Welcome to the May 2005 issue of Multimedia Information & Technology. Click on the headings in the sidebar, or the links on the pages, or scroll through. Images used in this issue are by courtesy of Aarhus Public Library, Film Education, *bfi*, *bfi* Stills and Moviemail.
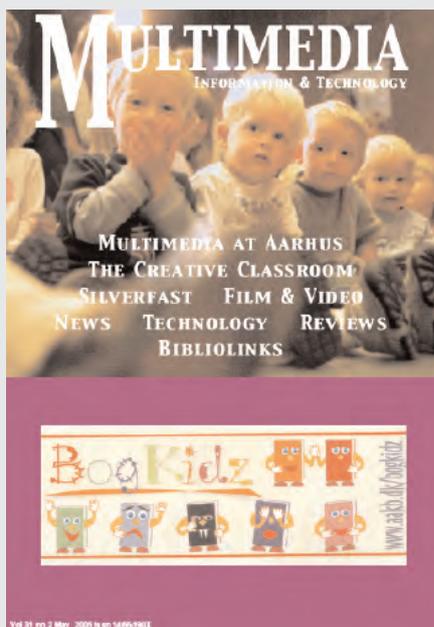
This issue's cover is of a group of children enjoying a story at Aarhus Public Library in Denmark. The library recently won the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Access to Learning Award for creating accessible digital information services. Rolf Happel describes the approach and identifies the crucial factors in developing a service which makes a particular impact on minority and disadvantaged groups in society.

Catherine Dhanjal writes about the impact of Softlink's library management system on two schools in England, and shows how libraries can improve performance.

Silverfast, from Lasersoft, is a professional-standard software package for scanners. Ken Cheetham referred to it in his review of the Canonscan 990F in volume 30 no 4 in November 2004, and in this issue he puts it through its paces.The image below right is an example of what can be achieved using Lasersoft's product.

Book reviews include Olwen Terris on cataloguing, LISU's Director, Dr. J. Eric Davies on the latest edition of Graham Cornish's book on copyright, and Tony Thompson on some free telecommunications software. Lyndon Pugh attempts to decipher a book on the PC.

Creativity and Multimedia is David Baugh's assessment of the impact of multimedia technology on the learning situation, based on Create at BETT.

Elsewhere, the news column covers developments at *screenonline*, previously featured in volume 30 no 4 in November 2004, DAISY – a project to bring synthetically-voiced books to the visually impaired, the oldest Bible in the World, now accessible at the British Library, a digital screen network for UK cinemas, and the MLA Disability Database. Maureen Brown's video listing is on page 41.

Technology has Visual Planet's new through-window touch technology, a walk and talk cordless lectern from Polyvision, new image library software from Axomic, videoconferencing from Tandberg (right), thin screens from Clarity and giant screens from Screen Technology (above left).

Bibliolinks is compiled as usual by Ann Borda and Film & Video completes this issue.

MmIT will be running a management training workshop, and full details of this are also included.

News May 15th 2005

screenonline

The BL's Bible
DAISY   Cinemas go Digital
Disability Experts

screenonline

SCREENONLINE (www.screenonline.org.uk), the British Film Institute's extensive online resource dedicated to the history of British film and television, has enjoyed a successful first year and continues to grow. The image above is The Errand Boy (1905) by kind permission of *bfi* Stills.

The site has acquired nearly 3,000 registered users and amassed more than 200 hours of unrivalled film and television footage from the *bfi* National Film and Television Archive, including a number of complete films and television programmes.

Developed with support from the BBC, Warner Brothers, Sony Columbia, Channel 4 and Canal Plus UK among many others, *screenonline* also features intelligent and accessible analysis from expert writers, as well as thousands of stills, posters and production designs and hundreds of biographies of leading film and TV personalities.

The site celebrates the achievements of British cinema and television since their inception, encompassing popular favourites and lesser-known but equally fascinating work.

With new material added monthly, *screenonline* is already a very broad educational resource, and is available free of charge to every school, college, university and library in the UK. It offers material of value to many areas of the school curriculum, not only Film and Media Studies, but also English, Art and Design, History, Geography, Citizenship and others.

With its rich cultural overview of British film and television, it is an essential resource to anyone with an interest in these areas. Highlights from *screenonline* include:

- Broad coverage of key film genres such as melodrama, comedy, musicals, documentary and social realism; television is also extensively covered, with collections devoted to drama, comedy, children's and non-fiction formats. *screenonline* allows film and TV enthusiasts access to rare material that is not available elsewhere.

- Intelligent critical analysis of the careers of towering figures such as Hitchcock, David Lean, Michael Powell and Dennis Potter, as well as hundreds of lesser known but equally interesting British personalities.

- An outline of key movements in British film, from the documentaries of the 1930s and 40s and the Ealing comedies in the 40s and 50s, to the 60s new wave and the heritage boom of the 80s.

- A thorough analysis of British cinema-going trends with statistics on film audiences from the early twentieth century to the present day, including figures for overall UK cinema admissions 1933-2001, and a year-by-year account of British Academy Award winners.

Though the majority of the website is available worldwide, the film and television clips are only available to registered UK-based schools, colleges and libraries. Registration is free and can be applied for at www.screenonline.org.uk/help/register.html

For more information please contact: Louise Watson, screenonline Support Manager tel: 020 7957 8988 or email: louise.watson@bfi.org.uk

The World's Oldest Bible at the BL

A TEAM OF EXPERTS from Europe, Egypt, Russia and the USA have recreated the Codex Sinaiticus, the oldest Bible in the world. Fragments of the original manuscript were held in The British Library, St. Catherine's Monastery Sinai, The University of Leipzig, and the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburgh. These have been integrated and made accessible to a world-wide audience through the application of innovative digital technology.

A range of projects, including a website, digital facsimile and CD Rom are being planned. An English language translation will be available, and there are plans for German, Spanish and modern Greek versions.

The project encompasses conservation, digitisation, transcription and scholarly commentary. The Codex will be available for a worldwide audience, with plans for a range of features, including a free-to-view website, a high quality digital facsimile and CD Rom. This project will be a model for future collaborations on other manuscripts.

The Codex is an iconic and historic document from the period when the Roman Empire split and the Emperor Constantine, who ruled the Eastern Empire, adopted Christianity. Greek heritage dominated this Empire and the Codex was produced to gather together Greek versions of the principal Jewish and Christian scriptures. It is the earliest surviving book encompassing in one volume the texts which have come to be recognised as forming the Christian Bible. It marks a dramatic shift to the bound book from a culture in which texts were transmitted in scrolls.

Arranged in eight narrow columns across a double-page, the Codex Sinaiticus may be modelled on the arrangement of columns on papyrus scrolls.

Due to its age and fragility, none of the partners is able to allow access to the manuscript, beyond display in a glass case. All four will carry out detailed examination and analysis, and their findings will be documented to enable the conservation status to be linked to the environment in which the parts have been held. International experts in areas such as parchment identification, multi-spectral imaging and iron gall ink will become involved as the conservation progresses.

Further information is available from Catriona Finlayson at catriona.finlayson@bl.uk

Here Comes DAISY

DAISY IS A PROJECT CURRENTLY being run by the National Library for the Blind with Dolphin Audio Publishing.

Over 400 visually-impaired readers are taking part in a pilot study of a series of synthetically-voiced books (DAISY stands for Digital Accessible Information Services) which combine several multimedia formats.

The easily-navigable digital books make use of text, audio and pictures. It is hoped the project will indicate the degree of interest in digital books for visually-impaired readers, improve the quality of synthetic audio and evaluate software performance.

One advantage the NLB is seeking to capitalise on is the fact that DAISY is based on the same source files used to produce Braille and other formats.

Depending on the feedback from readers taking part in the trial, and the evidence of interest, the NLB will develop a strategy to integrate electronic books with existing production processes.

The NLB are also anxious to stress that even if DAISY is a success and establishes a need, there is no intention that it should replace Braille publications.

Further information can be obtained from daisy.feedback@nlbuk.org

Disability Experts

THE MLA HAS LAUNCHED an online database designed to assist organisations in meeting requirements for disabled access. The details of over 200 experts in the areas of disability training and disabled access in general are held on the database, unsurprisingly called Disability Experts.

The experts concerned have all expressed an interest in working with museums, archives and libraries. The MLA does not endorse the expertise or services of any of the individuals on the database.

Disability Experts also offers advice on making the best use of the information available, and provides guidance on best practice in selecting consultants. At a risk of stating the obvious, they cover, among other things developing a brief, inviting tenders – but only if appropriate and possible – and preparing for interviews with care.

The MLA Disability Portfolio also sets out the kinds of training, audits and consultancy which are available. Some web useful addresses are:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/documents/dis_guide03.pdf
http://www.mla.gov.uk/documents/dis_guide03.doc
http://www.mla.gov.uk/documents/dis_guide04.pdf
http://www.mla.gov.uk/documents/dis_guide04.doc
http://disabilitydatabase.mla.gov.uk/

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Digital Screen Network for the UK

THE UK FILM COUNCIL has selected the Arts Alliance Digital Cinema (AADC) to install and run the digital screen network in the UK. The project, which is claimed to be the first in the world, is a core part of the UK Film Council's strategy for improving access to specialised film and broadening the range of films available to audiences throughout the UK.

In a contract worth around £11.5m, AADC will provide a network of up to 250 screens throughout the UK. Each cinema will guarantee a minimum number of specialised (arthouse/foreign language) film shows a week, in return for the equipment.

> Access to specialised films is currently limited across the UK. Although a variety of films is available in central London and a few other metropolitan areas, the choice for many potential viewers outside these areas remains limited. The Digital Screen Network will improve access for audiences across the UK. (Pete Buckingham, Head of Distribution and Exhibition UK Film Council)

This separate competitive process is currently nearing completion. It is anticipated that the winning cinemas will be announced in May, with the first installations occurring in the autumn of this year and the final installation around 18 months later.

The agreement with AADC runs for the period of the installation and implementation plus four years. It covers installation, training, servicing, warranties and upgrades for the lifetime of the contract.

In addition, under the terms of the contract AADC will, if and when required, create digital cinema masters for specialised film content, and when requested load the film onto disks, deliver to the requesting cinema and supply the security keys to enable the film to be played at an agreed price.

AADC will work with suppliers to provide and manage the equipment housed in cinemas. Christie Digital Systems and NEC (supported by Digital Projection Ltd) will supply 2K DLP Cinema Projectors, while QuVIS will supply servers.

Staff will also be trained and supported, and AADC will work with Impact Marcom, Sound Associates, The Metropolitan Film School and the BKSTS to provide these services.

The UK Film Council is the Government-backed strategic agency for film in the UK. It aims to support the UK film industry, and to promote the widest possible enjoyment and understanding of cinema throughout the nations and regions of the UK. Go to www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk

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Management workshop with MmIT: Designing Library Organisations for the e–Future: How to manage hybrid libraries, digital and multimedia resources

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Redesigning Libraries in Aarhus

Rolf Happel Director of Library Services

In 2004 Aarhus Public Libraries, along with the Evergreen Rural Library Service in China, received the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Access to Learning Award. Over a period of less than 10 years, Aarhus Public Libraries has totally reorganised its services and systems, intensively using information technology in the process.

> **The award was for:**
>
> commendable commitment to keeping librarians up-to-date on technology . . . efforts . . . to improve people's lives by expanding access to digital information, especially for immigrant populations who otherwise would have little or no access to such information. Aarhus Public Libraries is a model of what can happen when dedicated public officials, librarians, and patrons commit to making access to the online world a reality for all

The drivers of the development have been a combination of stick and carrot. Ever-decreasing budgets combined with the possibilities of new technology demanded long term strategies based on a high degree of customer self service combined with elements of outsourcing and a strong focus on staff training.

As part of a policy of increasing the use of digital and electronic services, the service now aims to reach one Internet workplace per 1,000 inhabitants.

As a result of the reorganisation, Aarhus has put 235 Internet workstations, 22 dedicated workstations, 66 self-service machines and a return sorting robot, interactive OPAC with reservation and requisition service and many other new services into public use.

The acquisition of more traditional media like books and newspapers sits alongside new media like CD-ROM, dvds, play station games, e-books, digitised music and film.

Lots of training courses and programmes have also been presented, all in the wake of a reduction in the number of branch libraries in the mid-nineties, budget cuts of about 30 per cent over the last 15 years and a reduction in full time employees.

In the same period the productivity measured in circulation figures and visits has increased by 28 % and the use of the virtual library is now extremely high.

The free e-mail and chat facilities are used mostly by children and teenagers, many of whom are immigrants. In this particular user segment, girls are dominant. The main library is also equipped with hotspot, which means users can bring their own laptop and access the library system, databases and Internet resources. A few study rooms – free for all to use – are wired for video screen Internet projection. So how could all this happen?

The IT infrastructure is an important precondition. Aarhus-net is the network which connects all the institutions of the municipality. All the local libraries in Aarhus have been connected to since 1997.

Currently 235 public workstations are connected to the "red net" – a section which is allocated to citizens' Internet use via the libraries. Consequently, everyone can access the Internet when visiting the library. Upgrades to a bandwidth of 100 MB in 2004 allowed the introduction of services based on high quality streamed video and sound.

The system has been expanded and modernised several times in recent years. Web access to the full services of the library's opac has been possible since 1999. In 2004, about 800,000 of the 5.3 million issues of physical media were from reservations or requests via the Web.

Since 2001 the Danish public and research libraries have been part of a nation-wide distribution system for physical materials.

This is based on a common catalogue, and enables users place an order on any book and have it delivered to the nearest library free of charge (www.bibliotek.dk).

The Library Organisation

Through this, Aarhus has a nation-wide appeal, and demand is met by reservations and requisitions as well as some of the Internet-based services described here.

Another key to the successful use of the Web in Aarhus is the focus on content, with a policy requirement for currency, regular updating and relevance to users.

Services free at the point of delivery are another important element. Aarhus Public Libraries provide one of the most comprehensive programmes of digital Internet-based library services in Europe. Forty three special services – all free of charge – are delivered already, and the number is still growing.

More than 140,000 individuals have pin number access to self-service machines and the Internet requisition and reservation programme. More than 57,000 users frequently receive e-mail notification of reserved books and the library-published e-zines reporting news, new books and on other media. These are subscription-based but free.

Collaboration has replaced co-operation as a vital impetus for developing services and reaching out to potential users. Danish libraries have developed many cooperative services, the so-called Net Libraries. Our version of collaboration is based on the premise that libraries are not competitors in a market, but allies as public governance institutions.

Because of the Internet they can now work closely together. For the users it is of no consequence where the service is produced. The rationale behind such services is clearly visible. for example in the Q&A service, where more than 50 public, university and research libraries share the workload of a service accessible every day of the week and manned on most days from 08.00 to 22.00.

Aarhus Public Libraries is active in most of the Net Libraries and has initiated some of the most used ones.
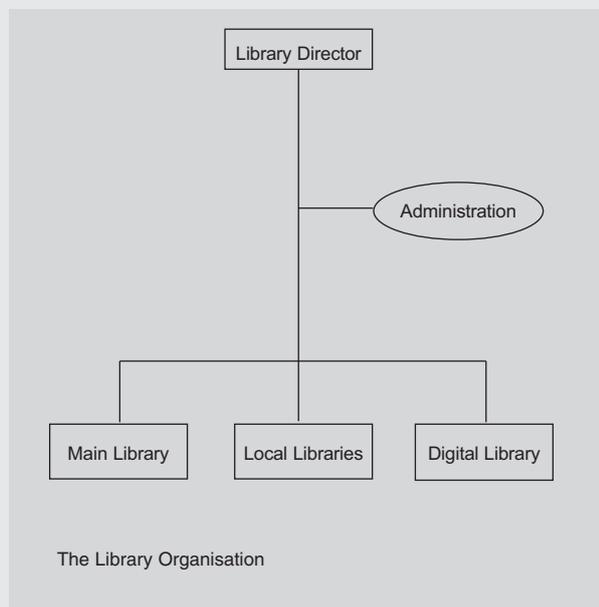
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Aarhus Public Libraries is a driving force in the development of national networked library services in Denmark. As initiator, developer, producer or co-producer, the service is engaged in The Public Libraries Netguide (www. fng.dk), the national library Q and A-service (www.biblioteksvagten.dk), the joint national children's library netservice (www.dotbot.dk) and several others.

An umbrella association of Networking Public Libraries links Aarhus with six other library services. The idea was to create a body to cope with issues arising from the emergence of cross- and networking municipalities. Relationships at state and government level and copyright are particular concerns.

An important aim is to convert human capital, or the "hidden knowledge", into structural, more usable capital, not least in view of the expected generational change libraries will experience in the foreseeable future.

By using collaborative workspaces, shared calendars, competence mapping systems and various other project management tools on intra – and extra – net it has been possible for staff to work efficiently with colleagues inside as well as outside the organisation.

Intent on Listening and Watching
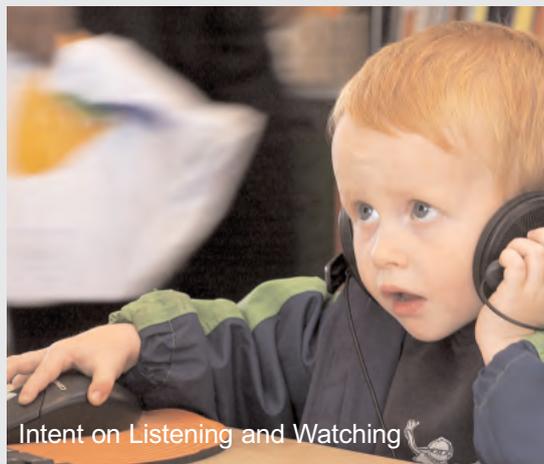
Another strategic element in the use of the Internet is the involvement of the civil society in the development of resources. The users form a vital part of the services, not just as the target group for the service but to a large extent as co-developers of the service. It would not, for instance, have been possible to create Censuses on the Net were it not for the participation of a number of volunteers who assisted in keying in the old censuses to a digital form.

Similarly, young volunteers, organised as a group of Netskaters, have contributed to the development of the homepage for children and young people, just as representatives of the users have worked as active consultants in the development of FinFo. This is the electronic information system addressed to refugees and immigrants.

Learning support provides a vital component for both library users and staff. It has been necessary to build up IT competences among the latter group, in part to make them capable of supervising the users, and to enable them to participate in the enrichment of information through selection, quality assessment and the analysis of relevant resources on the net.

Aarhus Public Libraries introduced distance learning courses on Internet use for Danish librarians in 1997, and these became a success on a national scale. The courses have been developed and translated for use in the DELCIS European Union project for the Baltic countries (Distance Education for Librarians: Creating an Information-Competent Society).

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This development of competences has also included the introduction of new IT-supported internal working methods, as well as a strong ambition to create self-service-based systems for the users.

Thus, the libraries in Aarhus have changed over a period of less than five years from mainly staff driven services to a self-service concept that allows more than 86% of all issues and more than 90% of all returns to be handled by the users using machines and a sorting robot, based on an intelligent induction-driven conveyor belt robot.

The library also provides support for the users of electronic information in other ways. Free weekly Internet introductions, some targeted towards various user groups, such as elderly people and children, enjoy a significant take-up.

Sessions for people with special interests like travelling, job-hunting or health issues are well-attended, as are special training courses of longer duration – up to five days.

Among the Internet-based services which Aarhus Public Libraries have initiated and developed is FINFO (www.finfo.dk). This is an information system for refugees and immigrants, and it offers access to valuable information on Danish society. Available in 11 languages, it also includes evaluated links to information from 45 of the refugees' home countries.

Now more than 70 Danish municipalities are working together on the development of this service under the auspices of the State Library.

Litteratursiden (www.litteratursiden.dk) is another service developed by Aarhus Public Libraries, and this is once more a co-operative initiative with other public libraries in Denmark. It is a Danish Literature Portal presenting contemporary Danish fiction to the public.

It offers subscribers news on literature: articles on new books; articles on and by authors; recommendations by librarians; debate, and a contact your librarian option.The e-zine is published every fortnight and has more than 1,800 subscribers. Users receive an email alert for each new issue, with hyperlink headlines to the articles.

Services based on the local history of Aarhus are popular among users – not only in Denmark, but also in overseas countries with a tradition of immigration from Denmark, such as the USA and Canada.

With the help of volunteers, Aarhus Public Libraries has transferred old censuses, marriage accounts and historical citizens' registrations to the net (www.folketimidten.dk).

A copyright-free database of old historical photos (www.danskebilleder.dk) has been established, and is once again the fruits of a co-operative project involving five other libraries in Denmark.

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Digitised short films, films of local history and educational films are streamed and distributed to public schools, high schools and libraries in the Aarhus region, via the Internet and free of charge.

From June of last year this service has also been available on broadband/fibrenet at www.bibcast.dk. Since 2002 digital music files have been available free of charge via the net to users in the Aarhus region. Libraries Netmusic (www.bibliotekernesnetmusik.dk) has now turned this into a national service, making more than 75,000 tracks available to registered users of a library which is part of the consortium.

The current public library membership is 106. The interesting thing about these services is not so much the technology, but the major breakthrough in the negotiations with the right owners which lies behind the service. The license fees are paid by the library.

The organisation is based on the main library, 18 branches and services for the homebound and institutions. There is a specialist department – The Digital Library – which coordinates, services and in part creates the virtual library. It is also responsible for media acquisition and marketing.

Aarhus Public Libraries is a modern public institution with a high degree of self management and decentralisation. It is governed by politically accepted aims and goals. This, combined with a long tradition of project and development management, development of competencies and networking with others, probably explains why it has been possible to engage more than 150 employees in various development projects.

The aim of the institution is to spend on average at least five days per employee every year on training and competence development. This goal is more than fulfilled. The tradition of using and expanding our own "brain-ware" and the constant challenges created and faced might also explain why the turnover in staff is very modest.

Denmark is often regarded as a role model in the development of modern information and knowledge-based societies. Being a rather small nation with only 5.4 million inhabitants, relatively well off in terms of economic resources and geographically placed in a calm corner of the world, Denmark would not be suspected of having major problems relating to society.

Nevertheless they are there. The main socio/political issue is related to the immigrants and refugees from the rest of the world who have been coming to Denmark over the last two decades. This has created tension in a traditionally mono-cultural nation during the transformation process toward an open, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society.

Legislation has become firmer and more restrictive on refugees and immigrants, and the general level of tolerance in society towards these groups of citizens is not always good.

In the process of assimilation and integration of this varied population (about 12 % of the total population in Aarhus Municipality, in densely populated neighbourhoods up to 70-80 %), the basic values of public libraries are invaluable.

A knowledge-based society which embraces all citizens, and provides access to learning and information, and support for e-literacy as well general literacy, should of course also contribute to social inclusion and development for citizens less fortunate than the ethnic Danes.

The staff and management of Aarhus Public Libraries feel a powerful obligation to deliver cutting edge library services, based on the latest in information technologies, to these users. They are fortunate to have had some success in doing so, attracting about half of the total population of refugees and immigrants as registered users of the service.

That means that the library use in these user groups is comparable with the rather heavy use of the libraries by ethnic Danes.

Aarhus Public Libraries were happy to receive the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Access to learning Award because it will be a major contribution to

- The visibility and marketing of the idea and role of public libraries as institutions securing free and equal access to information in a modern networked knowledge society.
- The social integration of immigrants and refugees in a complex society, based on the public libraries as "low-voiced integrators".
- The development of the library role as open learning centre for less fortunate members of society, in terms of educational opportunities and financial resources.
- The development of new Internet-based services with mobile and broadband connectivity, thus expanding library functionality from one primarily based on text to true multimedia provision.

Creativity and Multimedia

David Baugh, ICT Advisor for Denbighshire, went to BETT and reported on Create at BETT for MmIT

Most of the 27,000 visitors, and more, who come through the doors of BETT each year, are teachers or advisors who come to find out what is happening in the ICT educational field.

Most of the exhibitors are there to sell goods or services, but tucked away in parts of the show there are education-focused nuggets which give the visitor a different experience from the usual hard sell.

One of these features is Create at BETT, which this article will attempt to explain, as well as exploring some of the wider educational reasons for integrating ICT, learning and creativity with the use of digital media.

Create at BETT is a hands-on experience aimed at attendees of BETT, and especially chosen schools which send students to work with the Create at BETT partners. The intention is to demonstrate how digital media can be used to inculcate creativity into teaching and learning.

Creativity is usually associated with the creative arts, but the emergence of easily-accessible digital media such as digital video, digital still images or music, and flexible software tools to manipulate these media, has changed things.

It is becoming increasingly evident that any pupil can be creative with this media, given the right guidance and opportunities. Create at BETT works on this premise, and brings together the expertise of the following organisations:

- Film Education – providing a large range of publications and services to respond to the growing importance of Media Education in the National Curriculum and to meet the increasing demand for current educational material on film and film making
- DV in Education – an organisation specifically set up to support teachers in the creative use of media in schools, through providing training, advice and resources
- Media Education Wales – working to support media and moving image education in Wales, through the provision of resources, training, events, projects, research and consultancy in a number of areas
- Solutions Inc., formed in 1992, is an AppleCentre which operates from large premises in Brighton & Hove. It specialises in the use of video, music and digital photography
- South Street Studios, providing opportunities for students of all ages to discover the art and craft of model animation with digital media
- Ultralab, the learning technology research centre at Anglia Polytechnic University, working to develop a boundaryless, empowering, creative and delightful learning environment through disseminating and applying the results of research into new technologies

These organisations provide their expertise to BETT to show how pupils can use digital media in creative learning. One of the unique features of the Create at BETT partnership is that the participants give their expertise with no sales motive or expectation of payment.

The feature provided BETT visitors with the opportunity to see and try out activities in the following areas:

- Digital story telling using still images accompanied by music
- Making digital movies as narratives and documentaries
- Creating exciting stop-frame animations
- Making music and mixing soundtracks to accompany the projects created with still images, animation and digital video

Until now we have made a general assumption that it is a good thing for the Create at BETT feature to showcase creativity in the use of digital media, but it is worth pausing to think about this area of creativity in education in a little more detail.

It might first be best to clarify what creativity is when it comes to its application to education. Creativity in education is explained in the Government-sponsored All our Futures document, a report of the National Advisory Committee on Creativity, Culture and Education (NACCE) in 1999. The report defined creativity in schools as an environment where:

- Pupils are thinking and behaving imaginatively and where the imaginative activity has an educational purpose
- The process which the pupils are engaged in generates something that is original to them
- The outcome is of value in relation to the original purpose

Using digital media, pupils can achieve creativity, as the tools are open-ended enough to allow them to develop their own ideas without being forced into decisions driven by the computer. This is particularly important when the digital media have been created by the pupils themselves for their own purposes.

Sometimes there is a temptation to think that simply giving pupils access to digital media to incorporate into their own work will suffice: experience has show us that real creativity and learning emerges where pupils are allowed the freedom to complete the process themselves from start to finish.

In fact, evidence from digital video projects has shown that although teachers like using downloadable, ready-made digital resources, pupils much prefer to create their own resources, or to repurpose and edit existing resources.

This seems to be because the provided material never seems to be quite what the pupils had in mind when they were at the all-important creative planning stage.

Creativity & Multimedia 3 ☛

The NACCE report resulted in the following creativity-related statement being incorporated into the English National Curriculum 2000:

[for] pupils to acquire, develop and apply a broad range of knowledge, understanding and skills, the curriculum should enable pupils to think creatively and critically, to solve problems and to make a difference for the better. It should give them the opportunity to become creative, innovative, enterprising and capable of leadership to equip them for their future lives as workers and citizens.

Digital media certainly allows students to enjoy rich and varied contexts for their work across the entire curriculum. The whole process of multimedia project creation with digital media is centred on students making decisions, making choices, critically looking at their work and always striving to make it better.

It has been shown that students who work creatively and independently gain a number of significant advantages. They are:

- More interested in discovering things for themselves
- More highly motivated
- More open to new ideas
- More likely to have higher self esteem
- Keen to work with others to explore ideas
- Willing to work beyond lesson time when pursuing an idea or a vision

There is evidence, from the two Becta DV projects, which indicates that students who are engaged on projects using multimedia also reflect these characteristics. These factors are hard to ignore in classrooms which are currently experiencing high levels of pupil dissatisfaction and alienation.

Evidence from the state of Maine in the USA shows that where students statewide are working on a creative curriculum, involving digital media, with access to portable computing, then both attendance and performance will improve.

So how can the use of digital media help develop a creative curriculum? The intensive use of digital media by pupils on the Create at BETT feature allowed the partners to observe a number of strong characteristics, which show how the use of digital media can help develop a creative curriculum.

Questioning and Challenging

By creating projects with digital media, pupils are able to explore ideas and subjects in a way which is hard to do when using traditional learning support materials and methods.

They are able to challenge conventional ways of looking at subjects and question some of the ideas they encounter in their lives. This can result in very different teacher pupil relationships, which teachers need to be prepared for.

When pupils are working on creative digital media projects, the teacher's role changes from the person imparting knowledge to more of a mentoring role, or as the Americans describe it – "the guide on the side" as opposed to the "sage on the stage".

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Envisaging What Might Be

An essential element of digital media project creation is the vision which will lead to an end product. A team of pupils working together often has a strong sense of vision during the creative process whilst working with digital media.

This may be the reason why some teams do not like using media resources which have been provided for them, as mentioned earlier. This sense of vision is important, as it also results in pupils having high expectations for their end product.

However, these high expectations can result in disappointment when the end product is not as good as they had hoped. For this reason it is becoming obvious that teachers have a vital guiding and coaching role early on in any media project.

Exploring Ideas, Keeping Options Open

The teams working on a digital media project have a need to share and debate ideas, and be flexible enough to keep their options open so that they can take advantage of opportunities which arise during the process. For example, if students are working on a digital video project and go out filming with a prepared storyboard, they should be encouraged to take advantage of shooting opportunities which arise, or alternative shots which occur, during the filming process.

This is not to say that the storyboard is abandoned. It is simply supplemented. Then, at the editing stage, the digital nature of the content comes into its own as it allows the team to try out different options before committing themselves.

Reflecting Critically on Ideas, Actions and Outcomes

One aspect which continually strikes teachers who work with students creating digital media projects is the high level of critical debate displayed during the process.

For example, when observing a group of pupils editing a digital media project, it seems obvious that the process is based on reflection.

When an edit is made, the computer gives the pupils feedback which they reflect on and consider whether or not it meets their vision of the intended outcome.

This is then debated and amended as necessary, and the process starts again.

Through their work with young people on the Create at BETT feature, the partnership of organisations working there hope to show that using digital media creatively in classroom situations is a practical and worthwhile proposition.

There are, of course, challenges to be overcome in schools, such as the timetable and access to equipment. Given enough enthusiasm and determination, these can be overcome so that young people can be given all the advantages which working with digital media bring.

Further information about creativity and digital media can be found at:
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Film Education: www.filmeducation.org/
Media Education Wales:
www.mediaedwales.org.uk/enghome.html
Solutions Inc: www.solutions-inc.co.uk/
South Street Studios:
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Ann Borda

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What We've Got Here is Failure to Communicate

THE HEADLINE for the reviews column in this issue was the catchphrase of the Captain, Road Prison 36 in Cool Hand Luke, starring Paul Newman. While reading Graeme Kirkpatrick's Critical Technology: A Social Theory of Personal Computing, there were times when I did not know whether to laugh or cry. There were other times when I could have hurled the book across the room.

Equally, there are some chapters in Kirkpatrick's book which are fascinating and brilliant. I think the argument Kirkpatrick develops is that to exploit personal computing to the full it is necessary to understand the technology which lies behind the machine. This is confirmed by the publisher's blurb, which is a relief.

Whether or not the average computer user, personal or professional, at least in the information services sector, approaches the machine with ideas of empowerment and equality uppermost in his or her mind is a moot point.

> Under the hegemony of technological irrationality, the decontextualising and manipulative dimensions of primary instrumentalisation form the basis for the technical practices of managers and elite groups whose main responsibility is to maximise their own freedom by manipulating subject populations.

The major obstacle to be overcome in reviewing this book and so, I assume, in reading it for other purposes, was the intensely academic and intractable language. I am all for working at understanding things, but there is an argument that writing sentences of almost impenetrable density calls for a spell in a corrective institution run by Strother Martin, where the equally powerful virtues of writing academically but with clarity and succinctness could be instilled and added to the manifest other qualities abundant in this book.

One of the problems caused by this style is that it is difficult to work out where the potential readership for the book will come from. Having nipped in and out of a few academic institutions, and interfered with the teaching of library and information services management across a broad spectrum, I am not sure that students will have the time or inclination to give this work the attention it calls for and in many ways deserves, and rightly so.

Academics might or might not, and I will leave that to them.

This leaves practitioners. The issues examined are absolutely critical: fundamental not only to our understanding of the information society, but also important defences against the negative aspects of the advance of technology in our lives and organisations.

Kirkpatrick also offers many pointers to the ways in which we fail to make the best use of technology in our personal and professional affairs. For these reasons, notwithstanding the major reservation over the daunting use of language, this book is important and valuable. Coming back to it repeatedly until it is better understood is a rewarding process.

In general, the author has produced a wide-ranging text, meticulously argued, with ideas developed to a greater extent than many other longer texts which explore the same issues. His reach embraces Weber, Marcuse, the Protestant Ethic and the sociology of play. Chapter 1, where he establishes the "theoretical basis for a social critique of contemporary technology" is abstruse in both meanings of the word; difficult to understand on one hand, significant or profound on the other. Chapter 2, on the growth of hacking, which is established to have a much more nuanced and positive meaning than the purely destructive connotation implied today, tells a fascinating story in an even-handed and authoritative way. This approach is continued throughout the following critique of the pc interface, with design considerations explored in relation to the earlier issues of control, manipulation and domination. The role of gaming is examined in Chapter 4, and the significance of hacking in the context of technology design, construction and politics is considered in Chapter 5. The final chapter develops the idea of a politics of information technology design.

If my imperfect understanding of it is right, it is ironic that a book concerned with freeing us from the tyrany of the machine, albeit by increasing our technological mastery – which some of us might consider to amount to incarceration in fact – should be written in a style so opaque that it places it firmly in the canon of impenetrable literature about the digital revolution which actually reinforces the grip of the expert, whether technological or sociological.

The situation cries out for clarity – even, dare I say it, a populariser. In spite of this, but because of the message, this book earns four stars.

Incidentally, the full quote, spoken not only by Strother Martin but also Newman himself, is:

What we've got here is failure to communicate. Some men you just can't reach, so you get what we had here last week which is the way he wants it. Well, he gets it.

I don't. Not always.

★★★★ Lyndon Pugh

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All Opinions are Equal, But the Indexer's Is More Equal Than Others

Rafferty, P., and Hidderly, R. Indexing Multimedia Works and Creative Works: The Problems of Meaning and Interpretation. Ashgate Publishing, 2005. isbn 0754632547

THE AUTHORS BELIEVE THAT RETRIEVAL of the content of multimedia works is more effective if language and interpretation are shared by the creator of the index and the user. They explore this assertion against a review of different theories of language and communication, particularly semiotics, questioning the possibility of ideal multimedia indexing.

They do so bringing together current thinking from writers in information science, computer science, communications and semiotics and ask the question "Could pleasure, ideology, or intertextuality form the bases of new approaches to indexing?"

The book reads like a series of lectures and academic articles, and to find out the answer readers will have to engage with writing which is highly theoretical, for example the sentence

Traditionally libraries focused on creating and implementing retrieval systems which were based on rationalist or pragmatic positivist philosophical approaches to epistemology.

Chapter 1 provides an overview to studies of communication including art historian Erwin Panofsky's "levels of meaning" in relation to image retrieval. Chapters 2 and 3 introduce information retrieval and multimedia information retrieval tools respectively. Chapter 4 is an introduction to semiotics. Chapter 5 describes specific multimedia retrieval tools – the Art and Architecture Thesaurus, Iconclass and the Library of Congress Thesaurus of Graphic Materials I and II – and tests a range of non-textual documents using a model based on insights drawn from semiotics. Chapter 6 looks at current computer-based research approaches and Democratic Indexing.

The book, primarily intended for third-year undergraduate and postgraduate information studies students, is written for people who are interested in communications, information sciences and computer sciences in the broadest sense. The publisher's press release suggests that it will also make "relevant and fascinating reading" for those working in multimedia and digital archives and for multimedia developers, computer scientists and electronic specialists.

The problem is that the word multimedia itself causes problems: the authors try to provide a definition, and fail, concluding "Why does this issue of definitions matter? In relation to people who understand what is happening, it probably matters little". This book does not tell you how to catalogue and index (indexing here refers to both descriptive catalogue and subject indexing) and it is not very good at detailing what goes on in the head when indexers ask themselves "what is this about, and how can I translate it into the terminology of the classification scheme or thesaurus for the benefit of the user?".

What it does do is to outline the thinking of linguistic and communication theorists (Barthes, Panofsky, Foucault and others) and bring their structuralist tenets (crudely, that each reader creates his or her own meaning when they approach the text) to the authors' own area of research – "democratic indexing".

The authors offer Democratic Indexing as an alternative approach to concept-based indexing and retrieval. This approach rejects the notion that the indexer is the sole expert with a single perspective, and seeks additional authority from the users rather then the pre-determined expert view. So, for example, a film indexer may view Clint Eastwood's film Million Dollar Baby and assign it to the genre of sports films, with indexing terms: women boxers, father-daughter relationships, euthanasia and, if moving into the emotions evoked by the picture, then fear, ambition and so on. The authors state the unoriginal notion that other people, not indexers, may well view a work differently and feel that the film is actually about paraplegia or family life or masculinity.

An ideal retrieval system, it is argued, would take account of all these views, and so enrich the retrieval outcomes. On the practical issue of how the users' views are gathered and put into the system, the authors remain silent. They believe that a complete interpretation of a multimedia object is only possible "if the interpreter has an understanding and knowledge of societal and aesthetic codes and conventions which operate at point of production".

> The indexer is not the sole expert.
> Other people, not indexers, may well view a work differently

Does Democratic Indexing therefore necessitate that each person contributing the information has this level of knowledge? Do they require, for example, an understanding of how Der Blaue Reiter group came to be before their view on what a Kandinsky painting is about is acceptable as valid?

I would argue that all opinions are equal but the indexer's opinion is more equal than others. The indexer should have superior knowledge of the collection and how one item relates to another (historically, socially, aesthetically).

More importantly he or she should have a firm and instinctive understanding of the collection's users and be able to assess what researchers have asked for in the past and anticipate their future needs. They will exercise imagination and consider a range of possibilities, all to be matched against the formality of the thesaurus.

Where the thesaurus does not take account of a concept, they will usually add it locally – a fact the authors do not recognise or acknowledge when asserting that "rich description is always lost in adhering to controlled vocabularies and classification schemes".

Where the opinions of users outside the indexing institution are extremely valuable is in the establishing of fact, for example in identifying silent film actors, the make of a tram or the names of the family members in a photograph, and indexers will welcome this additional information to augment the record.

For a book concerned with indexing theory, the index to the text is a poor example of practice. There are no cross-references to and from the many acronyms to the full name, passing mentions are indexed, authors' names listed in the bibliography (latest reference 2003) are unnecessarily repeated in the index, some words requiring an accent do not have one, an illustrated page discussing a Lichtenstein painting has no entry under the artist's name, and the actress and dancer Ginger Rogers has her name spelt incorrectly.

After reading this book, I considered how the target audience might benefit from it. Would it help an indexer in a multimedia archive to catalogue and index a Beethoven symphony? Probably not. Would it help third-year undergraduates in information studies to understand the structure of thought processes when considering what an object was about? I doubt it. Would it help them evaluate user wants and needs both actual and potential? No.

What it does do is introduce students to the main multimedia thesauri and to the work of Saussure, Metz and other leading thinkers, suggesting how their philosophies and semiotics might inform multimedia information retrieval.

It gives a good historical account of the work of past experts in indexing including Mary Piggott, Professor Enser and Shatford Layne, and notes current research. It reminded me, working with documentation standards in a museum with an extraordinary collection of multimedia materials, that the social and cultural background and the vocabulary users bring to databases is vitally important, and that the meaning an indexer gives to an image is historically determined and does not remain constant.

★★★ Olwen Terris, Data Standards Officer, Imperial War Museum

One For Busy(?) Professionals

Batley, S. Classification in Theory and Practice. Chandos Publishing, 2005. isbn 1843340836 (pbk) 1843340941 (hbk)

This publication is another title in Chandos' Information Professional Series which, so their somewhat bland blurb tells the reader, is aimed at the "busy information profession-al" (does anyone know any idle ones?) and has been com-missioned to provide "an authoritative view of current thinking" for librarians and other information professionals.

The author (Senior Lecturer at London Metropolitan University and course director of the MA in Information Services Management) states her objectives and view of the intended readership in the Endnote where she writes "the main purpose of the book was to demystify a topic within librarianship and to encourage the development of practical skills in using the major library classification schemes".

> Batley's book is a good, sound text . . . . If money is not an issue it will stand the purchaser in good stead

To this end the book is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter 1 outlines theories of classification and introduces readers to technical terminology; this is followed by a discussion of the main classification schemes for general collections – Dewey Decimal 22 and Library of Congress. Chapter 3 looks at classification schemes for specialist collections (Universal Decimal and other faceted schemes). Chapter 4 covers classifying electronic resources, studying vocabulary control and thesaurus construction and the final section is a summary. Each chapter ends with an up-to-date list of recommended reading.

There are practical exercises both in applying classification and working back from the notation. For example, the reader is asked to use the UDC pocket edition and decide what subjects a list of notations represent.

Using the same scheme readers are also asked to classify subjects, for example The Book of Common Prayer or Fashion in Restoration England. Sensibly, and crucially, the author explains the thinking behind her answers. Regarding The Book of Common Prayer the answer is 264:283.1 – "Liturgy in relation to Anglican churches, the colon linking the two notations to indicate a relationship".

Bravely the author spends some time on describing ontologies (classification) and taxonomies (thesaurus construction). Although these words are used, there seems to be a lack of confidence in explaining any fundamental difference between the familiar and less familiar words. On occasions she gives up and hedges her bets:

> In essence taxonomy is classification which has perhaps been regarded as a rather boring topic within traditional librarianship – hence it may be claimed, the change of name for computer scientists and knowledge managers.

Or, quoting Soergel from an article written for the Journal of the American Society for Information Science entitled The Rise of ontologies or the reinvention of classification: "A classification by any other name is still a classification". For an in-depth discussion of ontologies the author refers the reader to the bibliography but adds

> Unfortunately, it seems that librarianship and information science have, as was also the case with taxonomies, been ignored by the computing and artificial intelligence communities when devising more powerful search tools, resulting in unnecessary duplication of work in devising principles that were already long-established. This level of invisibility is not to our credit as a profession.

I found the section on taxonomy construction, maintenance and management particularly interesting. Here Batley includes discussion of need analysis – the danger that studies of information needs are actually exploring information demands as we assume that what a user asks for is what they need, when in fact they tend to ask for what they expect the system to provide.

Need analysis documents how communication and information transfer take place across the whole organisation. The author stresses the role of oral communication and suggests, for example, that information exchange could be improved by providing better social spaces and an up-to-date telephone directory, rather than redesigning more formal and expensive information retrieval mechanisms.

Although the publisher asserts that the book is intended for the information professional, I think the main use will be in library schools. Few information workers have the luxury of deciding what classification scheme to use and will usually have to work within a system established many years ago.

Therefore they will not require an overview of several schemes, nor have ready access to a variety of schedules. I doubt also whether the "busy information professional" will find time to sit down and work through the relevant chapters. Teaching classification through a textbook (more so than cataloguing) is very difficult, as there is no substitute for learning through the guidance of the classification scheme itself and practical application.

This book covers very similar ground to that discussed in Vanda Broughton's Essential Classification, published by Facet and reviewed for this journal in a previous issue. I prefer the latter, finding the prose style more to my taste and the explanations slightly clearer.

At £39.00 for the paperback and £57.00 hardback Classification in Theory and Practice is expensive, and Chandos should really think hard about their pricing, particularly when Facet is selling Essential Classification for £25 in paperback with almost twice as many pages.

But Batley's book is a good, sound text, and if money is not an issue the purchaser will find that the information within it will stand him or her in good stead for several years to come.

★★★ Olwen Terris

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Copyright, Speed Limits, Anti-litter and Graham Cornish

Cornish, G. P. Copyright: Interpreting the Law for Libraries, Archives and Information Services. 4th ed. Facet Publishing, 2004. isbn 1856045080

COPYRIGHT, LIKE SPEED LIMITS and anti-litter legislation, brings out the ambivalence in people. The rules are fine for other people but . . . or so it seems when one is seeking to give advice to people on what should and should not be done with copyright material. Library, information and archives professionals frequently find themselves having to adjudicate on whether what a client wants is within the law as far as copyright is concerned.

It is important then to have a book by your side to get the facts straight, or as straight as they can be given the scope for interpretation and determination through case law which remains in legislation of this kind. As Graham Cornish states in his introduction:

The law is not there to deal in specific terms with any and every possible situation but to provide the framework within which decisions can be made in specific circumstances. There are always "grey" areas of interpretation or circumstances when the law will be unclear.

Graham Cornish has performed a service for us all by providing a manageable and reliable guide to copyright as it affects libraries, archives and information services. This service extends to his painstaking updating of the work at regular intervals to take new legislation and new issues into account.

That the book has fundamental appeal is evident – nothing runs to four editions unless it has something special about it. The distinctive character of the work lies in the way that the salient information is carefully structured in question and answer format.

There are other books on copyright, and those who are concerned with the topic in any detail will possess them, but this one offers the reassurance that the author has anticipated problem areas and questions, and responded with answers which are reasonably clear and comprehensive.

The first three sections of the book cover basic concepts, including defining what copyright is, the types of material and media which are covered, and the nature and extent of the rights which exist through copyright.

There follow several sections on specific types of material and media. The largest section is devoted to literary, dramatic and musical works, reflecting the emphasis it receives in the legislation as well as its importance to most library and information services, even in these electronic times.

Artistic works, sound recordings, films and videos, broadcast material as well as databases all get a section. This last offers valuable guidance through an increasingly important area for the library and information community.

There is no scarcity of licensing schemes to facilitate the legitimate use of material, and a section on these covers the main collecting societies and agencies involved. Cornish admits in his introduction that this is a rapidly changing area and that one would be wise to check for salient detail with the relevant organisation. A case in point is the CLA Trial Scanning Licence for FE institutions which was introduced in 2004, probably just after the manuscript was completed, and of which there is no mention.

A section on computer programmes, electronic materials and websites covers a range of issues which are likely to be confronted, including the way to use links to other websites. This section is inevitably going to grow in later editions.

A final section covers miscellaneous aspects including, amongst other things, international treaties concerned with copyright, legal deposit and public lending right. There are also brief observations on data protection as well as freedom of information.

The latter is likely to require more attention in future as the demand for access to public information gathers pace and the complexities of published, semi-published and unpublished material unravel.

Some useful appendices complete the presentation of information. These comprise: a list of useful addresses which are mainly those of collecting societies; a bibliography of further reading, including websites, which is reasonably up-to-date; a note and checklist to differentiate between copying for commercial and non-commercial purposes (of some importance now that the legislation is far more restrictive about what may be undertaken for the former); and samples of statutory declaration forms.

The book has an adequate index which, for finding answers to questions, offers a useful alternative approach to that provided by the main arrangement. Entries usually point towards paragraph (question) numbers rather than page numbers, and abbreviations get *see* references to the full form.

The publishers are to be congratulated on the quality of book design and production in this paperback; the type is clear and a good size, and it is printed on good paper.

Understanding the minutiae of copyright legislation, attendant case law and licensing conditions is as challenging as fathoming Midland Mainline's fares tariff – and that is saying something. With this edition Graham Cornish continues to provide, in one handy volume, a very helpful way through a lot of the perplexing detail.

★★★★ Dr. J.E. Davies Director L.I.S.U., Loughborough University

A Long-Established and Authoritative Guardian

The Guardian International Film Guide 2005. edited by Daniel Rosenthal. Button Group/Guardian Books, 2005. isbn 0954876601

REVIEWING A LONG-ESTABLISHED, AUTHORITATIVE annual reference book presents the writer with few opportunities to show off. Neither purple prose passages of approbation nor a cool damnation with faint praise seem appropriate.

Even if you were clever or lucky enough to find an error it would seem churlish to highlight it. What the reader seeks is reassurance that the work is as comprehensive and accurate as last year's, that information can be found in roughly the same place, and that it is just as current.

Under Daniel Rosenthal's editorship (regular readers will know that Peter Cowie edited the Guide for many years) any such doubts on these points can be put aside. All the usual information is there and this year there are several new features.

> comprehensive and accurate . . . information can be found in roughly the same place, it is current

An important change is that the publication date has migrated from November to March, which allows reviewers and contributors to provide a more current report on the previous year's film-making and festivals than in earlier editions, and to report on films, such as Vera Drake and Sideways, currently showing in British cinemas.

The new section Rest of the World takes account of countries (for example the Gulf States and some West African countries) where feature film output is too small to merit an individual report in the World Survey, and so coverage is expanded from 76 to 97 countries.

A new Film Festivals calendar is designed to make it easier for film fans and film-makers to navigate the festival coverage at the back of the book.

Finally, the Global Directory, a section I find particularly useful, has doubled in size, and should I have the need for the e-mail address of the Estonian Film Archive or the name of a good film bookshop in Berlin they can be found.

The World Survey and the Rest of the World sections (maybe another name could be found for the latter – it sounds just a shade dismissive) are written intelligently and clearly.

The expert contributors provide not only an annotation of the major film productions of that country during the year, but also an analysis of the political, economic and social forces which both corrupt and enable cinema

Roy Armes, summarising film production in the Democratic Republic of Congo, writes:

The turbulent and chaotic history of Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo, under President Mobuto meant that no film production structures developed there and most of the country's film-makers live in exile.

Pieter van Lierop's report from The Netherlands on the murder of the controversial film-maker Theo van Gogh is a painful reminder of some consequences of religious fundamentalism and also of the power of cinema: "The most likely cause of his murder was a short film, Submission . . . a lament for the systematic oppression of women in the name of Allah down the ages".

As last year, I am drawn to the Quotes of the Year scattered throughout the text, which are stimulating and often funny: "I encourage all teenagers to see my movie, by any means necessary. If you need me to sneak you in, let me know". (Michael Moore reacts to the MPAA's R rating for Fahrenheit 9/11) or "The Australian film industry is stuffed" (Stephen Smith, President, Australian Screen Producers Association).

The editor agrees with me that cinema is not just about feature film, and has included reports on documentary film production which since 2002 has burgeoned in an unprecedented way. In September 2004 one in five films playing in US cinemas was a non-fiction title, Michael Moore's extraordinary polemic Fahrenheit 9/11 taking $220m worldwide.

> Film-makers' urge to delve into issues not reported by other media has been matched by global audiences' desire to see the result

As Thomas White remarks in his article How the Documentary Took Flight:

perhaps the documentary is the new news. Film-makers' collective urge to delve deeper into the issues and report what's not reported by the broadcast and print media has been matched by global audiences' desire to see the result.

The Guide advertises itself on the front cover and title page as "a definitive annual review of world cinema". It is difficult to argue with the statement, and at £18.99 for over 400 pages it is such good value that I urge MmIT readers to buy a copy for themselves or their organisations and test the assertion.

★★★★ Olwen Terris

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Skyping and Shrinking to Good Effect

Skype (www.skype.com) and **DVD Shrink (**www.dvdshrink.org/where.html**)**

TWO FREE PROGRAMMES available on the Internet have recently been brought to my attention, and to my surprise and pleasure, they are very good indeed.

Skype, and it rhymes with ripe, is actually two connected programmes which allow a computer to be used as a telephone. With Skype – "free Internet telephony that just works!" – other Skype users anywhere in the world can be called free without a time limit. It works, it is brilliant, and I am hooked.

First, it is necessary to download Skype free from the address above, register, create a contact list from the on-line directory, and obtain Skype's once-only contacts authorisation to see when recipients are on line.

As far as hardware is concerned, users will need to plug in a microphone costing less than £1 if bought online, or a headset with a microphone boom – obtained for £6.99 at the local Games shop, turn on the speakers, and call and talk.

It really is that simple.

Skype works best between two or more broadband con- nections (conference calls are also easily arranged) giving the best quality with little or no signal deterioration. It will just about work with 56k modems, but if there are too many people on-line using the ISP, some deterioration will take place.

At this stage, Skype does not support a webcam, but this is high on their list of new features to come. In the meantime MSN Messenger can be used simultaneously with Skype on broadband so talking and viewing at the same time is possible without any problems. With only a 56k modem, Skype or Messenger can just about be used, but not both together.

Skype – free Internet telephony that works! Plug in a microphone costing less than £1, download, register, create an authorised contact list, use it

When the Skype main screen opens, any contacts on-line can be seen: a double-click sets up the call. The receiving computer then rings like a telephone. Calls received can be restricted to those on the contacts list, by using the options settings under file. This will cut out the double glazing salesmen. Text messages can be sent during conversations (but why? Ed.) and unlike email, files of virtually any size can be dragged and dropped to them.

End-to-end encryption is used, so the chances of the CIA monitoring calls and reading files are diminished.

Skype even works to other computers on the same network. When my wife and I are both working I often call her in her study to save running downstairs. I also make long calls to Austria and Australia, although there is a short time delay when talking to Australia.

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The sound quality on Skype is far superior to the telephone – it really is as good as having the other person sitting next to you. This applies both to Skype and Skype Out, which is described below. It is also particularly good for people whose hearing may be impaired, and works much better in this case than amplifiers on the telephone receiver.

Sound output to the headphones can be restricted, and headphones and speakers can work together with a mini-jack two-into-one socket into the sound card.

Skype Out, the second part of the programme, allows calls worldwide to contacts who are either not yet computer addicts, or not on broadband and yet still use the telephone. To those of you who say you can do this through the telephone, my answer is at at 1.1 pence per minute to Australia, hearing them clearly through the speakers and with Skype quality, I doubt it.

Skype – Key Points

Free

Excellent sound quality

Potential library applications

Talk and view with MSN Messenger

Secure

Inexpensive kit requirements

Using Skype Out, purchasing a 10 Euro voucher (plus 15% vat) online, the account is set up in about a quarter of an hour, and gives the equivalent of 10 hours talk time to Australia (or many other countries including Europe, Canada and the USA).

Some other countries are a little more expensive, but only a little. Once the the recipient's telephone number is entered into the Skype main screen and called up, it works exactly as Skype does.

So how do Skype make any money? I have no idea, but the programme is of the highest quality, impeccably designed, user friendly and with excellent FAQs and User Guides on-line on their website.

Skype want the programme to be used, and I would encourage you to do so, so get Skyped Out.

Available for PC and MAC, I know of commercial companies who use Skype in preference to their national telephone system, for reasons of both quality and economy.

Apart from personal and business calls, could this have library applications? Certainly for libraries running an Internet cafe service, Skype Out could be a money-earner and is definitely a new addition to the range of services libraries could be offering.

Check it out.

★★★★★ Dr Anthony Hugh Thompson, Chair, MmIT Editorial Board.

DVD Shrink describes itself as "free, powerful, yet user friendly DVD backup software". I am not going to enter into any discussions here about copyright and backing up, but for the purposes of this review I am simply reporting what DVD Shrink will do.

DVD Shrink – Key Points

Free

Powerful

User-Friendly

Works Well

Excellent Online User Guides

Full or Selective Backups

Works Without Nero

Backup Indistinguishable

There are a number of programmes on the Internet which enable all or part of a DVD to be backed up onto another DVD, or indeed onto CDs, but they can cost quite a lot of money. DVD Shrink, like Skype, is free, and it works well.

Also like Skype, DVD Shrink has excellent online user guides, and I have found two so far. They will guide users efficiently and easily through the various processes. DVD Shrink obviously has a considerable following out there, and several people have spent a lot of time producing thoroughly well-designed guides to its use. Take a look at www.dvdshrink.info/fulldisc_basic/php for example.

DVD Shrink can be used to produce a working backup copy, although in some cases a degree of compression is required as some DVDs contain more than 4.7 gigabytes, and have to be squashed to fit onto a recordable DVD.

Alternatively, the software will back up only selected parts of the DVD, thus reducing compression or avoiding it altogether. This is not a problem for users of multi-layer DVD recorders, and it overcomes both region coding and copyright protection in the process.

If the full disk setting on DVD Shrink is used, it analyses the disc to be backed up, indicating whether or not it will fit onto the destination disc and what compression will be used, and then enables the backup process.

Using the e-author setting provides a list of the various components on the original disc, so that unwanted extras or the various foreign language soundtracks, for example, can be left out. Then the backup can be made.

If Nero is already installed, DVD Shrink works in conjunction with it to write the backup disc. It will also work without Nero, but perhaps more slowly.

Provided compression is not too great, the backup copy appears indistinguishable from the original, and the disc will play back in most recent DVD players, either stand alone or in a computer.

This is a very clever programme, and it will make excellent backups of any precious material already on DVD.

Although DVDs and CDs should not deteriorate, some of them do, or they can be damaged, so backing up is a sensible precaution to take. DVD Shrink does the job very well indeed.

Take a look at it.

★★★★★ Dr Anthony Hugh Thompson

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Film and Video News
bfi BNFVC Arrow Films Film Education Moviemail

AKIRA KUROSAWA'S High and Low is based on Ed McBain's detective novel King's Ransom, and is a gripping police thriller starring Toshiro Mifune. A regular star for Kurosawa, Mifune takes the part of a wealthy industrialist embroiled with a kidnapper who mistakenly snatches his chauffeur son instead of the industrialist's own boy.

With his business schemes in a particularly parlous state, Gondo, the industrialist, confronts the dilemma of paying the ransom and facing ruin or leaving the boy to his fate.

Kurosawa injects ambiguity and complexity into the more conventional plot of the kidnapping which goes wrong and the associated moral dilemmas.

His reworking of the novel develops the theme of the inequalities of Japanese society, and the film also reflects a "penetrating insight into the kidnapper's state of mind." Kurosawa portrays all the major protagonists – the businessman, the police and the kidnapper – as equal in their brutality but still human, and the film in the end offers no easy answers.

From Kurosawa's High and Low

The DVD contains sleeve notes by film historian Philip Kemp, and the release is in black and white. The language is Japanese and there are English subtitles. Running for 143 minutes, the original film was released in 1963.

I LIVE IN FEAR is the second Kurosawa release in this issue, telling the story of a wealthy foundry owner who decides to move his family from Tokyo to Brazil to avoid the nuclear holocaust he fears is imminent. The family, resistant to the idea because of their worries about loss of status and inheritance, set about the task of having him declared mentally incompetent.

This film was made at the height of the Cold War, and plays on the same paranoia which inspired the Godzilla films. It is worth noting that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were still recent memories at the time. Toshiro Mifune again stars, this time with Takashi Shimura, who had earlier starred in Ikiru.

One of the director's least successful films commercially, it was the one he felt most proud of:

The turn-out for this film was very bad, few people came, and it was my biggest box-office failure. After having put so much of myself into this film, after having seriously treated a serious theme, I see now that we made the film too soon. At that time no one was thinking seriously of atomic extinction. It was only later that people got frightened, and that a number of films on the subject appeared, among them On the Beach.

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Much of the success was due to the extraordinary performance of Mifune as Kiichi the foundry owner – a man twice his age – and to Shimura's performance.

The DVD once again contains the menace of Rudolph Foster in the German version. The female leads also differ in style and interpretation. Later devotees of James Bond will recognise Lotte Lenya's earlier role before she starred as Rosa Kleb in From Russia With Love.

There are notes by Philip Kemp and a biography of G. W. Pabst, and both versions have English subtitles for £19.99. The release date was early December. Sleeve notes for the DVD are once again by Philip Kemp.

SIXTH HAPPINESS is a Warris Hussein film which won the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Award. Set in 1962 Bombay, Brit (played by Firdaus Kanga), a child with brittle bones, is born to Souad Faress's Sera Kotwal. Based on Kanga's autobiographical novel Trying to Grow, the story – funny and acerbic – is the moving tale of a young man's sexual awakening as family life crumbles around him.

Located in Mumbai's Parsee community, and centred on a non-stereotypical Indian family, the film is marked by powerful performances from Both Kanga and Faress, ably abetted by Nina Wadia, Indira Varma and Meera Syal.

The story was described by Faress as a "re-imagining" of his childhood and youth. The boundaries between fact and fiction are blurred even further by the casting of Kanga, with no experience as an actor, as Brit.

Nevertheless, Kanga succeeds in portraying Brit as neither martyr nor victim. Instead, the boy is "bright, spiky, opinionated and selfish, and the possessor of a sharp tongue. To Brit, the Kama Sutra is to be preferred to Shakespeare, and gender is never allowed to get in the way of his enjoyment of sex.

At the time that Sixth Happiness was first released theatrically, South Asian culture was little known in the West. Even after the exposure of western audiences to East is East, Bend it Like Beckham, Bombay Dreams, Goodness Gracious Me and The Kumars at No. 42, the film is still radical.

PEOPLE ON SUNDAYis a light-hearted tale of five young Berliners in the 1920s. By Robert Siodmak and Edgar G, Ulmer, it is a story of a taxi driver, a travelling wine dealer, a record shop sales girl, a film extra and a model who spend a typical summer Sunday in the countryside.

The story reveals the flirtations, rivalries, jealousies and petty irritations of the day, and is regarded as one of the most important examples of the German Avant-Garde film movement of the time.

The five principals were amateurs who actually worked in the jobs their characters hold down in the film. The results are performances which are remarkably unselfconscious and natural.

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The film shows exactly what the title suggests – ordinary Berliners (right) on their day off, doing what they would have been doing in any case. The honesty and quietly ironic observation, as the day wears on and the return to the weekday routine looms, lend the film a timeless and universal appeal.

The influence of People on Sunday on the French New Wave was considerable. It also had an affect on the Italian Neorealist movements.The original negative of the film is lost, and no complete copy exists. This restored version is a reconstruction by the Netherlands Film Museum, and contains important scenes which were previously missing. There is also a new score by Elena Kats-Chernin.

The release date was the 25th April, and the DVD is priced at £19.99. The film is silent, with a music soundtrack, and is in black and white. The release is part of the *bfi* History of the Avant-Garde, which covers major innovative films of the first 100 years of cinema.

TRISTANA, acknowledged as Bunuel's "most Spanish work", was inspired by the novel of the same name by Bénito Perez Galdós. Although there is much common ground between the novel, the filmmaker always asserted that neither of the works was to do with women's liberation, although both dealt with the themes of freedom, power and control.

The film is set in the Toledo of the 1930s, where Catherine Deneuve (left) takes the title role as an orphan who is in the care of an elderly aristocrat who has seen better times. This is Don Lope, played by Fernando Rey.

Inevitably, Deneuve becomes Rey's mistress but eventually meets a much younger man in the shape of the painter Horacio – "handsome but uninspired" – and played by Franco Nero. Upon becoming seriously ill Tristana goes back to Don Lope, ultimately to take her revenge on the man who corrupted her.

With a very strong cast and superb photography, Tristana is a "twisted, haunting study of sexual politics and the concept of freedom". Both the main characters believe in freedom of choice but find their actions dictated by desire. Bunuel presents this theme through the two characters who are seen to change throughout the film.

Two versions are available on the DVD, which contains both the Spanish and French versions of the 1970 release. Both have English subtitles and there is also a booklet with notes by Isabel Santaolalla of Roehampton University, London. She is an authority on Bunuel.

Details of all *bfi* Video releases are to be found at www.bfi.org.uk/video

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ARROW FILMS' 13 Conversations About One Thing (left) opens nationwide on the 17th of June.

Starring Matthew McConaughey, John Turturro, Alan Arkin, Clea DuVall and Amy Irving, this is an intricate tale of fate and the nature of happiness
.
The film is directed and co-written by Jill Sprecher with her sister Karen Sprecher,

13 Conversations About One Thing is Jill Sprecher's second feature, after her directorial debut in 1997 with the independent feature Clockwatchers.

In the story:

- A man approaching middle age decides to change his life.
- A rising young attorney's plans are thrown into disarray as the result of a single act.
- A woman faces her husband's infidelity.
- An envious businessman seeks revenge on a cheerful co-worker, and an optimistic young cleaning woman awaits a miracle.

The film appears to present the ebb and flow of daily New York life: chaotic, isolated and diffuse. Underneath, it asks questions: How can we know what effect we have on a passing stranger? What if the smallest gesture can change the course of someone's life?

It proposes that fate may be a product of the choices people make, such as how they choose to accept seemingly random events, whether or not we the interconnectedness of things is obvious.

Perhaps, too, there really is a light at the end of the tunnel, even if it cannot yet be seen.

Five contemporary stories are woven together into a single message which examines the complexity of everyday lives and the search for happiness.

Release date: 17th June, 2005. Running time: 104 mins. Certificate: to be confirmed

FILM EDUCATION announced the UK release of Robots in March. Twentieth Century Fox, Blue Sky Studios and award-winning director Chris Wedge have now created the world of Robots™ – filled with whimsical robots.

Rodney Copperbottom™ is a small town robot with a gift for inventing. He works with his dad as a dishwasher in a restaurant, and the dirty dishes are loaded into his chest.

The film is the story of Rodney's journey to Robot City to meet his idol, the inventor Bigweld, who spends his time trying to improve the lives of robots. On the way, Rodney meets the Rusties and Cappy, an executive at Big Weld Industries who forms an immediate liking for Rodney.

However, Rodney and his friends also meet unsavoury individuals who try to derail his plans to find Bigweld and save Robot City. Worksheets are downloadable from www.filmeducation.org/primary/robots.html

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MOVIEMAIL FILM FIRST has advertised a number of newly available films in their current catalogue. Notable amongst the latest news is the availability of all 13 films of Jacob Bronowski's famous account of the intellectual and technological history of the human race from prehistoric times to the present day.

The 1973 original, designed to complement Sir Kenneth Clarke's BBC documentary series Civilisation, was a true landmark and a glorious piece of television. A lucid and passionate broadcaster, Bronowski was genuinely fascinated by humanity's place in the world.

In the production he concentrates on the growing development of human science and technology, of the ways in which humanity seeks to harness and dominate its environment, and the ways in which scientific and intellectual theory across the ages, from Galileo to Einstein, have broadened our horizons. The series is available on DVD or VHS for £49.99.

MONDOVINO is an engrossing and frequently charming documentary which examines the effect of globalisation upon the French wine industry. This thought-provoking film is an intelligent examination of the impact of big business on a perhaps dying culture.

Thankfully, the production is very much more than an anti-American rant (although there is plenty of that from one of the acerbic vintners) but is alsoan intelligent examination of the impact of big business on a perhaps dying culture.

Directed by Jonathon Nossiter, the film is in French and was first released in 2004.

THE BIG RED ONE is Richard Schickel's reconstruction of Sam Fuller's original war film. Schickel worked from Fuller's shooting script, and added over 40 minutes. This makes the film much closer to the late director's original cut.

Previously available only in a shortened version, the film is now shown as the epic it was intended to be, and demonstrates that, in Fuller's words, "The real glory of war is surviving". The film stars Robert Carradine, Lee Marvin and Mark Hamill and was first released in 1980.
DVD extras include, on two discs:

- Commentary By Richard Schickel
- The Fighting First: A short War Department Film
- Reconstruction Trailer;
- Alternate Scenes
- Anatomy Of A Scene
- The Men Who Made Sam Fuller
- The Real Glory: Reconstructing The Big Red One Documentary
- Original Promotional Reel
- Stills Gallery

Moviemail is at www..moviemail--online.co.uk

How Technology and Softlink Turn Schools Around

Catherine Dhanjal of The Answer

Library Time at Nassington

Nassington School's new learning centre (near Peterborough) has state-of-the-art computers, internet access, an array of new books and a new computerised library system. But this was not always the case.

Headteacher Paul Archer, in post for over a year, and helped by staff and students, has achieved significant resource improvements.

Studies have shown that ICT is a big learning motivator for children. Nassington is a case in point, with no children having unauthorised absences in the last year (see also David Baugh's article on Creativity and multimedia).

Paul wants to give children the best education possible, and sees high quality resources and ICT as a key element in education today. An Ofsted inspection about 18 months ago found the school to be effective, but indicated that the library was woefully inadequate. Specifically, "pupils did not have enough opportunity to use information and communication technology right across the curriculum".

Library facilities and the range and quality of books needed improvement to meet the requirements of the national curriculum. Since then, £200,000 has been raised, and a new learning centre for the school and the community has been opened. The learning centre was equipped with 14 new computers, new books and flat screen vdus.

Central to this initiative is a new library management system from Softlink – Alice Junior – which was chosen by the children, from a shortlist.

Softlink's Alice Book Wizard library system helps children choose books to suit their tastes and reading abilities. Choosing books becomes a game which the children love. Book Wizard talks to the children, asks their reading ages, and shows book cover images and details for resources that match the children's ability to read, and their interests.

Library Time at Nassington

Teachers or librarians can catalogue a wide variety of learning resources and teaching aids.

Softlink 2 ☞

Nassington now has a learning centre which is more than an ICT suite. It is a truly integrated library and learning centre for the school and the community. The library is used during teaching time, unstructured time such as lunchtime and for a regular "library circus" so that pupils understand better how the library works, how it is alphabeticised, and which books are fiction and which are non-fiction.

Sladen Church of England Middle School in Kidderminster adopted a slightly different approach. This was a school which was failing, according to an Ofsted report in 2002. By the 2004 inspection, and with a new headteacher, Ofsted were able to say that Year 8 standards were in line with the national average and rising.

Elaine Griffin, with 15 pupil librarians working with her on a rota basis, carries out tasks such as shelving books, labelling books, and checking books in and out. Under this regime, all books have now been catalogued, including those kept in classrooms.

Softlink's Book Wizard, as in Nassington, helps pupils find books by generating a list of suggestions in line with their interests (for example teen love, war, surprise, funny) and reading ages. Pupils can carry out enquiries themselves on Book Wizard, with the younger children choosing the pictorial or one/two word search options. Older children search by title or key word, and can reserve titles using the library system.

The children learn that factual books are called non-fiction, and are shown the basics of the Dewey system and the author/alphabetical filing system.

Using the Softlink reports facility, regular reports on library borrowing are also generated for the Headteacher.

To provide an incentive, Library league tables are published, showing the top borrowers by class. The school believes this helps promote self-esteem and boost borrowing, and the statistics seem to prove it. In the first term of 2004/05, one Year 5 class borrowed over 200 items. One child borrowed 36 items in the same term.

The involvement of children in the library is also strengthened by the encouragement to donate books. Children who do so are given commendations and a book plate is placed in the donation. The result of this is that a high percentage of the pupils at Sladen, where the roll is over 430, are regular library borrowers.

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For more information about Softlink, go to www.softlink.co.uk

Using Book Wizard at Sladen

More About the *bfi*

Previous issues of MmIT have drawn attention to the significant changes taking place at the *bfi*, and the intervention of the anonymous Curatori. This is an issue which is already affecting some group members, and this journal.

The Managing Editor of Archive Zones, Michael Archer, comments in their current issue, and together with David Robinson, updates the story, and poses more questions. This is a summary of the concerns expressed by Michael Archer and David Robinson in the Spring 2005 issue (no 53) of Archive Zones, with their kind permission.

Archer observes to begin with that the news about the *bfi* is not all bad – the launch of the Mitchell and Kenyon Collection of Edwardian films was an exemplary exercise in making available a high-quality archive, but was very much a tale of the curate's egg – it appears that none of the staff involved in acquiring and restoring the material are still with the *bfi*.

Preservation

Commercialisation

Internationalism

Conservation

Technology

Ex-Times film critic David Robinson asks a number of questions. He raises the general issue of the position of the NFTVA (National Film and Television Archive) as an acknowledged vehicle for preserving "the nation's moving image" and making it "accessible to the public for education and enjoyment", then proceeds to ask if this is compatible with its new position as a subordinate element in the *bfi*, arguably at risk from short-termism.

Robinson goes on to amplify his concern for the autonomy of the Archive, curatorless and with reduced autonomy. He stresses that history, size, significance for the national heritage, commercial value and status in the international film world make the Archive's position as a "subsidiary department of a department" quite anomalous.

Referring to the statement of the National Film Preservation Foundation of the USA on film preservation activities involving

- Appropriate storage at the correct temperatures and humidity levels, to slow down, if not prevent, deterioration
- The transfer of film to more stable stock
- Improvement of public access by duplication and the proper use of technology

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Robinson asks how much progress has been made in the design of the storage facilities, and specifically how the apparent questioning of the validity of duplication sits with the consensus on the crucial role played by duplication in the preservation of film resources.

Conversely, there is some scepticism about the state of digital preservation technology and its capability in the area of preservation. This leads to some probing about *bfi* intentions in the application of digitisation to preservation. Robinson points out that the NFTVA already holds massive collections of digital resources which could be prey to the vicissitudes of uncertain and unpredictable technology in a sphere subject to rapid change.

Some weight is attached to the enunciation of "cultural significance" as a criterion for preservation: here the same strictures of uncertainty, unpredictability and rapid change apply.

There is then some sharpening of focus on the role of the new curatorial unit, which will assume significant responsibilities for researching, interpreting and exploiting the collections. Readers of MmIT may be familiar with the background to the reference to this unit being formed from redundant cataloguers and acquisitions officers.

The issue of redundant cataloguers – acknowledged by Robinson to be "long-established and highly-specialised", and supporting a number of vital functions, might well be a cause celebre in itself, and adds another concern to the undoubted need to maintain adequate curatorial staffing arrangements.

Staffing needs are also approached from another angle. Reductions have not only been applied to the cataloguing unit but to technical areas involving preservation, repair, collection integrity and access.

Fundamental issues of principle are covered by David Robinson. He observes that the NFTVA has traditionally played a dynamic role in international affairs, through its membership of the FIAF (the International Federation of Film Archives).

Drawing on sources inside the FIAF, Robinson raises the question of the *bfi*'s intentions as far as this international role is concerned, and asks about a possible clash between the FIAF's code of ethics and the growing commercial impetus of the *bfi*.

The preservation versus access tension forms the basis of Robinson's concerns about the underlying conflict inside the *bfi*. This is related to some of the assertions in the FIAF code of ethics and, it is argued strenuously, could lead to a damaging clash.

This is between access needs, to a degree driven by commercial imperatives, and preservation dedicated to preserving a cultural heritage.

With the generous cooperation of Archive Zones, Michael Archer and David Robinson, it is hoped that MmIT will be able to report this argument as it matures.

Archive Zones is the official journal of FOCAL International. More information is available at www.focalint.org

Film and Video From the BNFVC   by Maureen Brown

All Join In
Triangle, Unit E1, The Knoll Business Centre, Old Shoreham Road, Hove, BN3 7GS. Tel 01273 413141; Fax 01273 418843; email: info@triangle services.co.uk or NSPCC Publications, Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London, EC2A 3NH. Tel 020 7825 7422; Fax 020 7825 2763. Purchase only £35 inc p&p. Produced by Triangle. VHS or DVD, approx 50 mins. Made with a diverse group of three to seven year olds, aims to help children develop skills for communicating, making friends and understanding their own and other's feelings. Looks at new experiences and new relationships through a child's eyes, aiming to encourage: inclusion – children are encouraged to wonder about other children and about differences in a positive way; communication – children are introduced to strategies for making sense of each other, including sign language, around feelings and getting along; emotional literacy – children are shown skills for observing and understanding each other's feelings. Audience: children under the age of eight.

The Brewer's Tale
Broomrigg Productions, 6 Broomrigg Crescent, Ainstable, Carlisle, CA4 9QH. Tel 01768 896485 or 07786 705066; email: info@broomrigg.com or Books Cumbria, Bookends, 56 Castle Street, Carlisle, CA3 8JA. Tel 01228 529067; email: enquiries@bookscumbria.com. Purchase only, £12.50.

Produced and directed by Roger Brown. VHS or DVD, 40 mins. Documentary relating how the small rural community of Hesket Newmarket in Cumbria formed two consortia, one to buy the village pub (The Old Crown), the other to buy the associated microbrewery. The film relates the background to these events, describes the community and its surroundings and includes interviews with Julian Davey (brewery consortium chairman), Mike Parker (brewery manager) and local celebrity Sir Chris Bonington. The Hesket Newmarket Brewery, which now operates as a villagers' co-operative, makes cask-conditioned ales such as Blencathra Bitter, Helvellyn Gold and Doris's 90th Birthday Ale.

Brontë Ways; Part 1: Birstall to Haworth
Pathways Video Production, 1 Rose Bank Road, Todmorden, OL14 7AL. Tel 01706 8120088; email: jt@pathwaysvideo.co.uk. Purchase only £12.99 plus £1.50 p&p. VHS or DVD, 52 mins. The Brontë Way is a trail of about 43 miles, stretching from Birstall near Leeds in West Yorkshire, traversing the Pennines to Gawthorpe Hall at Padiham in Lancashire. The video takes us along this walk and visits the many places associated with the lives and literary works of the Brontë family.

Caravaggio: The Final Years
National Gallery Company, St Vincent House, 30 Orange Street, London, WC2N 5DN. Tel 020 7747 2870; Fax 020 7839 0367; email: admin@natgal.co.uk. Purchase only £15, ISBN 1 85709 366 6. DVD, 35 mins. Made to accompany the National Gallery exhibition. Concentrates on the last four years of the painter's life – a relatively little known period in Caravaggio's career – and features many masterpieces from the exhibition, including the National Gallery's own Supper at Emmaus, the Flagellation from Naples and new footage of the Beheading of Saint John shot on location in Malta.

Carl Th. Dreyer – My Metier [Denmark]
Royal Danish Embassy, Press and Culture Section, 55 Sloane Street, London, SW1X 9SR. Tel 020 7333 0200 x241; Fax 020 7333 0243. Free loan to educational institutions within the UK only. Directed by Torben Skjodt Jensen. VHS, 50 mins. Documentary about the life and work of filmmaker Carl Theodor Dreyer. Scenes from Dreyer's films are interspersed with interviews with actors and film studio workers who worked with him.

Circle Chasers 2004
The Crop Circle Connector, 11 Richmond Terrace, Clifton, Bristol, BS8 1AB. Website: www.cropcircleconnector.com. Purchase only, £12.95. VHS or DVD, 48 mins. Documents crop circle formations found across southern England during the 2004 season, focussing in particular on those around the Avebury

Stone circles area. Features aerial and Pole photography. Sites shown include: The Ridgeway, near West Overton; Wilton Windmill, near Wilton; West Kennett Longbarrow, near Silbury Hill; Milk Hill, near Alton Barn; and Tan Hill, near Stanton St Bernard – all in Wiltshire and Fort Nelson, near Portchester, in Hampshire.

Dying for Drugs
True Vision Productions, 49a Oxford Road South, London, W4 3DD. Tel 020 8742 7852; Fax 020 8742 7853; website: www.truevisiontv.com. Purchase only. VHS or DVD, 78 mins. An investigation into the global power of the world's pharmaceutical industry, exposing the lengths to which drug companies are prepared to go to get their drugs approved and to get the prices they want. Reports include: drug companies experimenting on children without their parents' consent; how one drug company attempted to silence a leading academic who raised doubts about their drug; and desperately ill patients' attempts to make a leading drug company sell them the drugs they need to stay alive at an affordable price. Audience: educational bodies.

Fascism: The Legacy of Hate [UK/USA/Australia]
Uniview Worldwide, PO Box 20, Hoylake, Wirral, CH48 7HY. Tel 0151 625 3453; Fax 0151 625 3707;
email: sales@uniview.co.uk. Purchase only £19.99 exc VAT. Produced by Journeyman Pictures in association with Films for the Humanities & Sciences and ABC Australia. VHS, 38 mins. Explores the roots of Fascism and Nationalism within Europe and investigates how unemployment and immigration across the EU have brought these extreme views back into the political mainstream.

Fired Up; Managing Anger and Strong Feelings
Mental Health Media, 356 Holloway Road, London, N7 6PA. Tel 010 7700 8171 or 8129; Fax 020 7686 0959; email: info@mhmedia.com or Trust for the Study of Adolescence, 23 New Road, Brighton, BN1 1WZ. Tel 01273 693311;
Fax 01272 679907; email: publications@tsa.uk.com. Purchase only, £49.95 inc. (£39.95 for small organisations). Produced by Mental health Media and Dawson Films, with funding and assistance from the Youth Justice Board. VHS, 30 mins. Accompanied by a 30-page workbook. Designed to facilitate discussions about anger and strong emotions, and how to manage them. It looks at the pressures young people face, and aims to help them explore more effective ways to identify and communicate their emotions. Drama and the recounted experiences of young people are used to cover the whole cycle of anger, from the triggers, thoughts, feelings to the actions and the aftermath. Audience: 14-17 year-olds.

Flightdeck 7; Virgin Atlantic; Boeing 747-400 Platinum Collection ITVV, 77-78 Westborough, Scarborough, YO11 1TP. Tel 0800 137 423 or 01723 500767; Fax 0800 026 5050 or 01723 501208; website: www.itvv.co.uk. £21.95. VHS, 166 mins. Filmed from the flightdeck of a Virgin Atlantic Boeing 747-400 flying from London Heathrow to San Francisco.

How Lawyers Win: A Guide for Prosecution Witnesses
Bond Solon, 13 Britton Street, London, EC1M 5SX. Tel 020 7253 7053; Fax 020 7253 7051; email: info@bondsolon.com. Purchase only, £116.33 inc VAT. Produced by Surrey Police and Bond Solon. VHS, approx 100 mins. Provides an insight into how to make the best of a situation in Court, Hearings and Industrial Tribunals. The video takes viewers through the entire process, from the incident, through investigation to the successful outcome. Marl Solon is interviewed in depth by two experienced Surrey police officers – specialists in the delivery of training programmes in investigations and investigative interviewing to other forces and non-police organisations. The interview is notably confrontational and the replies unscripted. Audience: professional evidence gatherers involved in any investigative process.

A Kabul Music Diary
Royal Anthropological Institute, Video Sales, 50 Fitzroy Street, London, W1T 5BT. Tel 020 7387 0455; Fax 020 7388 8817; email: film@therai.org.uk. Purchase only £50 plus p&p. VHS, 52 mins. Ethnomusicologist John Baily returns to Kabul to assess the world of music one year after the defeat of the Taliban. The film documents a variety of musical activities, including performances of rubab lute music by Kabul's traditional musicians, songs of Afghan orphans, the Music Department of Kabul University and a student pop group playing electric guitars and keyboard. Implicitly, the film identifies some of the dilemmas facing those seeking to help Afghans rebuild their music culture.

Items on the list are available direct from producers. The *bfi* National Library is at www.bfi.org.uk/nationallibrary/

Technology

Jane Rowlands

Cordless Stand and Deliver

PRESENTERS, TEACHERS, TRAINERS AND ANYONE ELSE WORKING WITH large groups in lecture theatres or big classrooms can now be more mobile with PolyVision's new Walk-and-Talk Cordless Lectern (below right).

The cordless lectern, launched in the UK at the BETT 2005 tradeshow, is the latest in a series of products based on PolyVision's unique Walk-and-Talk technology. It provides mobility and ease of use, and is straightforward to use.

It comprises two main components: an interactive flat-panel display and a battery-powered, adjustable-height, mobile lectern. PolyVision's interactive display acts as an extension of a computer, simplifying and improving It-based presentations in large group settings.

Users can access files, run applications, highlight key points and capture new thoughts from the interactive display surface by using either a stylus or fingertip. Alternatively, presentations can be controlled from anywhere in the room, via an easy-to-use remote control. Presenters are free to leave the lectern and engage more personally with the audience.

The interactive display uses PolyVision's patent pending Walk-and-Talk technology to create true mobility and flexibility, minimising set-up and eliminating the need to load or learn special software.The lectern can also be adjusted to a variety of heights and positions – including some appropriate for the wheelchair-bound.

It is also easily moved around a classroom or lecture theatre, and is adaptable to all presentation needs. Users no longer have to worry about choosing a single position to present – the position of the lectern can be changed as required. And, after a full day of extensive use, the battery pack can be re-charged quickly for another day's work.

The Cordless Lectern is now shipping in the UK through authorised PolyVision resellers. The Walk-and-Talk interactive panel is available as a stand-alone product for teachers working with smaller groups or for those not requiring a complete package.

For more information, the website is at www.polyvision.com or email marcus.edgar@sixdegreespr.com

Visual Planet's Through-Window Touch Technology

A NEW INTERACTIVE REAR PROJECTION DISPLAY screen called an Interactive Poster from Visual Planet is said to be much easier to use (below right).

The new, "shrink-wrapped" screen is simple to instal and operate. The new product comes in a range of high resolution interactive diffusion and holographic rear projection screens, either free-standing or attached to a window. The latter application offers the possibility of providing out-of-hours information and services at times when there is no public access to service points.

Promotion and information points are obvious places where the screens can be used. Visual Planet's approach allows content to be controlled over the Internet, and overcomes the limitations of using looped material or being forced to regularly change CDs at intervals during the day.

For more information, contact Bev Grigor at Holdsworth Associates, email bev@holdsworth-associates.co.uk

Digital Asset Management With Axomic

AXOMIC, A LEADING PROVIDER of digital asset management applications, has announced the latest version of its browser-based image library software.

OpenAsset 2.1 offers significant productivity benefits, and reduced management costs, through the introduction of Batch Upload, Batch Update and a Saved Albums facility.

Images are searched for via a standard web browser interface, and can be collected for output and converted to various formats and resolutions.

The software improves workflow by making digital assets accessible to everyone in the organisation, and reduces time spent searching for, and re-formatting, images.

Cataloguing and searching has been made even simpler with the addition of Batch Upload, Batch Update and an improved graphical user interface. This allows users to customise the number of search results returned.

Batch Upload enables users to load multiple images into the OpenAsset workspace from a single folder. Multiple images can then be tagged with common attributes before they are entered into the database.

Once in the system, it is possible to apply keywords to multiple images, and searchable subsets of data can be created using the Batch Update feature.

Also new is the Saved Albums feature. Users can save searches as a list of albums which can be referred to at a later date or shared internally, or with external users via a secure login.

Contact: Daniel Emmerson at daniel@axomic.com or Robyn Pierce at pr@thecroc.com

Tandberg's 1500 MXP for Videoconferencing

THE NEW TANDBERG 1500 MXP brings high quality video communication to the individual workspace. This cost-effective solution is easy to use, provides embedded security and allows organizations to bring reliable, face-to-face communication to every employee. The portable Tandberg 1500 MXP system can also be used to place video and voice calls.

The elegantly designed, powerful all-in-one conference and presentation system features a 17" widescreen LCD which can double as a PC monitor to save valuable workspace. It offers wireless capability, embedded security and advanced presentation capabilities.

The LCD can be used as a PC monitor and can link up to 4 video and 3 audio sites, with optional embedded MultiSite functionality.

Live presentations are achieved through a one-step PC plug-in, and the presentations and the presenter can be viewed simultaneously.

Tandberg's ExpresswayTM Solution Firewall Technology and URI dialling complete the package.
Performance features include:

Contact Tandberg at www.tandberg.com

Features Include

PC Card for wireless lan

High standard encryption

CD quality audio

Interruption-protected networks

High standard video

Desktop location

Integral microphone

CD/DVDs on the Run

TOSHIBA NOW OFFERS notebook users a facility for creating silk-screen quality cds and dvds from their slim-line drive with Light Scribe Direct Disc Labelling. The world-first kit – the SDR6572M – can help create cds with high quality graphic images. Video clips and music can be added. For use in highly mobile work environments, the equipment is available now.

Go to www.toshiba-europe.com/storage

Giant Screens Advance

CAMBRIDGE-BASED SCREEN Technology has recently launched ITrans, bringing high definition images to large screens.

The technology enables the screens to be viewed from any angle and at any distance, including close-up, without the picture breaking up. Nor is there any distortion or reduced visibility caused by sunlight.

The secret lies in the use of Bayer MaterialScience's Makrolon polycarbonate.

Four years in development, the success of the project is based on the use of a face plate made from Makrolon. This magnifies the image from an LCD panel, and gives a very high resolution picture, better than the highest resolution LEDs.

The first 58-inch screen was delivered for evaluation last year, but full production of much larger units has now started.

The product is the result of collaboration between Bayer MaterialScience, which is part of the global Bayer Group, and Cambridge-based Screen Technology.

Bayer is a research-based global organisation with a reputation for innovation. It concentrates particularly on innovative materials.

Screen Technology specialises in large, flexible format, high image quality display screens. The ITrans technology, a new concept developed by the company, offers widely applicable, lower-cost large displays while still using standard display components.

More information on Bayer can be found at www.bayer.com
and Screen Technology is at www.screentechnology.com

Clarity's New Thin Rear Projection Screens

EARLIER IN THE YEAR, Clarity Visual Systems demonstrated three of its newest digital displays at the Integrated Systems Europe (ISE) 2005 trade show in Amsterdam. Among the newly released products Clarity featured Bengal, which is a 154.9 centimetre ultra thin rear projection DLP display only 16 centimetres deep, based on technology collaboration with InFocus Corp.

Margay is a zero-mullion, widescreen 127 centimetre ultra thin rear projection DLP display designed for multi-display signage and video applications, and Bay Cat is a high resolution 116.8 centimetre, direct view liquid crystal display (LCD).

Clarity also exhibited its proven 170 centimetre Lion display, designed for mission critical command and control applications.

The newest digital displays from Clarity offer new design and performance standards, and provide businesses in many sectors with advanced technology tools.

These displays represent compelling alternatives to conventional display products, including CRTs and plasma-based models.

Clarity Visual Systems provides large-scale display systems to support the digital messaging application needs of business, government and other institutions worldwide.

A private company established in 1995, it sells through selected value-added reseller partners. It holds numerous display technology development patents. For additional information go to www.clarityvisual.com

Silverfast AI Imaging Software From Lasersoft

Practice images on the CD let you try your hand at reversing the ravages of time on great old photos.
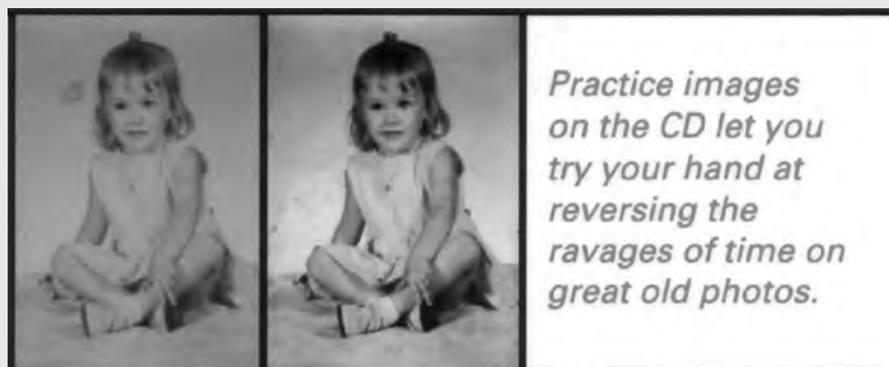
The decision to evaluate this software was made as a result of the author's review of the CanoScan 9000F flatbed and film scanner, which appeared in the November 2004 issue of this journal. It was felt that the software supplied with the scanner was not on a par with the machine's potential, and that adding a more professional package would deliver better results and offer more scope to the regular, professional operator.

SilverFast is bundled with a number of scanners on the market, and it seems to be accepted as the industry standard, much in the same way that PhotoShop is seen as the standard for image editing. SilverFast is in fact designed to work in tandem with PhotoShop as a plug-in, but the option to install the software as a stand-alone package is also there. One can in fact run it from inside PhotoShop or completely independently, the latter option providing a very wide range of sophisticated tools for image adjustment and correction. If there are no other strong reasons why PhotoShop is needed, SilverFast will take care of all associated scanning needs.

Installation, set-up and basic operating instructions come in a small (18cm x 12cm) well-presented booklet in six European languages, the English version of which occupies just fourteen pages. An extensive detailed version of the users' manual in PDF format may also be installed from the CD, along with Acrobat Reader if required. Using the Help menu even takes the user to a brief QuickTime movie, and on-line help provides instructional movies and tutorials.

Most users will have encountered automatic scanning features, though these are often little more than pressing an auto button to activate some pre-set process. SilverFast offers automatic scanning too, but first of all asks the user to manage the process, by configuring the automatic scanning tools, so that subsequently it can do most of the work effectively.

It is not the intention here to explain how to use this package, but to see what its advantages might be. It is enough to say that full details are provided to enable the setting-up process to be followed easily, even by an inexperienced user. However, one of the key steps in setting up any scanner and its scanning programme should be scanner calibration; it is necessary to ensure that the scanner knows just what it is looking at, in terms of colours and tones.

SilverFast enables calibration in one of two ways, depending on the version purchased. The Ai Studio version under review comes complete with an IT8 (International Test) target, allowing automatic calibration. The target is made up of 264 colour patches and 22 grayscale patches which are simultaneously scanned. The software contains a reference file, which holds the value for each individual patch, and adjusts the output for each patch so that it matches the reference value. Subsequent scans will be carried out in accordance with this set calibration.

Scanner calibration will deliver more accurate results than operating without it. The real advantage of this automation to the user is that it simply requires a marquee selection of the indicated area of patches; no further knowledge of the process or its principles is required. Should there not be a target provided with a particular version, manual calibration is readily possible using a 10-step grayscale target. This process is detailed in the manual.

Another point to be made here is that SilverFast is true scanning software, while PhotoShop and similar packages are not. Professionals will advise that image correction should take place during the scanning process rather than subsequent to it, as more data is available than at the later stage, leading to higher quality images. Image correction in an image editing package is also much more time-consuming than that effected during the scanning process.

SilverFast is equipped with sophisticated and powerful controls, and that is why it can be described as a truly professional package, and the industry standard. This does not, however, disadvantage the neophyte, as the interface is straightforward to use. That is a major attribute.

A little time spent defining the controls secures perfect colour and tonal rectification from the auto tools, at a single click. The image may still be altered manually, for refinement by the perfectionist, via an Adjustment Tools Palette which includes controls for Colour Balance and Gradation Curves as well as a Levels Histogram.

To begin at the beginning though, a palette called the ScanPilot shows the basic way forward. This palette includes a Preferences button allowing the user to choose which basic tools to show on the palette – the minimum is two. Choose from Pre-scan, Set Frame (crop), Zoom to Check Details, Image Auto-adjust, Histogram (to adjust brightest and darkest pixels), Adjust Mid-tone Brightness, Global Colour Correction, Selective Colour Correction, Set Output Dimensions, Sharpness Settings and Start Scan. No matter which choices are made, they will always appear in that same order on the palette, and for good reason. Quality scanning does not depend only on what is done, but also on when it is done.

So one can see, for example, that adjusting for sharpness will always be the last step before the final scan; performing this operation too early in the sequence will almost invariably lead to some degree of image degradation.

Newcomers to scanning, and to some of the terms used here, may best be served by limiting their choice of steps to the essentials for a basic scan: Pre-scan, Set Frame, Image Auto-adjust, Adjust Mid-tone Brightness, Global Colour Correction, Set Output Dimensions, Sharpness Settings and Start Scan should give very good results. Readers may have identified some of these functions through familiarity with PhotoShop or their particular choice of image editing package.

It should now be clear how carrying out these processes at the scanning stage might save much post-scanning work.

It might be useful to say here that the Sharpness function is included because all scanned images require sharpening, though to differing degrees. This is because the scanning process is a sampling process; edges of high contrast are softened and the more contrast there is in an image, the more softening will take place.

Sharpening therefore attempts to restore the original condition. These are the basics, but there is quite a lot more, and a brief look at some of these additional features should explain why the industry thinks so highly of SilverFast.

De-screening. Mechanically printed images are made up of halftone dots in screen patterns not visible to the eye, but readily discerned by scanning, and made clearly visible in the digitised image and even more so on reprinting. All good scanning software will include a de-screening function which will remove such patterns. SilverFast's filter is sophisticated, yet easy to use.

SRD (Smart Removal of Defects). This is the SilverFast answer to the Digital ICE function, found on Nikon film scanners. It is, however, a software operation which requires no hardware function operating within the scanner itself, thus rendering it independent of any particular scanner type. Dust and scratches are automatically recognised by SRD, highlighting the artefacts, and allowing the user to adjust the size and number affected. Image details picked up by this function can be excluded via a masking process which is part of the tool.

GANE (Grain and Noise Elimination). Emulsion grain in photographic film is often amplified by scanning, and the quality of an image may be significantly reduced. GANE reduces the apparent graininess of a film scan and incidentally helps reduce the effect of noise in images captured in some digital cameras.

Selective Colour Correction. This permits fine adjustment of any specific colour in terms of its RGB content, and also with regard to its brightness and saturation. One exceptional feature of this tool is that it can be applied independently across four separate layers in the image, allowing four objects of identical colour to be rendered as four completely different colours. This is clearly a creative element of the tool which goes beyond the normal scanning process.

ACR (Adaptive Colour Restoration). Presented as a separate entity within the Selective Colour Correction function, ACR helps reduce the effects of image ageing, in which colours in film – and especially print – fade over time, usually causing abnormal colour casts. ACR restores the faded colours, and works particularly well with old negatives. Applied with the Selective Colour Correction tools, specific colours can be fine-tuned.

That is not quite all – there is more help available. I recommend Start With A Scan by Janet Ashford and John Odam, (Peachpit Press, 1996) as an introduction to scanning. For this software, try SilverFast: The Official Guide, by Taz Tally (Sybex Inc., 2003). It is excellent and completely thorough. Rather like SilverFast itself, it is a very good buy indeed.

SilverFast Ai Studio is the version specifically intended to work with images during the scanning process in a specified scanner. Users may also need to apply corrections to images captured in another scanner, in a digital camera or available only in a digitised form and for which no hard copy exists, for example from a PhotoCD. Appropriate versions exist for each of these, and prospective users should consult the LaserSoft website at http://www.silverfast.com.

The QuickTime tutorial movies are also available there. Prices are quoted, and the copy evaluated is currently listed at €178, or €287 with IT8 calibration, equating to around £120 and £192 plus VAT. For further details it might be best to consult the UK distributor, who is AGX Holdings Ltd, 46 Murrell Green Business Park, London Road, RG27 9GR Hook Hants. Tel: 0870-7873030, Fax: 01256 741510, Email: info@agxuk.com.

Management Training With MmIT

How should the e-future influence library management? What opportunities does it offer for new ways of doing things? How can the digital workplace be made more effective for users and staff? How can it be made more fun and a more satisifying place to work? Are things like leadership, motivation and communication different in the digital environment?

These questions and others will be answered during a management training workshop at Cilip HQ on Thursday 20th October.

Find out about: creativity, creative abrasion, organisational redundancy, networked organisations, white space, black space, and chaos.

Can we learn anything from fish farmers, aircrew, ocean racing, naval architects, car designers, investment companies, frozen food producers, elite athletes, jazz bands, football managers and protest moverments?

The Trainer

Lyndon Pugh has spent over 40 years in academic librarianship and as a teacher and trainer in library management. He has also delivered management training in other sectors.

For 18 years he was Director of Learning Resources at the University of Wales Institute in Cardiff, and has worked extensively throughout Europe, for the Soros Foundation, TFPL, and as a freelance management trainer.

Formerly managing editor of Ariadne, now managing editor of MmIT, he has written and researched widely on a range of management topics, and written four textbooks. He works in the Department of Information Studies at the University of Wales Aberystwyth Business School and in 2003 won the LIRG/Elsevier Research Award for an investigation into the management of hybrid libraries. He is currently collaborating with Dr. Judith Broady Preston of the UWA Aberystwyth in a major study on organisation design and development.

The cost of the one-day workshop is £120 including vat for group members, and £140 for non-members. To book a place and obtain the full programme, email lyndon.pugh@virgin.net telephone or fax 01545 571391 or write to Nyth Y Fran, Pennant, Llanon, Ceredigion SY23 5JH

Stop Press

Management workshop with MmIT: Designing Library Organisations for the e–Future: How to manage hybrid libraries, digital and multimedia resources

About Multimedia Information & Technology

MmIT is the official journal of the Multimedia Information and Technology Group of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (Cilip). It is published quarterly in February, May, August and November. The electronic version is available online to all members and subscribers at www.mmit.org.uk. Copy dates are the 1st of the month before publication. Subscription rates are £65 pa for Europe, and £70 elsewhere. The journal has a world-wide readership of about 4500.

Please contact the managing editor by telephone, fax or email (details below) with any editorial, advertising or subscription enquiries.

Notes for Contributors

MmIT welcomes contributions on the broad spread of interests encompassed by the use, management and development of multimedia resources in information services of all types, and in related areas of education, technology and business. Editorial copy from commercial sources will be considered purely on merit, and the managing editor will be very happy to discuss potential articles with contributors.

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