

UNIT 9

MULTIMEDIA (ADVANCED)

AVCE Information and Communications Technology

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SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

There was a time when presenting information to a group of people involved reading from a prepared script, perhaps illustrating some of the points with badly drawn diagrams on a blackboard. Nobody can get away with this approach nowadays and expect to impress the audience. The personal computer (PC) now provides us with a wide range of tools and techniques for producing smart presentations bringing together audio, video and animation.

There are many sophisticated (and expensive) software packages dedicated to the production of multimedia presentations and indeed they can be used in the activities that go with this unit. However a great deal can be achieved with rather more limited resources. The special multimedia software may not be available when you are asked to prepare a presentation to management, and of course even if it were, much time would be spent learning to use it.

In order to use multimedia for maximum effect, there must be a lot of pre-planning: assessing the target audience and selecting the best components for the job.

SUMMARY OF LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will:

- Learn how to select effects appropriate to the subject matter, the occasion and the target audience.
- Be able to design original and complete presentations that include sound, video and graphical animation.
- Be able to create presentations using the software tools available.
- Be able to deliver the presentation to a target audience.

LINKS WITH OTHER UNITS

Unit 7: Multimedia (Intermediate). This advanced unit follows on naturally from the Intermediate unit 7.

Unit 1: Presenting Information (Advanced). This unit builds upon the skills developed during work on Unit 1.

Unit 20: Animation, Sound and Video (Advanced). These units fit together very well. Unit 20 covers the selection of specialist multimedia software and hardware and discusses the production process in greater detail.

SECTION 2 OVERVIEW OF LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

Students need to spend time exercising skills in working separately with text, sound and various forms of graphics, including animation, before they begin to build their own presentations. Students may start by considering what they consider to be weak points of existing multimedia CDs, simultaneously being stimulated to emulate the good use of attractive techniques.

Authoring packages vary considerably in the language they use in discussing the elements of multimedia presentations. The most useful approach may be to think of presentations as being built from separate events or objects. Such an approach also lends itself to the splitting of a presentation into separate parts for which different students can take individual responsibility. This consequently reinforces the need for user documentation and technical documentation.

There is no need for students to build all forms of multimedia elements into each presentation, for the different elements should occur only because they enhance the presentation, not because they demonstrate compulsory techniques. It is reasonable however, to assume that work at this level goes beyond the equivalent of slide-show sequences with negligible interaction. It would be a mistake to lay down a set number of screens for a presentation but, to ensure that the production reaches a suitable level, one could have in mind that the complexity should require at least 30 screens and a dozen routes through the material. It is important at the design stage that students are encouraged to extend the complexity of their work to an appropriately challenging level.

Teaching the sense of balance between different elements is extremely challenging. Teachers may like to combat the general myth that all multimedia productions should be sparing in their use of words. A multimedia examination of a play or book, for instance, would quite properly contain large amounts of text. Animations can easily degenerate into meaningless transformations of images but come into their own when they show users how to complete a practical physical task or understand how something works.

Documentation is a measure of quality. It is the area most likely to prove difficult for students, but the requirements for an E grade set reasonably achievable targets for all students.

A range of multimedia equipment should be made available to the students, such as digital still cameras, digital video cameras and scanners. The computers must have all the basic multimedia features such as CD ROM drives and good quality sound. A data projector would be a very valuable asset for presenting their completed work to an audience. Special purpose multimedia software is not essential as a great deal can be accomplished with presentation packages such as Microsoft *PowerPoint*. Nevertheless, students should at least conduct research into the packages available and 'the state of the art'. Internet access is essential.

It is probably worth having a stock of possible scenarios for students to consider. Ideally however, they will decide upon the themes of their presentations by perceiving a need often their own, and responding to it.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

Learning should be supported by the assessment programme. Opportunities should be available for peer and self-assessment in order to develop students' skills in being responsible for their own learning and development.

As this unit is assessed by portfolio, students must be encouraged to document all their work in a clear and concise manner. Each student should maintain a log book of all their practical work. It should be emphasised to the student that such log books are kept by the professionals and are a valuable resource when a particular sequence of steps needs to be repeated sometimes months later.

Students should receive clear briefings on the methods of assessment and clear feedback concerning the outcomes of all assessed work. Guidance on the requirements for the higher grades should also be provided.

KEY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

There may be opportunities to create evidence for their **Communications** portfolio: when they are working as part of a team producing the presentations, discussing ideas and producing design notes.

There may be opportunities to create evidence for their **Information Technology** portfolio: when they are accessing information via the internet or from CD based information systems. They will be writing reports which will involve the use a word-processor.

There may be opportunities to create evidence for their **Working with Others** portfolio: when they are planning, designing and reviewing their work as part of a production team.

SECTION 3 SUGGESTED DELIVERY & ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

TOPIC	TEACHING SCHEDULE	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES
1	Looking at multimedia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a teaching tool • As a marketing tool • For entertainment 	Activity 1 Locate and discuss existing examples	Websites. Tape-slide presentations. Taped TV programmes.
2	Accuracy and suitability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of target audience • Disabled access • How the aims affect the production • Getting your facts right • Setting the mood 	Activity 2 Class discussion Presentation by guest speaker	Guest speaker
3	Design specification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a theme or message • List achievement goals • Specification • User interaction required? 	Activity 3 Group 'brainstorming' session. Write specification.	Student imagination
4	Design structure and material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storyboards • Sound, image & video libraries • 'Live' video (Webcams) • Copyright issues 	Activity 4 Produce a structure diagram. Locate resources.	Access to Internet for web-based libraries of 'public domain' materials. Web camera
5	Presentation software selection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic packages • Professional multimedia software • Web-based presentations 	Activity 5 Individual and group research	Websites. Computer magazines
6	Layout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of colour • Timing considerations • Picture/Text proportions • Voice-over, background music • Incorporating user interaction 	Activity 6 Sketch out each screen or page of the presentation in more detail.	Coloured pens and paper or a computer drawing package.

7	<p>Creating the picture content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scanning images • Customising images • Creating drawings, diagrams, charts • Creating animations • Picture file formats • Using 'Live' video 	<p>Activity 7 Individual activity working with various software and hardware tools.</p>	<p>Drawing software Picture editor software Animation software Scanner Digital camera Web camera</p>
8	<p>Creating the text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting a style • Selecting fonts • Producing clear instructions 	<p>Activity 8 Individual activity to produce the presentation text.</p>	<p>Word processor</p>
9	<p>The Slide Show</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting it all together • Slide change animation • Slide Timing • Recorded narration 	<p>Activity 9 Group activity to assemble all the components into a slide-show type presentation.</p>	<p><i>PowerPoint</i> software Microphone for recording narrative.</p>
10	<p>The Interactive Presentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting it all together • Making it user friendly • Action buttons: mouse or touch screen? 	<p>Activity 10 Group activity to assemble all the components into an individual user or 'kiosk' type presentation.</p>	<p>Web-page Editor and Browser or multimedia authoring package such as <i>Macromedia Director</i></p>
11	<p>Evaluation: Objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matches intentions • Met deadlines • Accuracy • All 'links' logical and work • Reliability • Repeatability 	<p>Activity 11 Groups and individuals assess critically each other's work after demonstrations.</p>	<p>Data projection facilities would be useful.</p>
12	<p>Evaluation: Subjective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of sound • Value of video • Value of animations • Is the level appropriate? • Is interaction intuitive? 	<p>Activity 12 Groups and individuals assess critically each other's work after demonstrations.</p>	<p>Data projection facilities would be useful.</p>

13	Standard Ways of Working <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintaining files on computer• Logging ICT problems• Copyright laws• Backing-up data• Proof reading text	Activity 13 <p>This activity will be spread over the entire time needed to complete the unit.</p>	Access to a computer network with personal directory space.
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SECTION 4 SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: LOOKING AT MULTIMEDIA

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.1b, C3.2, IT3.1

A good start would be to ensure that all the students are clear on what the term multimedia means. It has been seriously over-used to describe personal computers that have little more than a rudimentary sound capability and a CD ROM drive. It is of course much more than that and this first activity should prove enlightening to many.

Tasks

1. As an individual activity each student should identify as many ways as possible to enhance a simple text-only presentation of information using new technology.
2. Class discussion centred on the findings from task 1. Students should suggest examples of multimedia presentations from their own experience.
3. Students should keep a record of everything they have learnt from their researches and discussions. This will prove useful when they come to select appropriate media for incorporation in presentations of their own.

ACTIVITY 2: ACCURACY AND SUITABILITY

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.1b, C3.2, IT3.1

It is important that the students have a good grasp of the factors that might influence the overall appearance of the presentation. An experienced guest speaker will help to focus their minds on the final outcome and how it meets the needs of the audience rather than getting carried away with the 'technology'.

Tasks

1. Try and find guest speakers with experience of commissioning multimedia presentations. Get them to talk about what they were looking for in the final product and what they hoped it would achieve.
2. Discuss with the class factors that must be taken into consideration when designing a multimedia presentation. Is it aimed at children or adults or both? How much factual material will it contain and in what level of detail? Mood is also important: are you selling something or does the subject require something more sombre?
3. Disabled access must be considered whatever the subject. Students should think about different sorts of disability that could render aspects of a

presentation useless to someone so affected and come up with ideas to get around these problems. They should try and locate web sites constructed with disabled access in mind.

ACTIVITY 3: DESIGN SPECIFICATION

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.2, C3.3, WO3.1, WO3.2

The students should now be learning and practising the art of putting together a specification. This activity follows on from the previous one in that they must apply some of the ideas to an actual 'commission'.

They should work in small groups and produce a written specification for a piece of work. A stock of ideas for presentations should be available for those groups unable to come up with their own.

Tasks

1. Establish the subject for the presentation and its main theme or message. It is better if the group work on something they have come up with themselves.
2. Produce a list of all the goals that are to be achieved by showing the presentation.
3. Decide on the level of audience interaction (if any) that is required. If it is possible to get a message across without significant user input then the production will be easier and cheaper. On the other hand, audience participation can raise their levels of interest considerably.
4. Produce a written specification. Each individual student should create one of these for their portfolio.

ACTIVITY 4: DESIGN STRUCTURE AND MATERIAL

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.1b, C3.2, IT3.1, IT3.2, WO3.1, WO3.2

With a specification available, the students can now start to work out the main structure of their production. They will decide how much material will be created by themselves, how much 'bought in' and from where.

Tasks

1. Storyboards need to be created, usually using pen and paper, to develop the basic static screen layouts and sort out how they link together.

2. Locate sound, image and video resources. Some material may already be loaded on the school/college network in libraries attached to word-processor, or presentation software. Otherwise there is much to be had for free from Internet web sites (See Additional Resources). 'Live' video may be available from a web camera, but should only be used in certain special circumstances.
3. Students must consider copyright issues before cutting and pasting from apparently free sources. A study of basic copyright law would be a good idea at this point. The main thing is that they should learn to check the 'small print' on software licences. Recording of most TV programmes for education purposes is permissible – check the ERA licensing regulations.
4. Each group should present their basic design proposal to the class and invite comment and discussion.

ACTIVITY 5: PRESENTATION SOFTWARE SELECTION

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.2, IT3.1, IT3.2

The wide variety of software packages available for authoring multimedia presentations should now be researched by the students. These range from the relatively inexpensive for simple 'slide shows' such as Microsoft *PowerPoint* to the sophisticated with its own programming language such as Macromedia *Director*.

Tasks

1. Consider the presentation methods available: non-interactive slide show, interactive 'kiosk' or interactive web-based, etc. List the pros and cons of each.
2. Research the software packages available for producing each of the presentation types that have been discovered. Look for reviews in computer magazines and for data on the suppliers' web sites. The cover CD ROMs on computer magazines are a valuable source of demonstration software and full versions of earlier releases.
3. Decide which software package would be best suited to the current task. Use the list of pros and cons from Task 1 to help you.

ACTIVITY 6: LAYOUT

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.1b, C3.2, IT3.1, IT3.2, IT3.3, WO3.1, WO3.2

The rough ideas of the storyboards now need to be turned into more detailed screen layouts and consideration given to the audio/video components and how they fit in.

The students are still at the felt-pen and paper stage, but the more adventurous might want to use a drawing/paint package.

Tasks

1. Work out a colour scheme. This really sets the tone of the presentation: is your message best put across by bold, bright block colour, or does the subject merit quiet, less 'eye-bashing' shades?
2. The relative quantities of pictures and text need to be considered next. The target age group and the presentation method need to be taken into account here. A younger audience may 'switch off' at the sight of masses of fine print, and any audience will get frustrated trying to read a lot of words on a timed-slide display. Remember too, the disabled audience with poor eyesight.
3. If a slide show is being made, will the slides change automatically and if so, does the software package support this feature?
4. Is sound going to be incorporated? Students should consider carefully all the possibilities: voice-over, background music, sound-effects, sound with video, etc. They should look at all these and decide which are appropriate – but should also produce justification.
5. A kiosk-type production may need user interaction. The group should discuss what form will this take; for example, single mouse-clicks or text input. The choice will determine the complexity of the software and the hardware that needs to be provided.
6. Student groups should show the results of their work so far to the class and invite comment and discussion.

ACTIVITY 7: CREATING THE PICTURE CONTENT

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.2, IT3.1, IT3.2

Students should now investigate methods of importing, creating and editing static and animated pictures. This is likely to be an individual activity using as wide a range of hardware and software tools as possible.

Tasks

1. Learn to use a scanner to digitise photographic images from books and magazines (bearing in mind the copyright!). Scanners can also 'photograph' flat objects like coins and printed circuit boards with their components. Photographic images can be generated directly if a digital camera is available: a cheap web-camera can take reasonable 'snap-shots' if nothing better can be afforded.

2. Download clip-art images from the internet. The term clip-art includes photographic images as well as 'animated' cartoons.
3. Use a picture editor to customise the images. Basic picture editors often come bundled with other software such as web-page authoring tools.
4. Create your own pictures and drawings with a paint/drawing package. Charts and graphs are best generated by spreadsheet software such as Microsoft *Excel*.
5. Make your own simple animations using GIF Animator software – often available free from web sites.
6. Consider the file format you will use for saving all your images on the computer. It is best to keep to just one or two formats out of the dozens available. Two factors to influence your choice: can the image be compressed to keep the file size down, and can the image background be rendered 'transparent' allowing your screen background to show through?
7. Finally, decide whether video, recorded or 'live' is appropriate: it may require a more powerful PC than you have available and need a lot of disk space.

ACTIVITY 8: CREATING THE TEXT

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.2, IT3.1

The production of text lacks the glamour of image creation and manipulation, but is vitally important – there aren't too many image-only presentations around. Students should research styles and fonts both for the presentation itself and the user instructions.

Tasks

1. Each group should discuss the text style bearing in mind what they have learned and decided in Activity 6. Disabled access is seriously important here: it's not just a question of having large text. The layout must not be confusing and jumbled but on the other hand you don't want it to be boring. Conduct research into screen-reader software. Find out what its limitations are.
2. Consider the documentation that will accompany the presentation. This may just consist of installation instructions for a kiosk-type production, or the script for the speaker in a slide-type projected onto a large screen. How can you ensure that the user will understand the procedures?

ACTIVITY 9: THE SLIDE SHOW

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.2, IT3.1, WO3.1, WO3.2

Students should consider all the features peculiar to a slide-show presentation. It is not as exciting as the interactive, but presentation software like *PowerPoint* can spice it up.

Tasks

1. Look at the animations provided for the transition from slide to slide. Some really wacky ones are available and you could run the risk of irritating the audience or losing the mood.
2. Consider the slide timing, that is, how long each slide or screen remains visible. The audience will consist of people with a very wide range of reading speeds and if they are listening to a voice-over or speaker at the same time the loss of concentration – and interest - can be rapid.
3. Practise writing a voice-over script and try recording it, saving the result in a suitable file format (e.g. as a WAV file). Each member of the group should try their hand at this.

ACTIVITY 10: THE INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.2, IT3.1, IT3.2, WO3.1, WO3.2

The interactive presentation may have no more components than the slide show, but it requires a lot more thought than the latter. This is because the slide show tends to have only one pathway, and control lies with the speaker or operator. The interactive contains perhaps dozens of pathways and worse: hands over control to an untrained user!

Tasks

1. As a group, work on the key aspect of making the presentation 'user-friendly'. What does user-friendly mean in practice? The ideal is an 'intuitive' interface, requiring few if any instructions. Remember, if the task is to produce an unattended information kiosk, users will expect to understand how to 'drive' it within seconds without reference to any paper manual or Help button.
2. Decide on the size, shape, function and quantity of any on-screen buttons. Size and shape are important with very young, old or disabled users. Discuss the implications of using a touch-screen or mouse interface.

3. All the possible pathways through the presentation must be worked out to ensure that the user cannot find themselves stuck at a dead-end, or worse, that they cause the system to crash. It is a good idea for each member of a group to work out a link structure for themselves. We will come to checking or proof-reading in a later activity.
4. Use the research results of Activity 5 to decide upon the best authoring software package to use for the particular case study and implement it as a group activity.

ACTIVITY 11: EVALUATION: OBJECTIVE

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.3, IT3.3

The student groups should by now have produced some presentations which they are in a position to demonstrate to the class. Before they do however, they should discuss how they are going to make constructive criticisms, starting with objective evaluation.

Tasks

1. Each group should make an objective assessment of their own work. Each individual member of the group should watch the presentation (or pretend they are an untrained user in the case of an interactive) and produce a checklist with grades and comments against a number of items: How far have the original intentions been achieved? How accurate is it? Are all button links logical and do they work? How reliable is it: is it possible to crash it? Repeatability: Do different things happen for the same sequence of button clicks each time?
2. Armed with their checklists, the students should perform a similar evaluation of their colleagues' work.
3. Each student should produce a critical evaluation report for each presentation they have seen, using only objective criteria.

ACTIVITY 12: EVALUATION: SUBJECTIVE

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.3, IT3.3

The exercise of the previous activity should be repeated to perform a subjective evaluation. This is rather more difficult to define and should promote some lively discussion.

Tasks

1. Each group should make a subjective assessment of their own work. Each individual member of the group should watch the presentation (or pretend they are an untrained user in the case of an interactive) and produce a checklist with grades and comments against a number of items: Do the sound, video and animations contribute to getting the message across? Has the correct level been achieved? Is the interaction intuitive or does it need a further presentation to learn how to use it?
2. Armed with their checklists, the students should perform a similar evaluation of their colleagues' work.
3. Each student should produce a critical evaluation report for each presentation they have seen, using only subjective criteria.

ACTIVITY 13: STANDARD WAYS OF WORKING

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.2, C3.3, IT3.1, IT3.2

This is a kind of distributed activity, performed by each individual student alongside and part of other work. Without these basics, the student will probably end up losing their precious work at some stage. There are also issues relating to this type of creative work in particular.

Tasks

1. Learn how to save and maintain computer files in appropriate directories. Make sure that data filenames reflect the contents clearly, ideally containing version numbers. With software such as Microsoft *Word* and *PowerPoint*, fill in the Properties box for each data file you create. If Tool Tips are enabled (Windows option) then all a file's details will be displayed when the cursor rests on the filename entry in Windows Explorer. This is a small detail, but can save a lot of time when hunting for a particular file.
2. Maintain back-up copies of data files on floppy disks (or ZIP disks if available).
3. Remember to keep a log of all apparent ICT faults, software glitches or system crashes. A network manager can use this information to establish fault patterns and stop further problems.
4. When copying any material for use in presentation work, always check copyright conditions. It may not matter in the context of a classroom exercise, but in the 'real world' it is possible to get into serious legal difficulties if you start publishing other peoples' work without their permission. Just because you got it off the web, it does not necessarily mean it's free for you to copy!

5. Whenever you produce a piece of text for presentation, get another member of your group to proof read it. Reading it yourself will trap many errors, but your brain is perfectly capable of substituting what it thinks should be there in place of what is actually there.

SECTION 5 SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Assessment Activity 1: MAKING A LECTURE-STYLE PRESENTATION

Each student must be able to put together a good presentation based upon a slide-type format. The ability to do this must be seen as essential to gain an overall Pass grade. They should be provided with the opportunity at least, to use as many different types of source media as they wish. This of course also means that they can create a solution vastly too complex and fail by 'over-cooking' it. Now is a good time to learn that simplicity may often be better.

They should be encouraged to come up with their own idea for the subject, but students with less imagination and perhaps more technical flair should be allowed to demonstrate their skills by working from that suggested in the activity description.

Part of the assessment may well be provided by the audience, ideally one that has not seen any of the work before. Questionnaires may be issued for this purpose.

In order to achieve the higher grades, evidence of thorough pre-planning, recording of each stage of the work as well as originality in ideas and design will be required.

Assessment Activity 2: MAKING A 'KIOSK' INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION

The interactive presentation is potentially a far more complex task than the simple slide show and grading will need to reflect this. Again, the resources made available to the student should allow them to explore as many different media systems as possible.

In order to assess the students' work, users relevant to the subject matter and design brief should be asked to try out the 'kiosk' and their progress monitored.

As before, in order to achieve the higher grades, evidence of thorough pre-planning, recording of each stage of the work as well as originality in ideas and design will be required.

Assessment Activity 3: ASSESSING PRESENTATION PERFORMANCE

For this activity the students will research examples of multimedia presentations and produce a critical analysis of them. Access to the Internet is important here as many commercial promotions can be observed directly or downloaded and run.

To achieve the higher grades, the student must demonstrate an in-depth understanding of what separates stimulating and interesting work that inspires the user to think differently about a subject or buy a product, from a dull presentation that may have the opposite effect to that desired.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 1: MAKING A LECTURE-STYLE PRESENTATION

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.1b, C3.2, C3.3, IT3.1, IT3.2, IT3.3

Situation

You have been commissioned by your local town council to produce a promotional presentation extolling the virtues of the area to potential industrial employers. The production should last about ten minutes and feature a narrative soundtrack, and appropriate background music, photos, video clips, etc.

Tasks

1. Spend some time thinking about the target audience. Who are they and what are they looking for? Make a list of the sort of information they are likely to require and carry out research to gather this data about your town.
2. Draw up a specification listing all the subject areas to be covered with possible techniques and styles. The type of audience must be kept in mind all the time.
3. Produce story boards using pen and paper to get a feel for how the information flows smoothly and consistently from screen to screen.
4. Gather together all the graphical images you are going to use. These may include scanned-in photographs, video clips, drawings and maps. Check on copyright issues.
5. Make a detailed plan of the whole production with sketches of each screen layout. Work out slide-change timing.
6. Write a script for the narrative to fit in with your slide plan. Record it yourself, or find someone else with a good speaking voice. In a real production, famous actors are often commissioned for this work. Generate the screen text.
7. Put it all together using a suitable package such as *PowerPoint*.
8. Assess your work: does it meet the original aims and objectives? Try it out on an audience and get feedback.
9. Make sure that all stages of production are fully documented.

Assessment

All documents you produce will form part of the assessment, because marks will be allocated for the methods you have used and the level of pre-planning as well as the final product. You must be able to justify the inclusion of any component and be able to say how it helps achieve the required aims and objectives.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 2: MAKING A 'KIOSK' INTERACTIVE PRESENTATION

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.1b, C3.2, C3.3, IT3.1, IT3.2, IT3.3

Situation

Your local museum wants an interactive system to be used in two different situations: firstly as a stand-alone system in the museum foyer to provide information to visitors, secondly as a web-site to provide an on-line resource to educational establishments. You have the task of presenting information in an interesting manner to a very wide audience so that more people will want to come and see objects at the museum. The museum director wants data on their most significant objects to be displayed, together with visitor information such as gallery plans.

Tasks

1. Think about the two main aims of this work: is it possible to produce one presentation that works in two different environments? List the features that each type of audience will want to use, and look for requirements common to both.
2. Draw up a specification listing all the subject areas to be covered with possible techniques and styles. Use your own local museum as the model – or try something ambitious like the British Museum!
3. Assess the hardware impact of the two different environments. For example, the stand-alone machine will probably require a touch-screen.
4. Produce story boards using pen and paper to get a feel for how the information flows smoothly and consistently from screen to screen.
5. Gather together all the graphical images you are going to use. These may include scanned-in photographs, video clips, room plans and maps. Check on copyright issues.
6. Make a detailed plan of the whole production with sketches of each screen layout.
7. Select and use a suitable authoring package. A web-page tool such as Microsoft *FrontPage* could be used so that the finished work is viewed via a web browser in both cases.
8. Assess your work: does it meet the original aims and objectives? Try out both forms of the presentation on an audience and get feedback.
9. Make sure that all stages of production are fully documented, including installation instructions for museum staff.

Assessment

All documents you produce will form part of the assessment, because marks will be allocated for the methods you have used and the level of pre-planning as well as the final product. You must be able to justify the inclusion of any component and be able to say how it helps achieve the required aims and objectives.

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY 3: ASSESSING PRESENTATION PERFORMANCE

Key Skills: C3.1a, C3.2, C3.3

Situation

Imagine yourself as a first-time user of a variety of different presentational material. Also put yourself in the position of someone with impaired sight or hearing or limited use of their hands or even all three. Consider other viewpoints: from an ICT expert to a computer-phobe, from a child to a pensioner. You must produce evaluations of various existing systems, each from different user perspective.

Tasks

1. Locate and research as many different multimedia productions as you can. Manufacturers produce promotional 'videos' which can often be obtained for nothing, or downloaded from the Internet. Software suppliers often produce training or demonstrations of their programs, again available via the Internet or included on the CD ROMs attached to most computer magazines. Look for interactive displays based on computers in museums.
2. Establish the likely aims and objectives for each of the presentations you have found. Work out their intended target audiences.
3. Evaluate critically the presentations from each of the user perspectives that seem relevant, producing a report suitable for submission to each body likely to have been responsible for the original commission.

Assessment

You will need to convince the assessor that you have an in-depth understanding of the issues that determine the success or failure of any particular multimedia presentation. Your reports should include clear and logical reasoning for all your objective and subjective assessments.

SECTION 6 ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Textbooks

Creating Dynamic Multimedia Presentations using Microsoft *PowerPoint*: Using Microsoft *PowerPoint*
C.M.Lehman
South-Western Publishing
ISBN 0324025378

Digital Multimedia
N.Chapman, J.Chapman
Wiley
ISBN 0471983861

Getting Started with Multimedia
C.Coorough
Dryden Press
ISBN 0030208025

If Macromedia *Director* is available (a professional multimedia authoring package), then the following book will be of great value to the students. Of course, at the time of writing *Director 8* is available demonstrating how hard it is to keep up.

Director 7 for Mac and Windows: Visual Quick Start Guide
A.Persidsky
Peachpit Press
ISBN 0201353989

Internet Web Sites

Many web sites offer free downloadable clipart in the form of cartoons, photos, and authoring components such as backgrounds, icons, buttons and borders.

Animated 'GIFs' may be downloaded from the <http://www.animationfactory.com> site.

Another good source of free clipart of various forms is the <http://www.clipart.com> site.

Finding examples

The Open University uses multimedia in many of its TV programmes. Many items of computer software come with very elaborate demonstrations and tutorials.

The COMPASS project at the British Museum in London provides public access to museum object information using a sophisticated multimedia system.