video interviews
- Case studies
 - First, a case is to be followed over time; second, it should exemplify different types of activity; third, the method of participatory observation should be applicable; fourth, the virtual life is meaningful to the participating actors and gamers; and finally, the case should elucidate the five guiding foci of the study. Note that the fourth criterion excludes those actors who left the worlds or chose never to enter.
- Participatory observations



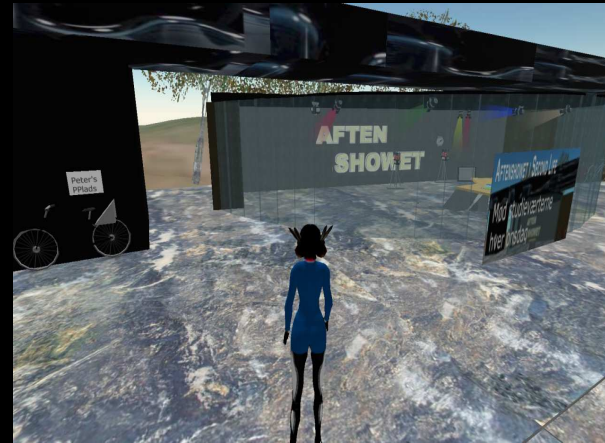
Observing

- The observations fall into four periods of time.
- They form a curve of increasing and decreasing involvement:
 - Period I “Remediation”: introductory observations to get an overview
 - Period II “Getting involved and settled”: participation, construction and cases selected
 - Period III “Belonging”: participation and observation at certain places and with time
 - Period IV “International”: a phase-out aimed to identify possible new cases from the international scene
- Danish islands and projects (Space and place)
- 38 Tableaux centred on snapshots and with concurrently written notes

Remediation

- Understanding New Media:
 - Immediacy
 - Hypermediacy
 - Remediation
 - Borrowing
 - Reshaping
 - Redefining

Remediation



Getting involved and settled



Meetings and conferences



Belonging and teaching



Workshop students



Everyday life



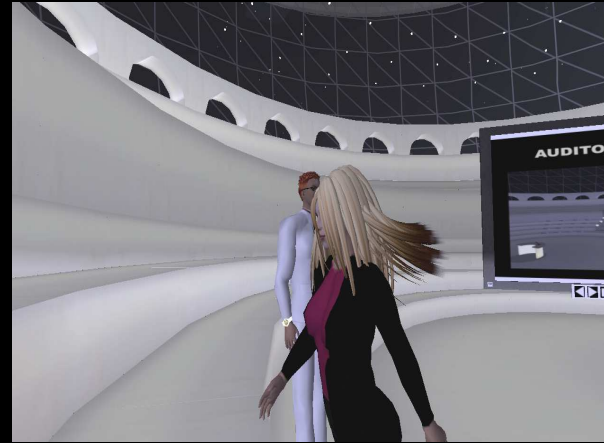
Music and literature



Feasts



Business



International projects



Positionings

- Distancing
 - Observing
 - Reflecting
- Participating
 - Asking
 - Involving
 - Constructing
- How did it influence the residents that I was present as an avatar and how did it influence me that I was present as an avatar?
 - the Cybergoth female
 - cross-boundary figure, transgresses the borders of the virtual and real life
 - she does not first and foremost convey connotations of a sexual nature
 - minor modifications, tone down the “goth and punk” connotations of the figure

Videoviews In-situ



Video interviews

- PRIOR TO RECORDINGS. Step (1)
 - Analytical design
 - Relevance, selection, and impact.
 - Simple and recurring video recordings
- RECORDING IN SITU. Step (2)
 - Overview and analytical levels
 - Situated interpretation and a dual focus
 - A virtual expedition

Video interviews

- PROCESSING THE RECORDINGS (3)
 - Analytical forms: Transcripts and Themes
 - Unstructured with timecodes
 - Structured with annotation-types and annotations

Video interview

- Situations and general descriptions
 - Transcription form

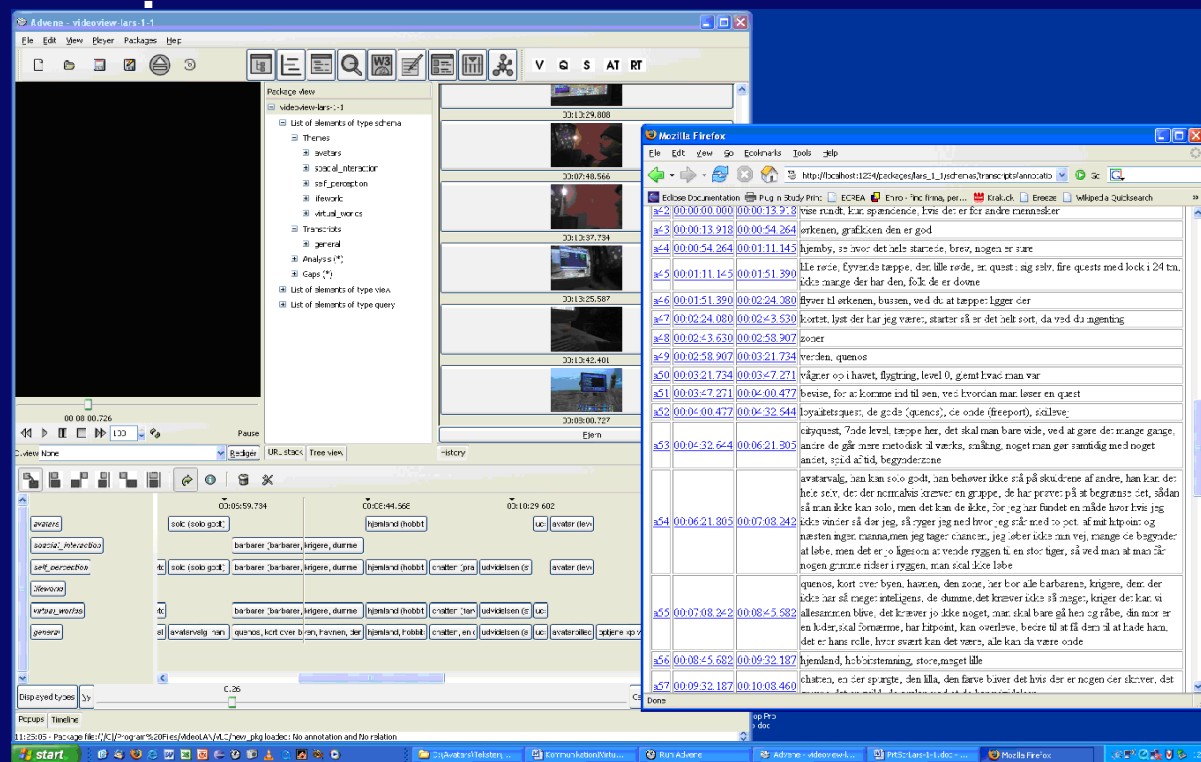
The screenshot displays a video interview interface. On the left, a video player shows a scene with a person. Below the video player is a transcription editor with a text area containing a transcript. On the right, a list of annotations is visible, each with a unique ID, a start time, an end time, and a description. The interface is designed for analyzing and transcribing video content.

Annotations of general (47)

ID	Debut	Fin	Contenu
a1	00:00:00.000	00:03:36.151	mor vil du se, 'der er xx og xx har, der er', ahmm, og så, hvad skal du bare se med den, 'han kan bare vente sig, den, den fort, han kan bare vente sig', han må ikke sige fort til nogen, de er jo også trold, de kan løbe stærkt, ja, videre, okay, ved du hvad du skal kugge i din bog og læse videre, nu skal du læse, hvorfor xx det, hvorfor spørger du om det når du skal læse, men xx, det er også fint, bagefter vil jeg meget gerne fortælle dig det, okay, her tror jeg, 'det samme får øje på det, ser
a2	00:03:36.151	00:04:27.511	tydelig voicechat, headsetts, spilletup
a3	00:04:27.511	00:04:43.669	kaffe, senseokaffe
a4	00:04:43.669	00:05:03.540	den er rød der, det er nok fordi jeg optager, kan den klare det mens der bliver roget, ja, det er også her vi ryger, det er så også længst væk fra barmene,
a5	00:05:03.540	00:05:35.910	det kan jeg så tage et billede af, nu kan jeg slet ikke se smørgerne for dig Burk, nu følger du hele billedet
a6	00:05:35.910	00:07:04.836	mat billedet her det er et billede af min figur, det er Gelao, er det en bestemt type, hun er shaman, og barbar af race, det er et billede jeg tog i tælligt sea, fordi jeg synes det er så smukt, så smuk en baggrund, det var ikke dig, nej, det var jacob der tog det, og hende har jeg selvfølgelig som baggrund, for hun er min gudinde, gudinde? det er min gudinde du, hun er superrej, min gud er Nuser, ja, jamen, sharmans, der er rigtig seje, hvis man kan finde ud af at spille shaman, så er de reje, moah, jamen, de kan rigtig meget af det samme som alle de andre kan, shamaner kan heale,
a7	00:07:04.836	00:07:13.676	nu er det mig der smækker, en ad gangen
a8	00:07:13.676	00:07:28.648	shamaner de kan heale, ikke ligeså godt som klenker, men, præster, eller druides, de healer helt klart bedre, men de kan heale nok til at det er,
a9	00:07:28.648	00:07:35.451	der sker ikke spor ved det
a10	00:07:35.451	00:07:55.319	og så shamanen de kan kaste slow, som gør mob'ene, mobtene, det kalder vi de monstre vi slås mod, computergenererede monstre,
a11	00:07:55.319	00:07:59.075	hvorfor, fordi jeg siger det

Video interviews

- Situations and general transcriptions
 - Conversion to Themes form and web



Video interviews

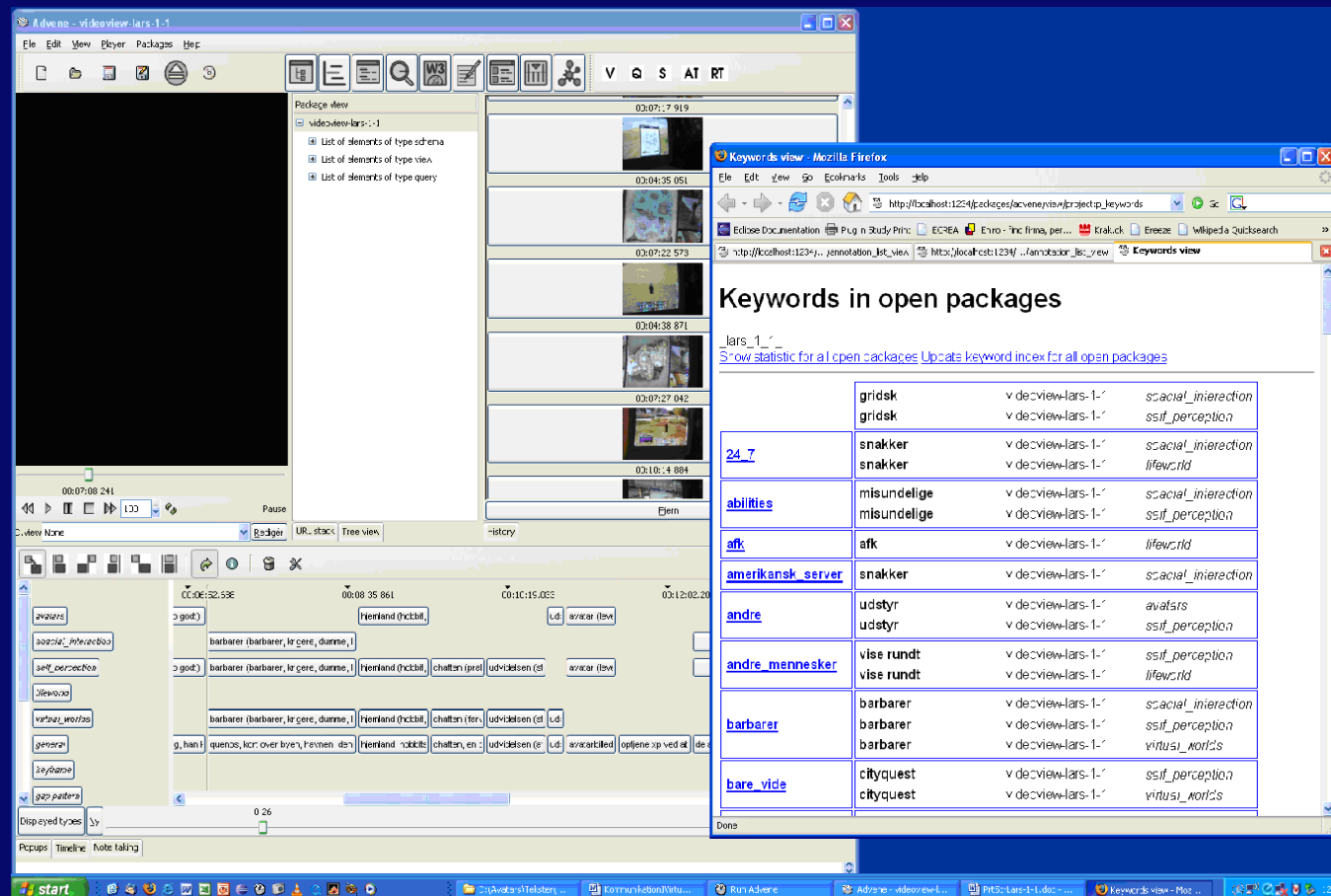
- Sorting and typologies

The screenshot displays the Advens - videoview-lars 1.1 application window. The interface includes a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Player, Packages, Help), a toolbar, and a main video player area. To the left of the video player is a 'Package view' panel showing a tree structure with 'List of elements of type schema', 'List of elements of type view', and 'List of elements of type query'. Below the video player is a timeline and a 'Display types' section. To the right of the video player is a 'Mozilla Firefox' browser window displaying the 'Annotations de self perception (28)' page. The browser window shows a table with columns: Id, Début, Fin, and Contenu. The table contains 10 rows of annotations, each with a unique ID, start and end times, and a corresponding text description.

Id	Début	Fin	Contenu
a0	00:00:00.000	00:00:13.918	titel=vise rundt keywords=vise rundt, andre mennesker test=vise rundt, kun gjærende, hvis det er for andre mennesker
a2	00:00:54.264	00:01:11.445	titel=hjemby keywords=hjemby, start, sure text=hjemby, så hvor det selv startede, brev, nogen er sure
a4	00:01:11.145	00:01:51.390	titel=Ile røde keywords=Ile røde, flyvende tæppe, fire quest=Ile røde, flyvende tæppe, den alle røde, en quest i sig selv, fire quests med lok i 24 km, ikke mange der har den, folk de er domme
a6	00:02:24.080	00:02:43.630	titel=kortet keywords=kortet, starter, sort, ved ingenting text=kortet, lys: der har jeg været, starter så er der helt sort, da ved du ingenting
a8	00:02:45.630	00:02:58.907	titel=zoner keywords=zoner text=zoner
a0	00:03:21.734	00:03:47.271	titel=flygtning keywords=våner, havet, level 0, glent text=våner: op i havet, flygtning, level 0, glent hvad man var
a2	00:03:47.271	00:04:00.472	titel=bevis keywords=bevis, .ose quest text=bevis, for at komme ind til sen, ved hvordan man løser at quest
a4	00:04:00.472	00:04:32.644	titel=oyatners quest keywords=oyatners quest, gode, onde, skillevej text=oyatners quest, de gode (quest), de onde (quest), skillevej
a6	00:04:32.644	00:05:21.805	titel=cityquest keywords=begynnerzone, bare vide, metodisk tiværks text=cityquest, 7nde level, tæppe her, det skal man bare vide, ved at gøre det mange gange, andre de går mere metodisk til værks, skiftning, noget man gør samtidig med toget andet, spid af tid, begynderzone
a9	00:06:21.805	00:07:08.244	titel=solo keywords=solo godt text=avatarvalg, han kan solo godt, han behøver ikke så på skuldrene af andre, som kan der hele selv, der der normalt kræver: en gruppe, de har prøvet på at begrænse det, sådan så man ikke kan solo, men det kan de ikke, for jeg har fundet en måde hvor hvis jeg ikke vinder så dør jeg, så ryger jeg ned hvor jeg står med to pct. af nutidspoint og næsten ingen mamma men jeg tager chancen, jeg

Video interviews

- Characterizing and mapping



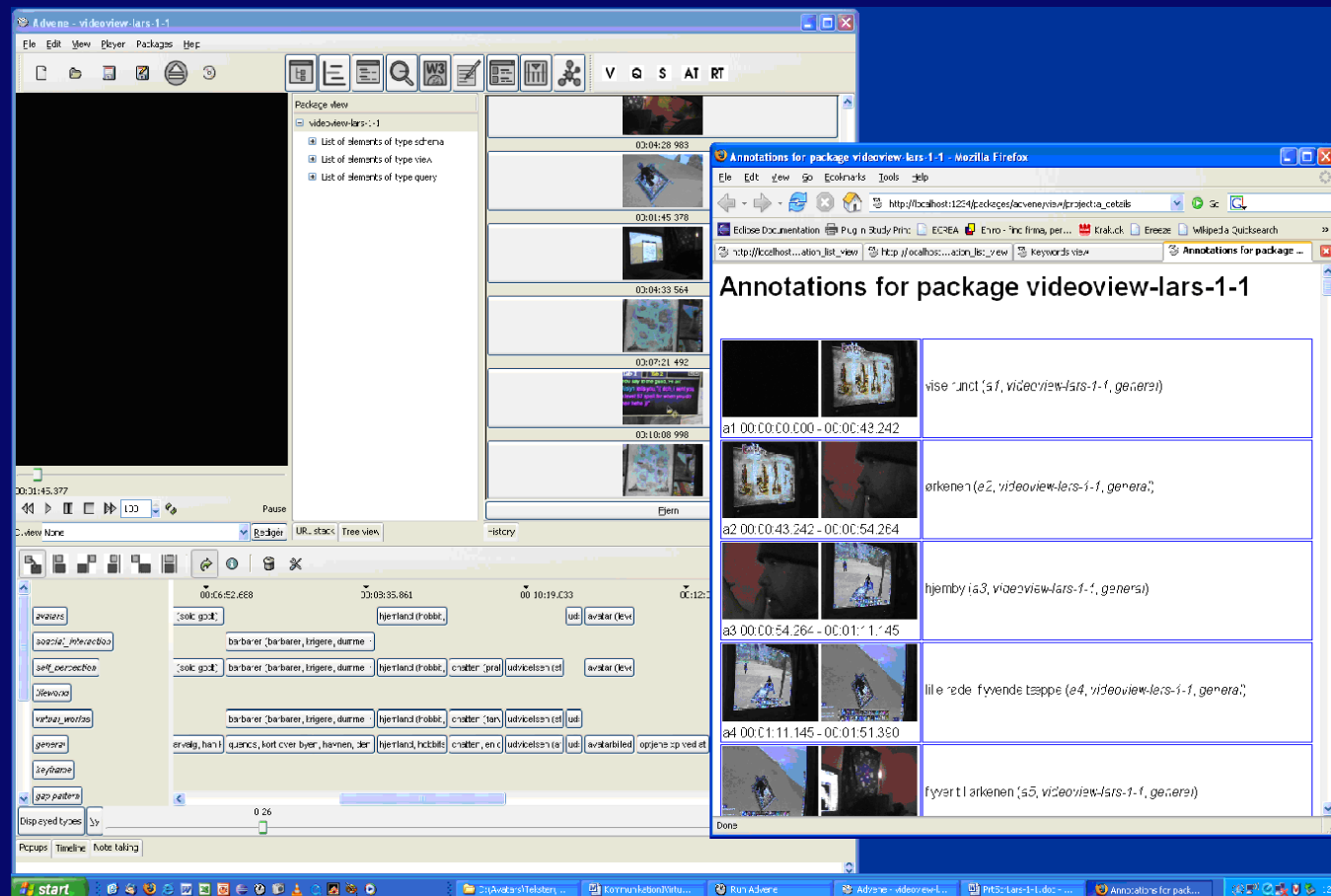
The screenshot displays the Advare - videoview-lars-1.1 application interface. The main window features a video player with a timeline and a list of video segments. A 'Keywords view' window is open, displaying a table of keywords and their associated packages.

Keywords in open packages

Keyword	Package	Package Name	Package Type
gridsk	v de:view-lars-1.1	social_interaction	ssif_perception
gridsk	v de:view-lars-1.1	ssif_perception	ssif_perception
snakker	v de:view-lars-1.1	social_interaction	ssif_perception
snakker	v de:view-lars-1.1	lifevrtid	ssif_perception
misundelige	v de:view-lars-1.1	social_interaction	ssif_perception
misundelige	v de:view-lars-1.1	ssif_perception	ssif_perception
afk	v de:view-lars-1.1	lifevrtid	ssif_perception
amerikansk_server	v de:view-lars-1.1	social_interaction	ssif_perception
udstyr	v de:view-lars-1.1	avalars	ssif_perception
udstyr	v de:view-lars-1.1	ssif_perception	ssif_perception
vise rundt	v de:view-lars-1.1	ssif_perception	ssif_perception
vise rundt	v de:view-lars-1.1	lifevrtid	ssif_perception
barbarer	v de:view-lars-1.1	social_interaction	ssif_perception
barbarer	v de:view-lars-1.1	ssif_perception	ssif_perception
barbarer	v de:view-lars-1.1	virtusi_worlds	ssif_perception
cityquest	v de:view-lars-1.1	ssif_perception	ssif_perception
cityquest	v de:view-lars-1.1	virtusi_worlds	ssif_perception

Video interviews

- Deconstructing and visual description



Video interviews

- Systematic and intuitively
- Rich empirical picture

Exercise 2

- Download Advene and VLC
- Create a package and a scheme
- Discuss the analytical focus
- Watch the video in a muted mode – do not turn on the sound
- Transcribe and annotate the video
 - Step 1: each of you
 - Step 2: compare your annotations
 - Step 3: reflections on the process