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THE DRUMCHAPEL PROJECT: ICT SKILLS IN TWO GLASGOW SCHOOLS

Dorothy McLelland and John Crawford report on the ICT skills of school pupils in a deprived area of Glasgow

THE BACKGROUND AND AIMS of this project are firmly rooted in Glasgow Caledonian University's mission statement, which identifies a duty to attract students from deprived backgrounds. In this context it is useful to form links with those communities which have quite low rates of progression to higher education. Contact between University library staff and school librarians in the Glasgow area led to a project which aimed to find out what school pupils knew about computers and what their ICT skills level would be when they

Not all pupils aware of public library ICT

Little consultation with librarians on ICT matters

Many teachers never refer pupils to the library

came to university. It had initially been intended that the project would be of the traditional information-seeking skills evaluation type, but in the planning stage it became clear that a project which would be of benefit to both secondary and tertiary education should focus more on ICT skills evaluation. As the project actually took place, and emerging comparative data was considered, the need to focus more on the information literacy agenda was discussed, and influenced our findings.

There were three partners in the project, alongside the University. They were:

- Drumchapel High School, with approximately 660 pupils, many coming from unemployed or low income families, and with few going on to higher education. In 2002, the school moved to a new building with five ICT suites, an intranet connection in every classroom, and a Library Resource Centre housing

an ICT Learning Centre with 20 computers.

- Hyndland Secondary School, situated in a more affluent part of Glasgow, and with 950 pupils. The recently refurbished Library Resource Centre contains 24 PCs.
- The third partner was the Drumchapel Learning Centre/Community Library. The library is a member of the REAL Partnership, a Glasgow City Council initiative which aims to improve access to ICT, creating an integrated learning environment focused on individual needs. Young people are encouraged to use the facilities.

THE METHODOLOGY contained a number of strands. In Drumchapel School, three focus groups were organised. A questionnaire on ICT use was issued to one class in each of the six year groups, yielding a total of 146 returns. In Hyndland School, it was issued to one class in each of the Secondary 1, Secondary 2 and Secondary 5/6 age groups, with 113 returned. ICT self-evaluation forms were issued to pupils in both schools on a voluntary basis, with 217 being returned in Drumchapel School, covering all year groups, and 47 from pupils in Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 in Hyndland School. Questionnaires for teachers were voluntary, and these were completed by 44 staff in Drumchapel and 25 in Hyndland.

A scan of relevant literature was carried out prior to the design of the project. Of particular interest was a recent study (RECS, 2003) carried out by the Research, Economic and Corporate Strategy (RECS) Unit of the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED). This attempted to determine the performance levels, on a range of related issues, of pupils at Primary 7, Secondary 2 and Secondary 4. The study examined ICT skills and abilities, pupils' experience of, and attitudes to, ICT and, in addition, the views of their teachers. As a result, two national surveys of pupils and

their teachers were undertaken, the first in 1998-9, and the second in 2000-01. Although not offering an exact parallel, particularly with regard to the size of the sample, the research tools developed were helpful in deciding on the methodology of the GCU study, and the results were useful for comparative purposes.

Useful data was also found in a research report issued by Scottish Enterprise Glasgow (2002). Entitled Digital Glasgow, its purpose was to measure individuals' awareness of a number of issues in a representative sample of Glasgow households. This study investigated access to ICT, skills levels, and desired support for ICT. The research population included some interviewees in Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) areas, such as Drumchapel. The results will be used to measure progress towards digital inclusion and lifelong learning in the city in the course of the next few years.

THE RESULTS INDICATED a number of key findings which are summarised here. For more detailed information, reference should be made to the full Report. This can be viewed at <http://www.lib.gcal.ac.uk/research/drumchapel.pdf>

It is plain that many pupils were very knowledgeable about computers and about the Internet, with the majority using computers between one and four times a week for recreational and academic purposes.

Pupils knowledgeable about internet

Majority used computers weekly, half had home access

Good ICT expertise

Secondary 1 pupils suggested that computers were very important for homework, for searching for information, and for future careers or for university-level work. Older pupils considered these skills more from the viewpoint of their present schoolwork, and were less sure about their general importance.

In general, pupils thought that computers

- helped with spelling
- produced neater work
- were helpful in correcting mistakes
- provided easy access to information via the internet
- yielded up-to-date information
- could be faster than books
- could add graphics and colour

However, some pupils complained of restricted access to sites. They appeared to encounter problems in logging on, viruses, forgotten passwords, and were aware of the dangers of chat lines. Difficulties also included mastery of the keyboard and mis-

Problems

Restricted access to sites

Website evaluation

Difficulties logging on

Viruses

Forgotten passwords

Keyboard use

Lack of relevant websites

Poor use of librarian's skills

use of log-ins and passwords.

Focus group discussions showed that there were misconceptions amongst the younger pupils about "ownership" of the Internet and World Wide Web, but that older pupils were more aware of this issue and consequently more selective in their use of electronically-generated information. Older pupils were also better able to judge when books would not only be more accessible but also more authoritative.

Pupils use the internet as a learning tool, although this is a secondary activity, with

word processing being the most prevalent use of computers. They are sometimes frustrated by the lack of sites which present material at an appropriate level. On the other hand, the librarians found that some useful sites, usually on contentious issues, were barred by the network's filtering system. It would seem that more research needs to be done on the availability and appropriateness of curriculum-related material. As with the selection of printed material, this may be a fruitful joint enterprise between teachers and librarians. In fact, the expertise of the librarians is generally under-utilised, as evidenced by the low number of teachers and pupils who consult them on ICT matters. In both schools, the librarians have completed a programme which qualifies them to advise on the use of internet sites which support curricular subjects, to promote reading through ICT applications, and to assist in the development of pupils' skills. However, the school's management would have to be clear on the extent to which librarians can contribute in this way, given their existing library management and class-contact workload. Appropriate clerical support may be needed in the library, to allow for this use of the librarian's time. In addition, the library may not be a suitable environment for teaching ICT skills, particularly regarding noise levels, which could have an adverse effect on established library services like quiet study areas and book selection activities.

Many of the points made by Todd (2001), in an address to school librarians, were supported by the research results. For example, pupils tend to examine only the first screen of most sites. They sometimes have difficulty in evaluating sites, especially when a large number are presented as a result of a keyword search. This is a difficulty which can be tackled by librarians as well as teachers, and in Hyndland School pupils are offered some guidance in a leaflet on internet use. This leaflet includes the evaluation of web sites.

The key role of the school in teaching ICT skills, especially in deprived areas, is highlighted by the research, with 64% of Drumchapel pupils learning most about computers from school. The use of ICT in general, and of internet sources in particular, was often dictated by the teacher's awareness and expertise, with the majority of teachers stating that they only occasionally referred pupils to internet use in the classroom, and never referred them to the library. This finding was supported by a study which was undertaken at

Positive Features

Improved spelling

Neater work

Easy access to information

Currency

Possibly faster than books

Graphics and colour

Loughborough University (Merchant and Hepworth, 2002). This showed that although the teachers interviewed were information-literate, their skills and attitudes were not being transferred to their pupils. In the Glasgow schools, the lack of guidance from teachers on evaluation of websites and on copyright issues was also striking. Since the teachers' questionnaires were completed on a voluntary basis by about half of the possible respondents, the evidence for this statement must be treated with caution, especially since a wide range of software (not necessarily internet based) was cited, and pupils were required to use ICT in a variety of ways.

As the questionnaire showed, at least half of the pupils had access to computers at home, a higher percentage than reported in the Digital Glasgow survey. This reflected 37% home ownership and 30% access to the internet. Overall, the majority of pupils used home computers for school work, but it is reasonable to suppose that the internet was also used for recreational purposes, since it vied with games as being the most popular use over all age-groups.

Ownership of home computers is forecast to increase, thus making the use of other access points less likely. The Digital Glasgow Report states that only 3% of their respondents used the internet in the public library, and so it is not surprising to discover that in Drumchapel, only 29% of pupils used the ICT facilities in the local library/REAL Centre. However, it may be that this is considered a less important facility because pupils have easier access through schools' provision during the day in term-time and, as time goes by, more have computers at home. Additionally, as the focus groups showed, not all pupils

knew that the public library's computers were available to them. There is still scope for the public library to increase the take-up of its ICT facilities and, as with book-based activities, to promote the use of ICT as a social and more personally-oriented activity. There is some encouragement for this in the Digital Glasgow Report, which notes that respondents from SIP areas have awareness, access and attitudes to ICT which are comparable with respondents in non-SIP areas.

Within Drumchapel High School, in general the opinions expressed in the focus groups were borne out by the results of the questionnaire. There is, however, one case where the evidence is contradictory. Members of the Secondary 4 focus group appeared to be less interested and less confident: they also felt that they had missed out on the tuition given to younger pupils. On the other hand, the questionnaires revealed that, at 76%, the largest percentage of home computers was available to this group of pupils. Only 24% of Secondary 4 pupils hardly ever used computers in school, with 56% using them three to four times a week.

According to their own assessment, 33% knew enough about computers to get by, and 46% claimed to know a lot. This corresponded closely with the school's overall

Key Recommendations

School libraries to be ICT advice/training centres

Develop teachers' ICT expertise

Collaboration on training and copyright

Joint project on information literacy

response of 36% and 44% respectively. In the ICT self-evaluation questionnaire high levels of competence were scored, with at least 52% of S4 pupils able to carry out all the processes.

The pupils' self-assessment of ICT skills suggested a high level of expertise, even at Secondary 1 stage. Glasgow Caledonian University's self-evaluation form for new

students was used as a basis for the questionnaire issued to the schools. From this it is evident that Secondary 5 and Secondary 6 pupils from Drumchapel High School would have little difficulty in satisfying the University's requirements. Since these two year groups were not included in Hyndland Secondary School's survey, it is not possible to make the same forecast for them, but the comparison of skills in Secondary 3 and Secondary 4 in both schools suggests that a similar level of expertise would eventually result.

Considering that large-scale ICT provision in both Drumchapel High School and Hyndland Secondary School is so recent, it is evident that, in the short space of a year or two, the acquisition of knowledge and expertise has been encouraging.

IN SECONDARY EDUCATION in Scotland, attention is increasingly focusing on the information literacy agenda. An information literacy course aimed at post-16 year olds has just been launched by a number of partners (Arthur 2003), brought together by the Scottish Library and Information Council (SLIC). The North Ayrshire Council has also begun to develop e-literacy support materials for primary school pupils (Sutton 2003). These encouraging signs suggest that joint work between the secondary and tertiary education sectors would be profitable. New students are now coming to University with better IT skills than was the case a few years ago. The time is now ripe to develop comparable information literacy skills.

THE MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS stemming from the study call for the more effective application of the ICT expertise and training of teachers and librarians. They propose:

- The designation of the school library as one of the centres for ICT advice and training, so that the ICT training and expertise of the school librarian can be utilised more by teachers and pupils
- The enhancement of teachers' ICT expertise for the benefit of pupils' learning
- Collaboration between teachers and librarians in the training of pupils in the choice and evaluation of websites, and on copyright issues
- The effectiveness of the use of REAL Centres by school pupils should be reviewed.
- More research on access to contentious websites, which are currently filtered

- A joint school/university research project on the development of information literacy skills training

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METADATA HOT AND COOL

REVIEWS

edited by Lyndon Pugh

Metadata Applications and Management edited by G.E. Gorman. (International Yearbook of Library and Information Management 2003/2004) London: Facet Publishing, 2003. 384pp. Hardback. ISBN 1-95604-474-2. £60.00

METADATA, the Introduction informs the reader, "is as hot a topic as we can have in the information profession". To confirm this belief the editors have assembled 15 articles from the information management profession, which offer an overview of developments in metadata applications both generally and in selected disciplines. The six broad groupings address General Perspectives, Metadata in the Humanities, Metadata in Government, Metadata in Education, Metadata and Bibliographic Organisation, with a final section covering miscellaneous issues such as international standards and applications in developing countries. The contributions come from

Concept analysis and the organisation of information . . . are processes that can be applied equally to a record of mathematical diagrams on a website or to a rare . . . Latin primer

practitioners in Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, India, Botswana, Canada, the USA, Germany and Great Britain.

The opening chapter Metadata – What it Means for Memory Institutions (libraries

museums and archives) makes a plea for the understanding of the word metadata, and this striving for definition continues throughout many of the articles. Acknowledging that "its boundaries are vague and definitions numerous" the reader is left to choose which definition seems the most precise and useful: should they accept "data that describe attributes of a resource, characterise relationships, support its discovery and effective use, and exist in an electronic environment"? Or would the sceptic lean towards "Metadata we assert is a cool name for a familiar activity, used by ambitious LIS scholars seeking to hook their traditional research activities on to exciting trends and fundable jargon."

The author of the chapter entitled Metadata – Bibliographic Organization Nexus, explores the relationship between metadata and traditional resource description, and this tension between cataloguing and metadata creation is apparent in several of the essays. The debate is, I think, fuelled by a fundamental misunderstanding of what cataloguing is, a belief that it is a process which deals solely with text-based resources and makes few, if any, assumptions about potential users of these records. There is an important misconception in the first assertion that influences much of the damaging "cataloguer v metadata creator" debates. Concept analysis and the organisation of information are not limited to physical items. They are mental activities operating quite separately from strictures of format and methods of delivery. They are processes that can be applied equally to a record of mathematical diagrams on a website or to a rare edition of a Latin primer.

One author takes this belief that cataloguing is restricted to documenting physical items one stage further, and cites an article by J. Jordan and T.B. Hickey in support of her argument that, as increasingly the items described in a library's catalogue are available directly from the computer terminal (for example film clips and photographs), then the need for "elaborate description is obviously less than that needed for physical materials." I would strongly disagree, and argue that the need to describe these materials in unelaborated detail is equally as important, if not more so, because it saves the user a great deal of

work by not having to browse on screen through potentially thousands of images to find those of most relevance and value.

The most successful chapters in the book are those which do not protest too much in defence of metadata, but look at what traditional bibliographic methods can bring to the organisation of electronic resources: designing portals to the Internet; creating controlled vocabularies; becoming involved in standards and promoting record exchange.

Many chapters deal with the need for standards for metadata, both generally and within the selected disciplines. The text discusses a bewildering array of such standards, and is a mass of acronyms – for example the ACMI Metadata Standard (The Australian Centre for the Moving

Metadata . . . as hot a topic as we can have in the information profession

Image, see News column p 136), the ISAAR (CPF) [International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families] and OAL-PMH (The Open Archives Protocol for Metadata Harvesting). The list of working parties, committees, and sub-committees working on these standards is equally formidable. The essays reveal how far the information world is from an internationally agreed standard which can be applied universally, as can the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules.

The Dublin Core is perhaps the best known of the standards, but here too there are problems. Priscilla Caplan, author of the chapter International Initiatives in the Implementation of Metadata Standards, notes that several institutions have found the lack of content guidelines for use with the Dublin Core to be a difficulty, and so have chosen to develop their own local procedures. Caplan states that there is a clear lack of definition as to what a collection is, and therefore there is no standard scheme for collection-level descriptions.

This chapter concludes with support for metadata registries which would record all the terms used and proposed in a particular

**Metadata has created
a renewed sense of
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resource description**

metadata scheme, and match them with terms used in different schemes. This would seem to add a layer of administrative complexity, and it is a near admission of failure in achieving a single, definitive standard for digital or any other collections.

I looked carefully, and in vain, for guidance or information on what metadata standards have been developed, or are in the making, for the control of subject terms. Bill Stocking and Louise Craven in their essay *Metadata and the UK Archives Network* admit that in the archive community at least, the prospect is not good. They acknowledge that a standard for subject terms is taking longer to develop, and that postgraduate archive courses do not include subject indexing as part of the syllabus. When research repeatedly shows that the most popular types of search enquiry in archives and record offices in the UK are subject searches, they acknowledge the paradox and the immensity of the problem.

At £60 this is an expensive book and I wondered who would benefit from that investment: not practitioners; there is a regrettable lack of examples. The Dublin Core Metadata Element Set is referred to many times throughout the book, but the authors all fail to tell you why those elements have been chosen and how they can practically be applied across a wide set of media including web pages. One author writes “an ontology is similar to a controlled vocabulary but not exactly the same; and RDF (Resource Description Framework) description of a person is similar to, but not exactly the same as an authority record”. No examples are given to illustrate these difficult distinctions and such evasions and omissions obfuscate the issue. The book would be of most interest, I suspect, to those teachers of information management who need to be abreast of the latest developments in thinking and technologies, and a list of references at the end

of each article will undoubtedly help this education.

It should be celebrated that documentation has become “a hot topic”, and all the essays in the book bear witness to the fact that metadata, in one author’s assessment, “has created a renewed sense of intellectual excitement in resource description”. Managing and imposing structure on web resources is a daunting and exacting task which is inviting worldwide professional scrutiny and financial investment; reassuringly, for this reviewer, a traditional printed back-of-the-book index serves as a quick and efficient road into the debate.

Reference: Jordan, J. & Hickey, T.B. (2001). *Metadata Trends*. In Chen, C. (ed.) *Global Digital Library Development in the New Millennium*; fertile ground for distributed cross-disciplinary collaboration. Beijing. Tsinghua University Press. 115-20.

Olwen Terris ☆☆☆
Chief Cataloguer
National Film and Television Archive

**Zephaniah
Adrian Mitchell
Kwesi Johnson
Mahmood Jamal
Michael Rosen
Tony Harrison
Sarah Maguire**

On the Eve of Destruction: Poetry Against War. Team Video, 102 Canolot Studios, 222 Kensal Road, London W10 5BN. Tel 020 8960 5536 Fax 020 8960 9784 email: team-video.co.uk website www.team-video.co.uk

RECORDED AT the Bloomsbury Theatre, London, in February 2003, on the eve of Coalition action against Iraq, this video is a vigorous and unashamed explosion of anger, and is none the worse for it. There is an eclectic mix of rap, dub, irony, monologue, chant, lyric,

and performance poetry. The poets involved range from Benjamin Zephaniah to Tony Harrison and Sarah Maguire, via Adrian Mitchell, Linton Kwesi Johnson, Mahmood Jamal, and Michael Rosen. It is said that the contents have been specially edited for use in schools. If that is so, then teachers will naturally want to listen closely to one or two contributions and take their own decisions on exactly where they might profitably use some of the material in a teaching environment.

With that out of the way, the video is a spirited, principled, and opinionated expression of some of the variety of modern English poetry, as well as an outpouring of protest. Users can make their own minds up on the critical standards of the contributions. If purists and traditionalists quibble, the intention of the production is to provide graphic, stimulating learning material: in this it succeeds, and there is much in it to satisfy most tastes. I particularly liked the contributions of Tony Harrison and Sarah Maguire, whose work I found to be the most effective and well-targeted, if the allusion can be forgiven.

Michael Rosen has provided a number of teaching suggestions to complement the readings, and these are wide-ranging and stimulating. They include questions on how poetry can contribute to vital political events, the way in which the statements of poets differ from those of journalists or politicians, the different voices used, and what kind of content and media pupils themselves would include if they were preparing a similar event.

The bottom right-hand corner of the video also has a useful video index which will allow individual poems to be used with ease, and will also permit teachers to follow an order which suits them best.

Given the difficulty of producing what is essentially a “talking heads” video while retaining interest and pace throughout, the production is satisfactory from a technical point of view. Although some of the split screen effects did not work, and were distracting, for the most part the producer allowed the words, and in some cases, the performances, to speak for themselves. There were occasional weak spots when the satire was not that biting, and when the jokes were weak, but the audience dutifully laughed in all the right places.

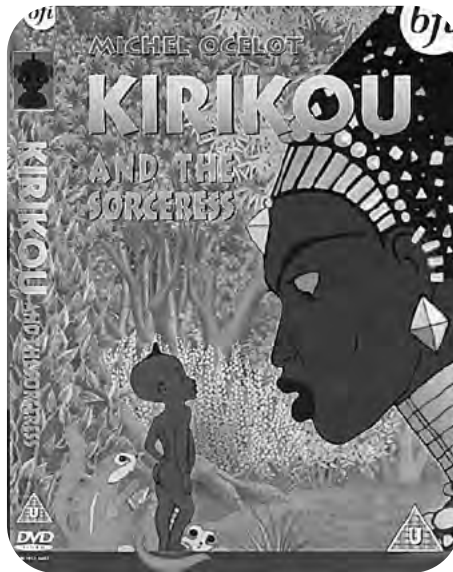
Overall, this is a most valuable source of material for what will surely remain a divisive but important issue.

Lyndon Pugh ☆☆☆

bfi Video Releases

KIRIKOU AND THE SORCERESS, released on dvd towards the end of last year, was the joint winner of the 2002 British Animation Award for best European feature. Based on a traditional West African folk tale, it tells the story of the 10cm tall Kirikou, who emerges, walking and talking, from his mother's womb. To discover the secret of a sorceress who has cursed his village, Kirikou goes through a perilous journey through the African bush. The brilliant animation style and setting are unapologetically African, with stylised drawings of plants and trees inspired by Egyptian drawings and Henri Rousseau's paintings.

A specially commissioned musical score uses only African instruments, with the sound track adding another rich layer to this magical fairytale. DVD extras include the original French version with English subtitles, as well as the English language version, and a Director's biography.



THE EDGE OF THE WORLD, which tells the story of a remote island in the Shetlands, was Michael Powell's first independent production, and established his reputation for experimentation. To settle an argument over whether the islanders should give up their livelihood and move to the mainland, two childhood friends follow an ancient tradition and climb the island's highest cliff face. The outcome shatters the island's peace and splits the community. The film was restored by the National Film and Television Archive in 1990, and the *bfi* further restored its picture and sound for this dvd release. Powell later wrote a book about his obsession with the grandeur of Scotland's Outer Isles, and his struggle to make the film. Entitled *20,000 Feet on Foula*, extracts from the book, read by Daniel Day Lewis, are included on the dvd. Other extras include commentary by Michael Powell's widow, and film critic Ian Christie, and Michael Powell's home movies. Also included are the documentary *Return to the Edge of the World* (1978), the travelogue *St Kilda – Britain's Loneliest Isle* (1928), biographies of Michael Powell and producer Joe Rock, and a stills gallery. There are subtitles for the hard of hearing, and the dvd was released in January at a price of £19.99. It runs for 74 minutes.

CHARLIE CHAPLIN: THE MUTUAL FILMS Vol 1 was released last November. The first of a two volume production contains six films Chaplin made for the Mutual film Corporation during a period when he became the highest paid entertainer in the world. During that time, Mutual built Chaplin his own studio, and allowed him total freedom to make 12 two-reel films during 12 months.

This release contains the custard pie fights of *Behind the Scenes*, his portrayal of a migrant's arrival in New York in *The Immigrant*, and his policeman in a tough neighbourhood in the acclaimed *Easy Street*. The brand new scores are written and recorded by Carl Davis.

Dvd extras include newsreel footage of Chaplin on a voyage back to Britain, a filmed interview with Carl Davis; biographies of Chaplin's leading lady Edna Purviance, and Eric Campbell; Frank Scheide's essay on Chaplin's time at the Mutual Studios. Also priced at £19.99, the contact for this and the other releases reported on this page is the *bfi* Press Officer, Jill Reading, who can be emailed at jill.reading@bfi.org.uk

JOURNEY TO ITALY is Rossellini's deceptively simple tale of a bored English couple travelling to Italy. As their marriage disintegrates around them, the story becomes one of passion and cruelty. *Journey to Italy* is now recognised as one of Rossellini's finest films, and a key landmark in the development of modern cinema.

The meandering storyline is underpinned by powerful cinematography and with images and ideas celebrating the ancient culture that had grown up around the volcano Vesuvius, as well as the lives of the Neapolitan people filmed by Rossellini.

Working without a script, George Raft and Ingrid Bergman reflect the confused and troubled state of the protagonists as their relationship falls apart. The dvd extras include commentary by the film historian Lorna Mulvey, and a biography of Roberto Rossellini. It is priced at £19.99 and the running time is 80 minutes.





National Library



Maureen Brown compiles our list of

Film and Video From the BNFVC

Adult Abuse: Basic Awareness

TOPSS Foundation Standard 4

BVS, London House, 271-273 King Street, Hammersmith, London W6 9LZ. Tel 0845 644 2866; Fax 020 8233 2914; email: orders@bvs-uk.com Free trial and purchase £95 + VAT. VHS, 36 mins. Training video for anyone who works with a vulnerable adult, which aims to raise awareness of abuse. Considers the different forms of abuse as well as other key definitions (e.g. vulnerable adult, or significant harm) as stated in the Department of Health's guidance leaflet No Secrets. Also gives attention to where abuse can occur, such as in the community and in institutions, who abuses, how to recognise abuse and what to do if a worker suspects or finds that abuse is happening. Audience: care workers.

At the Coal Face

Panamint Cinema, Abercorn Schoolhouse, Whitequarries, Broxburn, EH52 6PZ. Tel 01506 834936; Fax 834550; email: cinema@panamint.co.uk Purchase only £15.99. VHS, approx. 59 mins. A compilation of two documentaries about British coal mines: The Cumberland Story (1948) directed by Humphrey Jennings uses miners and managers as actors to tell the story of the modernisation of the Cumberland coal mines in the 1940s, and includes a dramatic reconstruction of the Ladbroke disaster of 1837, in which 36 men lost their lives as workings beneath the Irish Sea were flooded; Rhondda and Wye (1948) which explores the famous Welsh valleys, and contrasts the development of the Rhondda's collieries with the pastoral scenes of the farmlands and plains of the Wye Valley.

Caterpillar: the Experience – Volume Two

Miller's Classic Plant, 24 Great Lane, Reach, Cambridge, CB5 0JF. Tel/Fax 01638 741428; email: grahame@millersclassicplant.co.uk Purchase only £15.74 + VAT. VHS, approx. 120 mins. The second in a series of Caterpillar licensed videos looking at the company's earliest products. Modern day footage was filmed in various quarries, opencast coalmines and earthmoving jobs around England. Includes archive films from the 1920s onwards. Features Caterpillar D11R with ripper, Caterpillar 992G, 988G wheeled loaders, Caterpillar 789 and 777D haulers, and Caterpillar D 9 and D5M LGP dozers.

Children Can Learn with their Shoes Off

Lucky Duck Publishing, 3 Thorndale Mews, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 2HX. Tel 0117 973 2881; Fax 1707; email: publishing@luckyduck.co.uk Purchase only £40 + £7 VAT, ISBN 1 873 942 89 3. Produced by Barbara Maines. VHS, 104 mins. A video and handbook on supporting young people with Aspergers Syndrome, covering best practice in classrooms and colleges around the country. Shows the excellent, flexible and imaginative ways in which adults working in schools can improve the learning and social experience for these students. Includes a commentary by Rita Jordan and the full transcript of her extended interview is provided in the accompanying handbook. Audience: teachers.

Civil Rights Movement, Part 2: Awakening a Nation

ABC News Classroom Edition (USA) Viewtech Educational Media, 7-8 Falcons Gate, Northavon Business Centre, Dean Road, Yate, Bristol, BS37 5NH. Tel 01454 858055; Fax 858056; email: info@viewtech.co.uk Purchase only, Library code: 21764. Produced by Disney Educational Productions. VHS, 18 mins. This programme is the second in a five-part series of programmes which cover the story of the civil rights movement in the United States. The production draws on archive footage from ABC News. Explores Dr Martin Luther King Jr.'s pivotal role in focussing national attention on civil rights. Shows key demonstrations in Montgomery and Birmingham, and includes Dr King's stirring "I have a dream" speech, which inspired thousands of his fellow African-American citizens in their quest for equality. Audience: Secondary schools; ages 11-18.

Concorde Around the World

Quantum Leap Group, 1A Great Northern Street, Huntingdon, PE29 7HJ. Tel 01480 455125; Fax 456686; email: quantumleap@ukonline.co.uk Purchase only £12.99. Produced by Fast Forward Productions. VHS, 60 mins. Follows the last ever BA round-the-world charter in late 1999. Experiences include on the flight deck, in the cabin, and on the ground, as the aircraft visits 11 destinations in 28 days. Places visited include: London, New York, Hawaii, Fiji, Sydney, Bangkok, Madras, Nairobi, Aqaba, and Venice.

The Driver

Out-Takes, 139 High Street, Beckenham, BR3 1AG. Tel 020 8289 2466; Fax 2467; email: info@outtakes.co.uk

Hire £95 + vat for two – or £140 for five – working days, or purchase £345 + vat VHS, or £450 + vat DVD.

Made in association with the CBI. VHS or DVD, 12 mins. Safety training programme for company drivers, which asks them to imagine taking their company vehicle out for a journey, then think how they would feel if they killed a complete stranger and ended up in prison.

The film tells the story of Dean, a driver with an exemplary record who took his eye off the road for a second too long.

As well as issuing a stark warning, the programme provides an understanding of how adopting a few key behaviours could dramatically reduce the number of road accidents.

Eden: the Inside Story

The TwoFour Collection, PO Box 17, Plympton, PL7 5YG. Tel 01752 333900; Fax 344224;

email: enqs@twofour.co.uk

or Eden Project, Mail Order Department, Bodelva, St Austell, PL24 2SG. Tel 01726 811951; Fax 811933;

email: mailorder@edenproject.com

Purchase only £15. VHS or DVD, 135 mins. Edited from over 2000 hours of film, provides a behind-the-scenes record of the birth of the Eden Project at St Austell in Cornwall.

The production starts with construction against the odds during some of Cornwall's worst ever weather, and covers the sourcing, nurturing and planting of over 120,000 plants from across the world – all against the clock.

Fenland Farming 1955

Primetime Video Productions, Woodhatch Studio, Eastville, Boston, PE22 8JR. Tel 01205 270397; Fax 270204;

email: orders@ptvideo.com

Purchase only £16, code: Vid 01. A Lincolnshire Film Archive Presentation. VHS, 55 mins. Presents a year in the life of a Lincolnshire farm at a time when horse-drawn carts brought trays of seed potatoes to a field where a gang of a dozen men planted them by hand, while a tractor driven ridger closed the rows behind them.

Film as Evidence: Britain in 1900

BFI Education Resources, PO Box 105, Rochester, ME2 4BE. Tel 0870 241 3764; Fax 01634 290175; general enquiries email: education@bfi.org.uk

Purchase only £34.99 inc VAT, catalogue no. BR073. VHS, 62 mins. A history teaching resource consisting of a video compilation and a teaching guide supplied on a CD-ROM. Aspects of Britain in 1900, brought to life by contemporary filmmakers, include the wonders of transport, children's games, women's rights and the war, and many others. The video consists of 33 films made during Queen Victoria's reign, and five from the early Edwardian era. Audience: Ages 9-15 years.

Frontiers of Dreams and Fears

Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, 1 Gough Square, London, EC4A 3DE. Tel 020 7832 1310; Fax 1329; email: caabu@caabu.org

Free loan to educational establishments, purchase by individuals £25. Directed by Mai Masri. VHS, 56 mins. Documentary following two Palestinian teenage girls who correspond by email. One of them lives in the Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon, and the other in Bethlehem's Dhaysha camp.

Future Tense

Legal Network Television, 2 Bream's Buildings, Chancery Lane, London EC4A 1PJ. Tel 020 7611 7438; Fax 7435; email: talkback@lawcol.co.uk

Purchase only £27.50 + VAT. VHS or DVD, 60 mins. The 1000th anniversary issue of LNTV Times. Filmed at the Solicitors 2003 Conference, focuses on the future framework for legal services, the implications of the Clementi review and the opportunities and threats for law firms in the coming years. Includes interviews with key figures in the legal profession and an exclusive, extended interview with Lord Falconer, the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs. Audience: legal profession and students.

Greetings from Missile Street [USA]

voices uk, 5 Caledonian Road, King's Cross, London N1 9DX. Tel 0845 458 2564;

email: voices@viwuk.freeseerve.co.uk

Purchase only £4 inc p&p. Directed by Tom Jackson. VHS, 40 mins. Documentary on Iraq, showing what day-to-day life is like for Iraqis, struggling to survive under hardships caused by the embargo. Focusing on three families from Basra, and on the effort of several US activists to live with them on the UN food rations during the hot month of August 2000.

The Human Shields

Platform Films, c/o Pennybank Chambers, 33-35 St John's Square, London EC1M 4DS. Tel 020 7278 8394;

email: platform.films@virgin.net

or CultureShop.org, PO Box 29683, London E2 6XH; www.cultureshop.org. Purchase only £15 home use only, £50 institutional use, £10 low income. Directed by Chris Reeves. VHS, 58 mins. Follows a group of people from Britain who wished to do something to stop the war against Iraq, and became known as the human shields. Records their journey as they set off from London in three double-decker buses on January 25 2003 to their arrival in Baghdad on 16 February, the support they found along the way, and the disturbing realities they discovered in a country on the brink of invasion.

It Happens Every Day; How to Use Fire Extinguishers in Your Office

BREBookshop.com, Bucknalls Lane, Garston, Watford, WD25 9XX. Tel 01923 664262; Fax 644094;

email: bookshop@bre.co.uk

Purchase only £38 + VAT. VHS, 8 mins. Shot in a demonstration office built in the BRE Fire Division's Burn Hall, follows the experiences of two trainees in dealing with recreated, but real, fire situations. After demonstrations by an expert, they are taken through key steps to enable them successfully and safely to deal with a small fire in an office, using a water fire extinguisher and, in the case of an electrical fire, a carbon dioxide extinguisher. It also deals with how to raise the alarm and locate escape routes.

Kissed by Angels

Disruptive Element Films, 1st Floor, 3 Logan Place, London W8 6QN. Tel 797001803;

VHS, 26 mins. Documentary, which provides a glimpse into the Mod Culture. From Carnaby Street fashion in the 60s to the continuing force of contemporary musical heavyweights Ocean Colour Scene and Paul Weller. With honest opinionated discourse from Paolo Hewitt, Damon Minchella, the Mods and police from 60s Brighton.

Putting the Cash into Cashmere: a Video Case Study of Belinda Robertson Fashion Design

The European Case Clearing House, Cranfield University, Wharley End, MK43 0JR. Tel 01234 750903, Fax 751125; email: ECCH@cranfield.ac.uk
Purchase only, ref no.: 301-188-3. Produced by University of Edinburgh. VHS, 44 mins. A video case study which documents the evolution of a firm from start-up through to various stages of growth, setbacks and innovation. The enterprise is an up-market women's fashion clothing company based in the UK. Audience: MBA entrepreneurship courses, which place a major emphasis on the business plan.

Reaching the Top

Schwops, 34 Ashton Road, Luton, LU1 3QE. Tel 01582 412622; Fax 412095; email: info@schwops.co.uk
Hire or purchase. VHS or DVD, 8 mins. Covers all main aspects of choosing, checking, carrying, siting, securing and using stepladders and ladders, including what not to do and hazard information. Designed as an aid to training, for induction and refresher courses. Audience: all who use steps or ladders.

Trouble in Store

The Stationery Office, TSO, PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN. Tel 0870 600 5522; Fax 5533;
www.tso.co.uk/bookshop
Purchase only. Commissioned by the British Retail Consortium. VHS, 18 mins. Training programme designed to assist in the management of aggression and violence in the retail workplace. The learning and methods are also applicable to other staff who suffer high levels of aggression or violence in the workplace. Accompanied by a 19-page training manual.

Turner and Venice

Illuminations, 19-20 Rheidol Mews, Rheidol Terrace, Islington, London N1 8NU. Tel 020 7288 8409; Fax 7359 1151; www.illumina.co.uk
Purchase only £14.99. VHS, 40 mins. Filmed in Italy and London, and produced alongside Tate's major 2003-4 exhibition on the subject. Explores all aspects of the rich relationship between the painter and the city. Among the interviewees are the exhibition's curator Ian Warrell, historian David Laven, poet Andrew Motion, and artist Cornelia Parker.

Turning the Corner – Developing Manual Wheelchair Skills

Spinal Injuries Association, 76 St James's Lane, London N10 3DF. Tel 020 8444 2121; Fax 8442 3761; email: sia@spinal.co.uk
Purchase only £22.50. Produced by Two Cats Can, for Independence Technology, The Community Fund, Ford MAGIC and The Private Physiotherapy Educational Foundation. VHS, 66 mins. Shows how the user can get the most out of a manual wheelchair, whatever the level of disability. Designed to empower new wheelchair users, provide tips to experienced ones, and guide healthcare professionals to help maximise the potential of manual wheelchairs for users. Shows wheelchair adjustments, postural assessment and self-assessment, practical skills, getting in and out of cars, assisting wheelchair users, propelling a chair, shifting bodyweight, finding a balance point for "wheelies", going up kerbs, and going over rough ground.

We Did It Together. So Why Do I Feel So Alone?

Amber Videos, 5&9 Side, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 3JE. Tel 0191 232 2000; Fax 230 3217; www.amber-online.com
Purchase only £15. Produced by Amber Films in collaboration with Teen Talk, a peer education project. VHS, 32 mins. Offers an honest and gritty account of the lives of four teenage parents living in East Durham. Four stories portray the difficulties and the realities of being a teenager with a baby.

The videos in Maureen Brown's list are produced by specialist organisations, and their details are recorded on the SIFT database. The prices are given if they are supplied by the producers. Further information on these and other videos can be obtained from Maureen:

BNFVC
BFI National Library
Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL
tel 020 7255 1444
fax 020 7436 7950

Sponsorship for New Members of the Royal Television Society Scotland

SMG TV Productions, Scottish TV and Grampian TV are offering sponsorship for 30 young adults who would like to become members of the Royal Television Society Scotland.

The offer is available for people living in Scotland who are under the age of thirty at the beginning of January. It is open to anyone who has an interest in broadcasting, or who is currently working in the industry. The benefits for those who successfully apply are enormous. Anne Fleck, Chair of RTS Scotland said: "This sponsorship agreement will enable people in Scotland to take advantage of all that the Royal Television Society in Scotland offers. We have an amazing depth and breadth of television talent in Scotland, but access and training can be expensive."

Donald Emslie, Chief Executive of SMG Television said in response: "Supporting indigenous talent here in Scotland is something both Scottish and Grampian TV are extremely proud of. Schemes such as This Scotland, New Found Land, and New Found Films are becoming recognised across the UK as leaders in their specific fields. Anyone who wishes to be considered for sponsorship to the Royal Television Society should write to: Wendy Saunders, SMG TV Productions, 200 Renfield St, Glasgow G2 3PR, enclosing a current CV and a letter setting out why they would like to be considered."

DAMS AND CULTURAL DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

A Report by Fiona Leslie Product Manager Talis Information Ltd

At the Bringing Collections to Life: Digitising Local Studies and Special Collections Conference at The Guildhall Library, London on the 29th October 2003, Nic Sheen, Technical Director of iBase UK, a specialist in storage, organisation and retrieval of media files, gave an address based on a paper on digital asset management systems (DAMs) first presented at ICHIM 2003 (International Cultural Heritage Informatics Meeting) in Paris. The conference was organised by Talis Information Ltd, specialists in technology solutions for academic and public libraries

DIGITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT systems build repositories of reusable digital information which can be utilised for different purposes, for example to deliver collaborative projects. Every project starts out with physical objects and/or digital images, data in different, inconsistent formats, and fixed and limited budgets, and the goal is to integrate these to develop a website, and often to generate revenue. There are a number of key issues to be understood in this process. Most projects bring images, text, and structured data together into a Digital Management system (DAM). This creates a repository of clean, related information, which can be re-used for websites, CDs, or indeed shops – and possibilities perhaps not yet foreseen. The key concepts and terminology are sources, relationships, targets, and resources:

- Sources provide resources to go into the DAM
- Relationships link resources
- Targets, for example websites, CD Roms, Collage systems, use resources
- Resources generate the images, text and other assets to go into the digital asset management system

As the resources are brought together, relationships are built and validated automatically, so that all resources about the topic of transport will come up under one search, for example.

The links between the fields will automatically facilitate a variety of search preferences, which may lead back to the same item. An art historian may start with a biography. A searcher interested in the

Tower of London might see an image, but both might end up at the end of the search with Tidmarsh's painting of the Tower of London, and the associated catalogue details.

The DAM also allows the creation of many different targets for the resources. Some resources may, for example, be accessible over the Internet, while others may only be made available for use by in-house users.

Information for the DAM is drawn from a number of sources. Text may come in a variety of different data formats such as Word, Access or Excel, but can all be linked into a standard structure, ideally a Dublin Core structure described in XML.

The terminology used in the DAM must also be consistent. For example, formats used for dates, places, names and keywords must all be rationalised. If there is consistency within collections, it may be possible to do this automatically.

The master digital assets are crucial. High quality, high dpi and large file size TIFFs (Tagged Image File Formats) are vital. Keeping master digital assets as TIFFs is important because if images are saved as JPEGs they will lose information.

The filename convention developed by the project team must be readable and intelligible in 10 years time. It is important that the image metadata should show how the image was captured, by whom, and the date. Unlike Dublin Core, there are no international standards for this, but there are loose standards which iBase can advise on.

The unique identifier for the digital assets is essential to understanding and linking the collections. An identifier could be a number or image file name. For example, in A1234_FRONT_20030903.jpg, A1234 is the identifier, and FRONT is the view. 20030903 is the version and the file metadata. This provides additional information on the colour, file format and resolution.

AFTER BUILDING UP THE DAM, a refining and improving process is likely to be beneficial. This allows

outputs, for example websites, to be changed in response to feedback. It is also easy today to build websites in an incremental fashion.

There are also ways in which traffic to sites can be increased. It is important to note that users often only index the main page of their website, but there are techniques to enable search engines to find dynamic content and obtain page level information.

Portals can help increase traffic to sites, and will integrate information from multiple sites. They can reduce costs by sharing overheads, and increase benefits and visitor numbers. The DAM framework is an ideal way to link into portals, ensuring that the master resources can be simply redirected to a variety of different outputs. However, participants must be willing to compromise on style and content, and must share a vision for the portal.

With a DAM operational, there are a host of associated services which can be offered. Resources can be repurposed for picture libraries, marketing, education, portals, and online exhibitions.

Content-based image retrieval is a new technique for finding images based on colours, texture, and shapes instead of words or dates. iBase pioneered this in collaboration with what was the Newcastle Polytechnic, and using the COLLAGE collection (Corporation of London Library and Art Gallery Electronic). The technique is now being used more widely. A search using content-based image retrieval (CBIR) retrieves images which the computer thinks are similar in terms of colour, visual texture and shape. It is fairly accurate, although the computer's view of what is similar might not always be quite the same as the searcher's. Even so, in an iBASE survey nearly half of the people who used the technique thought that it was useful and better than a word search.

There is a detailed paper on digital asset management on the iBase website www.ibase.com

Nic Sheen can be contacted at nic.sheen@ibase.com

ABOUT MEDWAY

A Community Information website Lucy Atherton Project Officer



There's a new **website** where you can find out ...

about Medway



Explore it at ...

www.aboutmedway.info

THE ABOUT MEDWAY community information website was successfully launched on 21st November 2003.

It is the result of an innovative local partnership of information providers, led by Medway Library and Information Service and funded through the New Opportunity Fund's Digitisation of Learning Materials programme.

One of the key issues facing library and information professionals is how to make information from a wide range of organisations available to the citizen in a user-friendly way, without confusion or duplication of effort. Medway Library Service was looking for a way to simplify access to the information people need in their daily lives – to build bridges between information islands. Other NOF-Digitise projects shared the same vision, and the community information projects joined together in the

seamlessUK consortium led by Essex County Council.

ABOUT MEDWAY SET OUT to deliver information through the creation of a portal enabling people to find, in one place, organisations and services which can best support them. This is achieved in three ways:

- Metadata from databases and websites is harvested, allowing users to search across a number of resources in one operation.
- Using the ICT facilities in public libraries, small local organisations have received free training in website creation. These resources are meta-tagged so that the About Medway software can harvest them and provide local content for the site.

- About Medway is a component of the seamlessUK consortium, and is a channel for delivering its national information services. This enables the retrieval of local and national information in a single search

BY ENTERING KEYWORDS in the About Medway search engine, information is retrieved from over 600 organisations and services, both local and national. The resources available are increasing, and currently include:

- Medway resources
- MOLE – Medway database of local organisations
- Local Halls for Hire database
- Medway Schools database
- Medway Carers' Centre
- Medway Consumer Support Network
- Council for Voluntary Service (Medway)
- Universities for Medway
- Local sites created through it.com range from Hospital Radio Medway to Age Concern Gillingham, Medway Scrabble Club, Gillingham Volunteer Bureau,
- Medway Spinners, Dyers and Weavers and Chatham Historical Society.

National resources currently include

- nhs.uk, covering doctors, dentists and pharmacies
- Advice Guide from Citizens Advice
- Royal Association for Deaf people web pages

These are already live, and data from the Community Legal Service, Department of Work and Pensions, BBCi, HMSO Information Asset Register and Age Concern is scheduled to follow.

The results are returned in one accessible list including local and national information. They are presented either as database records or links to web pages, but the sources remain distributed. Information providers remain responsible for maintaining their data and undertake to keep their

data accurate and up-to-date. Medway Library Service's only involvement is to harvest the information using Fretwell-Downing Informatics software.

THE TECHNOLOGY behind About Medway is Fretwell-Downing Informatics' CPORTAL (Citizens' Information portal). This powers the About Medway search engine, enabling the public to enter a single search to find information from both local and national resources. The CPORTAL software interrogates multiple datasets held in a range of formats, including those held in XML, non-XML, and those using the Z39.50 protocol. It integrates access to all the resources, and plugs About Medway into seamlessUK national resources. About Medway has access to a web-based administrative interface for CPORTAL. This provides an easy-to-use facility for customising information targets, and a harvest interface which enables the management of meta-tagged websites to be included.

seamlessUK has also developed a number of practical tools for partners, together with support and expertise to assist local portals. About Medway has benefited from being part of the seamlessUK national consortium in a number of ways:

- Shared taxonomy: About Medway adopted the seamlessUK taxonomy, saving time and improving the quality of information retrieval.
- Metadata profile: the seamless UK metadata profile has been developed by



Left to right: Mark Allcock Product Manager, FDIInformatics Lucy Atherton Project Officer Sarah Walton Marketing Manager FDI Jo Morris seamlessUK Helen Leech About Medway Project Manager

- Essex County Council specifically for community information. It is e-GMS compliant.
- Metadata creation tool: this web-based template enables About Medway staff to add meta-tags to local websites using the seamless metadata profile. Where appropriate, the partner organisations can be trained to undertake this process themselves, although this can prove problematic for some of them. Tagged sites are added to the harvest administration page and then become searchable content for the site.

- A geographical information system (GIS). This is the final service to be implemented, and will enable precise place searching, with the results displayed on a map. The system links to Multimap to provide travel directions.

About Medway is built around emerging information standards and government guidelines. During the time of the project, working with DC Gov and XML has meant a steep learning curve for project staff, but has raised the profile of the project within the council, and ensures compatibility with other projects.



IMPLEMENTING CUTTING EDGE technology always uncovers practical challenges which need to be overcome. As the first local portal to go live, Medway was involved in the development process in parallel with implementing the new service. Both the technology and the understanding of its capabilities developed quickly during the summer of 2003. The experience of Medway, and the other seamlessUK partners, means that subsequent portals can benefit from the lessons learned. Apart from the volume of work involved in re-indexing records using the seamlessUK taxonomy, there were issues to do with geographical indexing – for example in establishing that the postcode of a club venue was indexed rather than the contact's home address, as this was essential for the accuracy of geographic information retrieval. The meticulous work done here has ensured that the search results

**Some Problems
Indexing issues**

**Creating viable
partnerships**

**Obstacles to resource
sharing**

IT Skills deficit

**Information
management skills
deficit**

Maintaining standards

are now much more relevant to user requirements.

Aside from the technology, there are obstacles to be overcome in dealing with local organisations, and in creating a viable partnership. Some organisations have large databases of materials, but are unable to make them available to About Medway. For example, a local project, with a database covering information for older people and people with disabilities, is self-funded and therefore subscription based. In spite of their strong support for About Medway, they were unable to join the partnership because they would have lost funding. Another large local project, funded specifically for Medway, is unwilling to allow access to users outside the area. This becomes a problem because About Medway will be available wherever there is a People's Network computer or Internet access. The project is seeking ways to work with both these information sources.

Organisations without information management skills have also presented difficulties. Much of the interesting and potentially useful information identified by About Medway is not structured in a coherent way, and About Medway cannot deploy the resources to organise it.

Equally, organisations without information technology skills, which include most small voluntary organisations, are unable to meet About Medway's standards. They lack the time, skills, or equipment to provide the kind of indexing which will make their information accessible to About Medway. Nevertheless, some success has

come from About Medway's ability to support voluntary organisations in creating their own websites. The project officer has also undertaken the metadata indexing that they are not equipped to do themselves.

Community groups have also benefited. Local clubs and societies have expressed an increasing interest in creating websites. With the help of an Adult & Community Learning Service tutor, the project provided free training sessions to set up websites using it.com's community kit software (www.communitykit.it.com). There was an enthusiastic response from local people, and 77 sites have been created to date. Working with it.com, About Medway ensures metadata and other standards are complied with. The full list of organisations is available at www.onepine.info/medlibrary.htm

LOCAL ORGANISATIONS are obviously a vital element in the project. About Medway is not solely a public information service. It is also a local partnership. Key founder members are Medway Library and Information Service, Kent and Medway Strategic Health Authority, Learning and Skills Council (Kent and Medway) and the Council for Voluntary Service (Medway). The e-communications department of Kent and Medway NHS added meta-tags to their web pages using the seamlessUK profile so that their information is also searched by the About Medway search engine. CVS Medway is another organisation which has successfully tagged their pages.

Many smaller organisations have also become involved in the project, or expressed interest in having their web pages harvested. These include the Medway Credit Union, 1st Byte Online Centres, the Kent Association for the Blind, and Medway Neighbourhood Watch.

One of the significant problems encountered is the need to ensure the currency of information on the sites. Long term site maintenance will be a key issue, especially as calendar pages, enabling groups to list and publicise forthcoming events and meetings, are popular features. After a few months of operation, website providers are offered follow-up sessions to develop software skills and also to update website content. Email support is also provided to participants.

THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT is difficult to assess at this stage, as the site has only been live since the end of November (www.aboutmedway.info/).

The full geographic information service, and further enhancements to service functionality, will be delivered to the citizens of Medway before the end of the project in March 2004. It is anticipated that website hits will go up, and the number of community information enquiries handled in libraries will go down. If so, this will be a sign of success. Initially, the bulk of the promotional work will be directed at front-line staff in council offices, the Citizen's Advice Bureaux, the Employment Service, and community projects which are well placed to reach people from niche target groups, such as specific ethnic groups.

The long term aim is to continue to develop the content and range of resources available via About Medway, and to ensure they have access to a source which will give them the right information at the right time.

Contact Lucy Atherton, Project Officer, on 01634 281066 or at lucy.atherton@medway.gov.uk

Helen Leech, the project manager, can be contacted on 01634 281066 or at helen.leech@medway.gov.uk

For more information about opening up access to local resources with CPORTAL, or about joining seamlessUK with CPORTAL, please email Mark Allcock at FDI email mark.allcock@fdisolutions.com

Benefits

High profile project

**Strong local
partnerships**

**Single search retrieval
for local and national
sources**

**Development for local
organisations**

Easy to use

Skills development

**Improved expertise and
experience**

MANAGING MERGED SERVICES

Liz Hart, Director of Information Services, Staffordshire University

This article, an edited version of a presentation at Umbrella 2003, in Manchester on the 3rd-5th July last year, is the second in an occasional series on managing converged information services. It is based on experience at Staffordshire University and examines the institutional, organisational and human issues in the management of IT and learning support. Within the overall context of managing change, the key influences, and their impact on local processes and decision making, will be considered.

THE ORGANISATIONAL VISION and the mission will inevitably provide the major impetus for merging services. Approximately two years ago, Staffordshire University created a new mission and vision, both driven by the sectoral changes in Higher Education. This provided a clear framework for institutional change and development, and, most importantly in the context of this article, the justification for convergence. The strategy demanded efficiency, effectiveness, and also a business approach to the management of services. Information Technology, together with the Library and Learning Resources Service, Management Information Services, and Learning Development, were all brought together. This was in part because they were seen as duplicating each other to an extent, and also because their roles were essentially complementary. Of some significance, the planned change was driven primarily by the business needs of the organisation and by the achievement of important long-term institutional goals.

THE PROCESS envisaged implementation of the change within a short timescale. The approach was pragmatic, and inclusive of staff at all levels. It encapsulated five key elements:

- Structure
- Consultation
- Building on existing positives
- Consolidation
- Realism

It was recognised that it was essential to provide a clear framework in which staff could understand their roles. Establishing the appropriate structure was therefore the first issue to be considered. Key senior

managers were brought together at three away days to consider and evaluate the immediate and future needs of the Service in the context of overall University change.

Consultation was one of the cornerstones. Communication was emphasised throughout the process, even to the extent of becoming boring.

Positive features of the separate services were considered to be worth retaining. There were a number of good ongoing initiatives. These were not changed nor dropped, but were supported, sometimes adapted, and championed.

With each team given a very clear view of their role and objectives in the context of the overall structure, the changes that were made were given ample time to settle down. This time for consolidation not only fostered a considered approach, it demonstrated a realistic approach to the change process in general. While this sounds obvious, it is easily overlooked during a change project. Overstretching an already changing service is an easy thing to do, and should be avoided.

The establishment of the Senior Management Team was perhaps the most significant initial step. This was followed by a process of ensuring that the Team recognised the importance of functioning as a “real” team in practice. This is often a question of blending management styles, and working to the strengths of individual managers.

The establishment of any change requires communication. Open staff seminars are a key part of the communication process. During these seminars it is vital that little or nothing is hidden, or avoided.

In addition, senior staff need to spend time talking to everyone and anyone. While this can be a costly process in terms of time and effort, it is worth it in the long-term.

All of this should be re-enforced by bulletins and weekly emails, even if, in the end, staff complain about receiving the same information via different routes. The key issues are that the information is delivered through as many channels as possible, and is consistent and clear. During the change process in Staffordshire, all staff in the service were emailed weekly for the first three months of implementation.

The creation of common objectives and

agendae is an important further step. Key strategies for the Service, covering the next three years, were introduced at an early stage and contextualised in the overall change process within the University. This can act as a real motivation, as for some staff it creates new opportunities, a new sense of direction and, with luck, a little excitement.

Such key strategies usually provide opportunities for some relatively quick successes, particularly in terms of team work and cross-profession collaboration. In the case of Staffordshire, this was reflected in developments relating to e-learning, meta-data, and the website. As an example, the modest success created by work on the website, recognised at a national level, led to the beginnings of a common ethos and service ethic. This was further underpinned by very simple changes such as answering the telephone in a common, cross-service manner.

Nevertheless, it is always essential to allow comfort zones in the first 12 months, and to introduce change at an appropriate rate for the organisation. Consequently, in Staffordshire certain areas remained virtually unchanged, but received a considerable amount of attention in terms of communication, and also staff development.

One of the key groups in the change process is the middle manager. Recognition of this in Staffordshire, for example, led to the delivery of Managing Transition workshops using an external consultant. This helped to create common views and approaches, and also offered an opportunity for participants to raise, and later address, challenging issues. Middle managers appreciated the support provided for them, particularly as all the senior managers also actively participated in the workshops. The middle managers felt valued and important – as indeed they are – in the tasks of embedding and delivering change processes.

EXTERNAL ISSUES, and especially the perception of the newly merged services in the eyes of the rest of the institution, are also important. Here, the immediate improvements delivered from the Key Strategies for the service can prove very valuable. Change at Staffordshire saw

a new and comprehensive support for the development and delivery of e-learning. This extended from pedagogy to systems support in content creation and input, and continues to please academic colleagues. The creation of a corporate information team linked to the development of corporate information systems was equally welcomed by administrative colleagues. Essentially, the Key Strategies outlined the future, provided quick improvements, and ensured the Service attracted the attention of the majority of the institution.

This is not to say that there was no resistance to the newly merged service from parts of the institution. This notably coloured the attitudes of some of the technical support staff in faculties. It was addressed by the establishment of open forums for discussion and negotiation, and by the development of common projects such as single card initiatives.

The Key Elements

Structure
Consultation
Building on existing positives
Consolidation
Realism

IT IS DOUBTFUL IF ANY CHANGE process works completely, and there will always be compromises and alterations as time progresses. However, the approach undertaken in this example attempted to overcome some of the obvious reasons why change fails. Major factors contributing to success were

- An action approach was taken, based on projects and tasks where skills and expertise were shared and staff encouraged to work together.
- No group of individuals lost out, despite the initial assumption that one element of the Service had taken over the other.
- Some breathing spaces were provided during the process for consolidation.
- This last feature was also combined with some time to acquire new skills and to

think through new opportunities.

Change fails for a number of reasons, which can be found in any competently written textbook on change management, but the most important are:

- Misunderstandings
- No acceptable justification
- Lack of planning and preparation
- No clear vision
- No short term goals
- The idea that things can be changed quickly and easily
- Poor communication
- Employee resistance
- No incentives (no matter how small)
- The temptation to alter something that does not need changing
- Personality clashes
- Increased workloads
- Lack of security, often involving fears about loss of earnings or status
- Self interest
- Loss of familiar and mutually supportive work surroundings
- A tendency for people to assume the worst
- The legacy of previous change initiatives.

The key is to make change a normal part of the development of the service, rather than consider it as a series of separate projects. The beginning of a permanent cultural change can be seen when change begins to come from within the service rather than from senior managers.

IF CHANGING THE CULTURE IS CRITICAL, then what kind of culture suits a merged service? As usual, this depends on the organisation and its vision and mission. In broad terms, however, a service can usefully employ the following standard theories, which do work in practice.

MOST HIGHER EDUCATION libraries, and some IT departments, tend to operate in a role culture. The role culture is something like a Greek temple in that leadership and authority radiates from the top. It is a bureaucratic organisation, but it is logical and rational. Normally, it needs a stable environment in which to function and flourish.

ONE ALTERNATIVE IS a Task culture, which is job or service orientated. In physical terms the structure looks like a net or matrix. This structure and culture tends to bring staff together to

address specific tasks or projects, and it is fundamentally a team culture. It is usually adaptable and readily supports the formation and reforming of teams of appropriate staff to meet the tasks and the organisational needs presented.

ESSENTIALLY, STAFFORDSHIRE set out to move from a role culture to a task culture, where complementary knowledge and experience could be combined to meet needs. It began with the introduction of a project or task approach linked to a requirement for the implemen-

Keys to Success

Action approach

No losers

Breathing spaces

New skills

New opportunities

Sharing

tation of project management to a fixed standard. While this has taken time to be accepted by some groups of staff, it has resulted in mutual learning and an awareness of differing expertise within the service, and these will be key factors in future development.

The contributions to the convergence debate, from Liz Hart on these pages, and from Gordon Brewer in Volume 29 no 4, raise a number of points to be debated in the context of what is still a live issue for some information services in all sectors. The questions raised also have a relevance to the general problem of how the mixed economy is managed in today's information services, and to the forms which organisational development will take in future digital library management. Coming issues of the journal will return to these themes, and will explore some of the alternative ideas about the kinds of organisations which will be needed for libraries in the 21st Century. Some current research findings will also be discussed, together with the presentation of some case studies.

A POWERSHOT HOTSHOT

Ken Cheetham, Learning Development Coordinator UWIC, reviews the Canon Powershot G5 Professional Compact Digital Still Camera

THIS REVIEW OF A CAMERA IN USE is a follow up of the overview of digital cameras in the November 2003 issue of MmIT. The Canon PowerShot G5 featured here was purchased soon after its release, around June 2003, and has been used for architectural work, landscapes, and portraiture, as well as document copying. One of the main reasons for purchasing digital was a desire to keep up with new technology, particularly for teaching digital theory as well as conventional photography. Practice supports the theory. The reasons for choosing this particular camera were:

- Five megapixels should enable high quality A3 prints.
- Professional, compact design brings enhanced functionality and a high quality, wide aperture, zoom lens.
- The camera can save in three levels of JPEG as well as in uncompressed RAW format, the latter being converted to TIFF using the Canon software on a computer.
- The LCD monitor flips out and rotates, giving flexibility in use. It stores flush against the back of the camera, with the screen inwards in order to protect it from damage.
- Additional flexibility comes from the supplementary lenses available, and the camera will accept a range of dedicated, external flash units.
- The camera is powered by a rechargeable, lithium-ion battery that will give around 450 exposures from a full charge.
- It uses readily available Compact Flash I and II cards as well as an IBM Microdrive.
- Everything needed to be truly up and running is supplied right from the start. The G5 comes with: -
 - BP-511 lithium-ion battery
 - Date battery (button type)
 - CA-560 AC mains adapter/charger (110-240V)
 - 32 MB CompactFlash card
 - WL-D100 IR remote control with button battery
 - Lens cap & string
 - Shoulder strap

- USB & AV cable
- A Canon Solutions software CD-ROM
- ArcSoft PhotoStudio together with VideoImpression software
- User Manual

That is quite a package, and although the RRP is £580 + VAT (£682), the kit is readily available at £449 VAT included, and has been seen online at £405. A spare battery is a must, and Canon's BP-511 might cost £56, but it is a generic type and is available from other manufacturers for £20 less.

THE CAMERA BODY IS CONSTRUCTED from both metal and plastic and actually has some weight, which, to any user of traditional 35mm SLRs, lends a more comfortable feel. The right-handed

and shutter settings, are all on the top-plate, within easy reach of the right index finger. The right thumb readily accesses five menu or function buttons, and these control everything that might need to be done when in action – white balance and exposure compensation, for example. There are other controls too, but these are generally for pre-sets, which would not normally be changed often when working. The left thumb falls neatly to a flash on/off button, a light-metering mode selector, and a macro On/Off button.

It is worth noting here that while so many controls/menus may seem confusing, regular users will discover that Canon's menus are logical, and I think no worse than any other make. They are all, of course, necessary for any system that depends entirely upon electronics. Wholly mechanical cameras contain their "menus" on the actual dial or ring to be turned; shutter speed, aperture settings, focal point and even depth of field can be read off at a glance.

The rest of the Canon's top-plate holds the Power-On/Off switch, which doubles as Expose/Playback selector. To its left, and aligned centrally with the lens, is a flash hot-shoe, and to the left of that is a status display panel, easily read from above. This shows essential information such as camera settings, remaining image capacity, and battery charge status.

FOR COMPOSING THE IMAGE, the LCD monitor display, which gives 100% coverage, can be flipped out and used away from the camera body, or twisted 180 degrees and folded back into the body, screen out, like other digital cameras. The display unit can be folded away (screen in) when not in use, thus protecting the screen, which has an excellent anti-reflective coating, and is bright and sharp. The monitor design is truly versatile, for use in the field or studio, especially on a tripod or copying stand, as well as for less usual applications such as overhead or waist-level shots.

The G5's optical viewfinder has dioptre adjustment tuning for vision and shows the zooming image. That is all there is to it really, so it is useful only for snap shooting. Also, the frame coverage is only about

Strengths

High quality A3 prints

Compact design

Flexible use

Rechargeable battery

Compact flash

Comfortable feel

Shutter settings accessible

Logical menus

Infrared remote

(from behind) finger grip is aided by a hard rubber coating. The balance is good, with the lithium-ion battery being stored inside the grip, keeping that weight to the right hand support. The dial controlling exposure mode, the zoom lever/shutter release button, and the wheel for changing aperture

80%, and the lens barrel obstructs the bottom left corner of the frame. Most of my work does not call for this kind of viewfinder, so it is not a problem for me, but it is very poor for a camera of otherwise remarkably good design.

THE G5 IS EQUIPPED WITH a fast, 4 x optical zoom, 7.2 - 28.8mm lens (equates to 35 - 140mm in 35mm camera format). Maximum aperture is f/2 in wide-angle view, and f/3 in telephoto. Minimum aperture is f/8. The lens is constructed from eight elements in seven groups. Normal focus is 50cm to infinity and its macro mode allows ranges of 5cm - 50cm in wide-angle and 15cm - 50cm in telephoto. Digital zoom (4x) is also available. Automatic Focus modes are 1-point, through the lens (fixed centre or any point), AF lock, AF assist beam and Focus Bracketing. This latter allows auto-bracketing around a selected point when in manual focus mode. An AF assist lamp provides illumination in low light situations, to help the camera's auto focus system to "see" the subject. It can be switched off.

The G5's shutter operates between 15seconds and 1/2000th of a second, depending on exposure modes, of which there are several. The Creative Zone offers

- 1 Programme
- 1 Shutter Speed Priority
- 1 Aperture Priority
- 1 Manual
- 1 Two Custom settings.

Weaknesses

Noise at higher ISO

Poor optical viewfinder

Not enough steps on the zoom

Status panel not backlit

Slow start up

The Programmed Image Control Zone offers

- Portrait
- Landscape
- Night Scene
- Stitch Assist
- Movie, with optional sound

There is also a straight Auto setting, in which the camera simply takes over. An Auto-Exposure lock is available as well as Auto-Exposure Bracketing, and exposure compensation of +/- 2 stops is possible, in 1/3-stop increments.

Sensitivity ratings (film speed equivalents) are 50 - 100 - 200 - 400 ISO, a little meagre perhaps, as both an 800 and 1600 ISO would add enormously to functionality. However, the 400 rating seems to behave more like 800 on comparison.

The built-in flash is useful between 70cm - 5 metres in wide-angle, and 70cm - 4 metres in telephoto. Flash exposure compensation is +/- 2 stops, in 1/3-stop increments, but I would not take a built in flash very seriously in any camera. If flash is needed, then it would be better to buy an appropriate unit as an accessory; the camera has a hot shoe. The user guide provides a list of Canon flash units that will work with this camera.

The camera also has a built-in Neutral Density Filter which may be switched on and off. In use, it will reduce the intensity of light falling on the sensor to 1/8 of that available. This is the equivalent of three stops reduction, and it enables the selection of a wider aperture or longer exposure time. Full marks to Canon for including this really useful facility, which is an absolute gem.

Another small item that is really useful is the Infrared remote control, as the camera does not accept a cable release. The remote control enables shake-free shutter release when needed. It has a range of about 5 metres and can also control the zoom, as well as running a slideshow of camera-based images via a TV set. This is an excellent feature.

Actual exposure measurement, via through-the-lens metering, can be switched as required between Centre-weighted Averaging, Evaluative, Spot Point (Centre) and Spot Point (at Auto Focus Point). Evaluative is the default, and switching between modes is the function of one of the three buttons accessed by the left thumb. In Evaluative mode the camera divides the scene into a number of zones that it assesses individually, then adjusts final exposure



for the main subject. Centre-weighted averages the whole scene, but places more weight on the subject at the centre. Spot Point (Centre) meters only the area within the spot Auto Exposure Frame at the centre of the LCD monitor, while Spot Auto Focus meters the area within the Auto Focus Frame (it may not be at the centre of the monitor).

This last points to another really useful facility in the G5. Canon's Auto Focus Frame can be activated and moved around the image to overlay the principal subject; the camera does not have to move at all and will automatically focus where the frame is. Metering will also take place here if required, when the Spot Auto Focus metering mode is selected. This is brilliant.

FOR IMAGE CAPTURE AND STORAGE, the G5 provides four image size options aligned with three JPEG quality settings. There is also the RAW format file, containing unprocessed data coming directly from the CCD. This data also contains information about the camera settings at the time the exposure was made. It is a compressed file, but the compression is reversible without loss of data. Such a file might be considered to be ideal for archiving purposes, and RAW format files are becoming known as digital negatives. I would suggest that the Super Fine JPEG is virtually loss-free, as I could detect no digital artefacts or "jaggies" in images so recorded and printed at 300dpi, and no apparent loss of detail. Fine and Normal settings also yielded relatively clean images compared to others I have seen. My tendency is to record RAW files, and convert them to TIFF in the Canon software. Any image adjustments can then be carried out in PhotoShop in TIFF or PSD (PhotoShop's own) format, before saving as TIFFs for insertion into Quark for printing. It is also possible to save as JPEGs for lesser quality printing or compression for the Web. After making an exposure in JPEG format, and while the instant replay is in operation, pressing the Function button enables immediate conversion to RAW format if called for.

THE CANON G5 HAS SOME OTHER features worth mentioning, even if some of them may seem a little gimmicky. Four pre-set scene modes cover landscapes, portraits, night shots and assisted stitching. This allows alignment overlays on the monitor when shooting

Conclusions

Clean and detailed image quality overall, outstanding battery performance, distinctive and useful features not found elsewhere

multiple exposure panoramas, and I quite like that. There is an Effects Menu that allows the choice of different photographic effects such as Black and White, Sepia Tone, Vivid Colour, Neutral, Low Sharpening and Custom. On the whole, each of these are of more interest to a ded-

icated amateur than for any real use in many professional fields, but they do not detract from the latter, and any form of image control can be useful.

The camera has a self-timer. It also has a metal tripod socket and is equipped with an orientation sensor to detect which way up the camera is held or mounted and automatically adjust for that. Images are tagged with the information.

Wide-angle and telephoto lens converters are available as extras. Removing the bayonet-fitting lens ring and attaching a conversion lens adapter prepares the G5 for their use. This adapter comes with a 58 mm thread and I would propose that this could easily be further utilised to mount the camera to the ocular of a microscope or telescope, should such an application be desirable.

Camera connectivity is DC-in for power from mains (including recharging the battery in-camera), USB for computer download or upload, and AV-out. This allows images and sounds to be output to a TV or video monitor. Sound annotations can be attached to images in replay mode. A neatly hinged, plastic cover protects the connectors.

Aside from the considerations I applied when choosing my digital camera, the strengths emerging from its use are:

- Strong, balanced colours
- Excellent light metering yielding balanced tones and shadow detail
- In-camera control of saturation, sharpness and tone
- Excellent resolution
- Low image noise at low sensitivity
- Range of manual over-rides
- Neutral density filter
- Infrared remote
- Excellent battery life
- Excellent software included
- Accessories

It is only fair to point out that all is not rosy. There is some noise at higher ISO ratings, and the optical viewfinder is poor. The zoom controller does not have enough steps, and the status panel on top of the camera is not backlit. Start-up is slow (about 4 seconds) due to the extending lens system, but I cannot envisage a situation in which that would matter one jot. On the other hand, auto-focus lag seems no worse than other systems I have tried, and there are no serious delays with shutter release or between shots. I have to praise Canon for a number of features of the G5, like the clean and detailed image quality overall, its truly outstanding battery performance, and its numerous distinctive and useful features not found elsewhere.

DIGITAL SIGNATURES FOR COPYRIGHT ASSIGNATION FROM EMERALD - A PUBLISHING FIRST

IN A WORLD PUBLISHING FIRST, leading international publisher, Emerald, has developed an online system of digital signatures for the process of copyright assignation. This will be delivered as part of an online submission and peer review delivery engine for authors and editors who are working with Emerald. The new system will be known as JADE.

John Peters, editorial and author relations director said, "We pride ourselves on a customer-focused Copyright policy. Using Digital Signatures is a continuation of that ethos. For the first time, authors will be able to assign copyright online, resulting in a more efficient article submission process, much shorter time to publication, and of course, the widest possible dissemination of their work."

Going live in Spring 2004, the new system will provide Emerald with a better, more legally robust solution for recording, data extraction, and storage of the legal status of the articles. The system will be rolled out to all 130 Emerald journals during 2004. Entrust TruePass software underpins the digital signature solution, and it was chosen for its superb track record in the development of secure online transactions.

Using zero footprint encryption and digital signature technology, Entrust provides identification, verification and privacy capabilities for Emerald and its authors, without necessitating software to be installed or configured on the computers of Emerald's writers.

Majed Al-Mashari, editor of Business Process Management Journal, said, "Let

Business Process Management (BPMJ) be amongst the first journals to make use of this system. I am sure that the new system will give the journal a great opportunity to increase its contributors and readers. It will also make a dramatic improvement in handling submission and increasing the quality of published material in the journal."

For further information about the new system, please contact Catherine Dhanjal at TheAnswer Ltd., (Tel: 0208 655 0953/0794 166 9925) or Gill Crawford at Emerald (Tel: 01274 777700)

Catherine Dhanjal can be emailed at catherine.dhanjal@theansweruk.com and Gill Crawford is at gfcrawford@emeraldinsight.com

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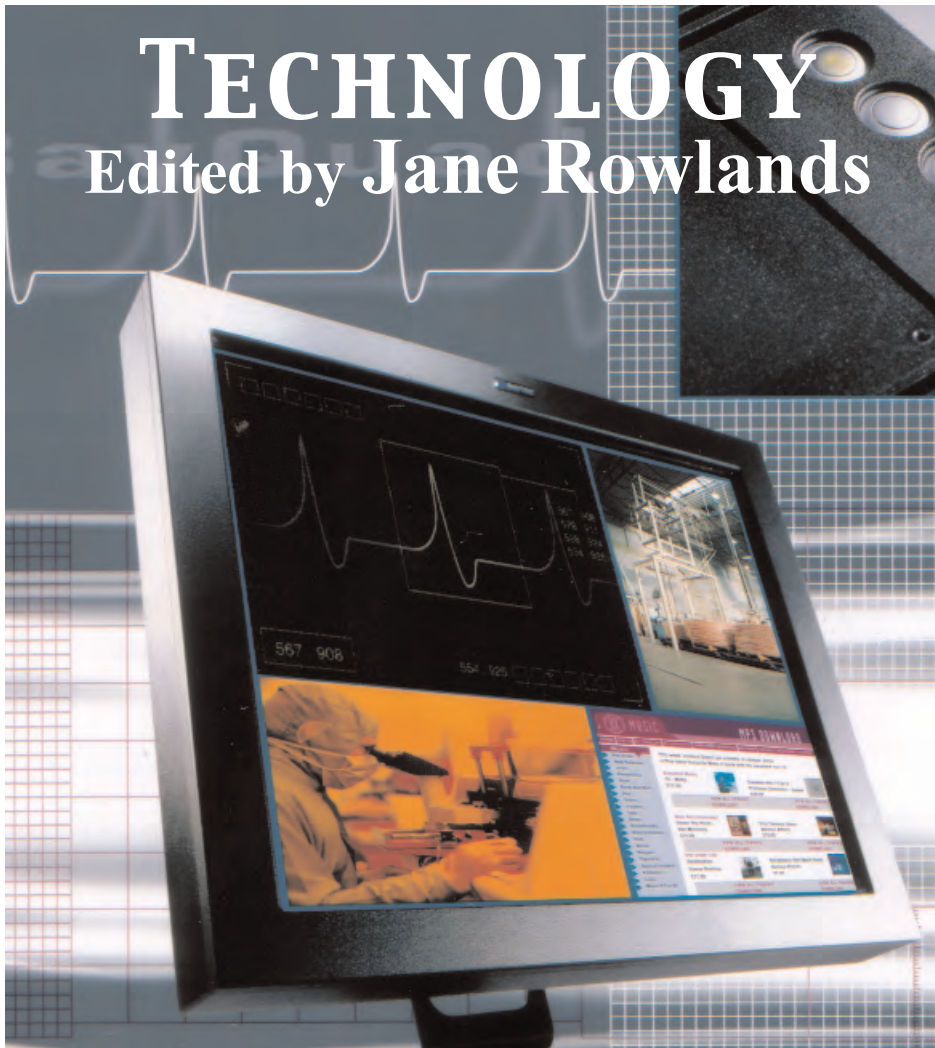
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TECHNOLOGY

Edited by Jane Rowlands



Videos and PCs

CAMEO 200 TR, from Terratec Electronic, is a video card that transforms a PC into a very powerful video editing workstation. It delivers everything that is needed for production, including real-time video editing, on-the-fly functions for burning DVDs, and fast hardware with Firewire™ and digital connection options for camcorders or video recorders. Bundled software facilitates quick and easy editing, with 3-D cross-fades, pans, and dubbing with music or speech. Ulead Video 7 has a wide range of editing functions, recording and output options, and an extensive pool of effects, transitions, and filters. All operations are carried out in real time, and there is fast transfer of data between PCs and digital camcorders or videorecorders. The Cameo 200 RT is priced at £89.99 vat inclusive.

Contact Terratec at www.terratec.co.uk

Trident Offer New LCD Monitors

TRIDENT DISPLAYS' new rugged LCD Monitor, the BayQuad (shown above), offers exceptionally flexible input and display options. The monitors are ideal for any applications which might require simultaneous viewing of multiple images on the same screen. They are also compatible with Trident's recently introduced Ergotron mounting solutions. Bayquad's new range incorporates four sets of PC, composite video and S-video inputs. Each input can be selected to fill the screen or take up only a part of it. The layout, size, and position of each picture-within-a-picture can be controlled either via a serial RS232 or the on-screen menu. Monitors are available with screen sizes from 8.4" up to 18" and come with a VESA mount for use with arms, pivots, or wall mounts. Firmware, mechanics, and aesthetics can be customised for users. There are also optional DVI input and touch screens.

As touch screen control becomes more and more popular, it is obvious that the monitor must remain stable when touched. This is particularly true when critical operations are being performed, and Trident's Ergotron is fully compatible with all their standard OEM and industrial LCD monitors. The Ergotron arm range combines exceptional stability in use with full adjustability.

Wide Screen as Well

The Sharp TFT LCD monitor is also available from Trident. This new model provides a range of options for public information terminals and similar applications. It is particularly well suited for av education and information display, and also has a built-in wall function which will allow operation as a tile configuration.

Contact Trident at www.tridentdisplays.co.uk

Activpanel

TDS HAS ISSUED a press release on the impact of their LCD display screen on a special needs student at South Chadderton High School in Lancashire. Here, a visually impaired student has been able to begin her secondary education with ease, thanks to the TDS ACTIVpanel LCD display screen. Transition Learning mentor Tim Bamber recognised that Melissa Thornton would need additional support if she were to play a full part in lessons. With video cameras or laptop enlargers ruled out because of wiring and portability problems, TDS recognised that the ACTIVpanel would provide an excellent resource, and a solution to the problem, as her personal small screen would enable her to see what was appearing on the ACTIVboard at the front of the class. Tim Bamber said: "The benefits for Melissa have been immeasurable. The ability for her to participate fully in lessons and contribute ideas from her seat have definitely added to her understanding and ongoing development. The innovative ACTIVpad was launched by TDS at the BETT exhibition last month. A "plug and play" A6 tablet for use in conjunction with the ACTIVboard, the pad provides a preparation tool for the creation of presentation and lesson material. It is the perfect aid for preparing ACTIVpx and BOARDmate flipcharts. Go to www.tdshouse.co.uk



New Sony Network Player

PROFESSIONALS SEEKING STATE-OF-THE-ART VIDEO TECHNOLOGY need look no further than the Sony NSP-100 Network Player from specialist presentation and IT technology distributor, MultiVision. This leading-edge item of equipment has been added to MultiVision's range of hi-tech goods, and applications include training and multi-media entertainment. Boasting excellent picture quality and high reliability, all in a lightweight package, the Sony NSP-100 is suitable for large, small and mid-scale applications. It comes equipped with a 40 GB Hard Disk Drive (HDD) and is capable of storing up to nine hours of video. The high capacity HDD also allows users to store a large number of clips and programmes. Picture quality on the NSP-100 is similar to that on a DVD, with high quality MPEG-2 encoded video at a bit rate of up to 9Mb/s. It is also capable of displaying full colour bitmap images and scrollable text, supporting high quality multi-media presentations. The NSP-100 has a variety of interfaces allowing the unit to communicate with a wide range of equipment, and as well as being packaged in a palm-sized unit, it is user friendly, easy to set up and control. Jane Toombes, marketing manager at MultiVision said: "What makes the NSP-100 unique is that custom-tailored rich content can be delivered easily to pre-designated locations . . . by adding this to our range we are confident that it will become a valuable addition to existing networks."

MultiVision was established in 1988. The company provides audio visual presentation solutions including projectors, plasma screens, interactive whiteboards and presentation screens globally through its network of specialist dealers.

For further information, contact Jenny Letts at Connect PR, tel 01902 714957
Email JennyL@connect-group.com

Stylish, Bright, Compact

MITSUBISHI'S LATEST PORTABLE PROJECTOR is slim and lightweight yet offers strong performance and is fully featured to make it perfect for lecture halls, meetings and conferences. Despite being compact and weighing just 2.7kg, the Mitsubishi XL8U is stylish and bright. With a brightness of 2000 ANSI Lumens combined with XGA resolution (1024 x 768 pixels), this ensures that clear, sharp images are displayed even in less sympathetic environments. The XL8U also benefits from a long-life dual mode lamp giving the user the choice of standard and economy modes. The economy mode gives extra lamp life allowing up to 3000 hours of running time and still produces 1600 ANSI lumens of brightness. One of the advanced features of this new projector is the automatic vertical digital keystone correction and manual horizontal digital keystone correction, which ensures accurate, undistorted projection images even when the projector is not set up at an ideal angle. The XL8U also offers a password control system that can be set to prevent operation of the projector by unauthorised users.

The Mitsubishi XL8U offers a host of picture and colour enhancing features including Mitsubishi's patented Natural Colour Matrix technology, which allows independent colour control across six colours to ensure the realistic reproduction of both pastels shades and strong colours. Furthermore, the sRGB setting takes the guesswork out of colour adjustment by ensuring that the XL8U pictures match the now widely adapted sRGB standard for colour display. 3D CineView raises picture quality to new heights and creates a cinema-like image by eliminating jagged oblique lines and enabling the reproduction of beautiful, natural-looking images. Colours are also more natural, and shades are more accurate. The XL8U comes with a compact card-style remote control as standard. There are many other exciting features.

The XL8U is expected to retail at £1655 + vat.

Largest LCD Screen Ever

SAMSUNG HAS RELEASED what it claims to be the biggest LCD screen in the world (TFT LCD TV). The 57" screen has a contrast ratio of 100:1, a significant improvement over previous screens, and a resolution of 1920x 1080 with 6.22m pixels. It is expected to be on sale in 2004.

For further information visit the samsung web site at
<http://www.samsung.com>

New Iomega Storage Drive

IOmega HAVE ANNOUNCED a new peripheral storage device capable of holding up to 35GB, and fast enough to back up 20GB of data in just 10 minutes – an alternative to tape for backing up. The Removable Rigid Disk (RRD) is based on conventional hard disk technology, making it much faster than other back-up media. RRD drives are to cost around £210 and 35GB cartridges under £29. For further information visit the Iomega web site at

<http://www.iomega-europe.com/eu>

The Smallest Centrino Laptop in the World

JVC'S NEW MINI Note MP-XP731, described as the smallest Centrino laptop in the world, has a footprint barely larger than an A5 page, but offers ample performance. It sports a broader range of ports than many full-size laptops. With built-in 802.11b wireless LAN support as well as 10/100 Ethernet capability, the memory can be expanded to 512MB. The battery, however, still only permits a couple of hours of use.



For further information visit the JVC web site at <http://www.jvc.co.uk>

3D Modelling with Canon

CANON, ONE OF THE WORLD'S foremost experts in imaging technology, has enhanced its "best in class" 3D software modelling tool, 3D S.O.M., with the release of a ground-breaking converter and viewer to make the inclusion of 3D models on a web page as easy as adding a 2D image.

To offer 3D modelling to a wider user base, Canon has also announced that the single user licence for 3D S.O.M. will now be available for just £99 + VAT, which is a massive saving of almost 80% over its previous RRP. The 3D S.O.M. converter and viewer tools, which are available for free download, have been created by 3D S.O.M.'s developers at Canon Research Centre Europe specifically to support the needs of those users who want 3D content on their web sites, but do not wish site visitors to suffer the inconvenience of having to download a plug-in viewer to see it. The 3D S.O.M. model converter features a viewer that can be embedded within the

website's HTML code, and which will work with any modern Java-enabled browser. This means that there is no need for additional – often data-heavy – downloads. The new tools also enable site visitors to interact with 3D images once they are placed on a 3D S.O.M. user's website. Visitors can examine the 3D image by dragging and spinning the model in any direction. They can also click on the selected image and choose from a menu of options to alter some characteristics such as lighting and shadow.

"In May 2003, 3D S.O.M. opened the door to simplified 3D graphic modelling," said Robert Fraser, who is the Business Communications Manager at Canon Research Centre Europe. "We're committed to enabling as many users as possible to experience the benefits of having professional 3D images on their websites, and we're determined to remove the barriers to take up. The new price point for 3D S.O.M. means that the software is now even more affordable, and is available at a price that brings 3D imaging to all, but we believe that product enhancements like this latest converter and viewer are equally important in increasing usage. 3D S.O.M. has a

strong product roadmap, and we'll be unveiling more during 2004."

Using the new converter, adding models to web pages could not be easier. Users simply place a link to the model and the viewer within their web page HTML. Additional viewer parameters give the flexibility to alter orientation, position, rotation and even lighting of the model, so that designers can see exactly how that model is going to behave when first viewed.

Allowing users to place static images behind a model is also something that Canon believes increases the appeal of 3D on web sites. Images from advertising campaigns, for example, can be placed behind a product. Web sites instantly become more attractive and dynamic through the combined use of static images and rotating models.

Details of the 3D S.O.M. converter is available from the 3D S.O.M. web site:
www.cre.canon.co.uk/3dsom/downloads.htm

The Canon website is at
www.creCanon.co.uk