

Part A

Performance Capture

These days, we hardly think about ‘special effects’ in films – we’re so used to them, they’re not actually that special any more! There’s the strange, half-human Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings*, the lifelike Incredible Hulk, and the blue-skinned Na’vi people in *Avatar*. These were all digitally created, but we believe in them as real characters, and forget the technical tricks involved. But how do they do it? The answer in most cases is Performance Capture.

What is Performance Capture?

Performance Capture is a way of translating a real actor’s performance into a digital character. Actors can perform naturally on a digital stage set, and this performance is then ‘captured’ by cameras and translated into an expressive digital character. If real actors are not involved, digital characters can often seem lifeless and dull.

Tim Doubleday – Face specialist



Tim has worked in Performance Capture for 12 years, and it’s his dream job! He can’t believe he earns a living working on the type of games and films he loved playing and watching as a teenager!



Tim works for Europe's leading Performance Capture studio, Imaginarium. Based in London, it was founded by the actor Andy Serkis (Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings*), and Jonathan Cavendish. Imaginarium has worked on many major films, including *Star Wars Episode 7*. Tim's role is facial supervisor. He's responsible for capturing the subtle movements in the actors' faces, which are used to produce lifelike facial expressions on digital characters.