

Multimedia Information and Technology Digital

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This issue of MmIT (vol 31 no 4) introduces a different format for the news column. The News Update will now be found at <http://mmit.willco.com> and is a rolling bulletin updated on a daily basis. Go to the page and click on News. There is no need to log in.

Subscribers and members can also use the feature as a blog for comment or to send in their own material for inclusion. The electronic version of the journal will continue to include the longer items.

The main features in vol 31 no 4 include an article on [website design](#) by Kevin Curran and David Robinson of the University of Ulster.

This is the second of our mini-series and deals with good design for the elderly and infirm. The last in the series will appear in February.

Lyndon Pugh contributes an [opinion](#) piece on current events, and elsewhere Karla Youngs and David Young put us in the picture on [TASI](#), while Nick Brealey reports on the remodelling of a [creative media lab](#)

Ken Cheetham provides some simple tips on the proper use of [Powerpoint](#), with some examples (right), and the [reviews](#) column covers convergence, the development of learning centres, managing digital rights, scholarly publishing, the internet for librarians and books on media and technology today.

Effective Presentations

How to do it with PowerPoint



[Film & Video News](#) reports on Fellini, Menelik Shabazz, Horace Ové, early cinema, Oliver Twist (left) and MovieMail.

The [Technology](#) column includes collaborative study systems at the London Business School and Antenna Audio's new kit for museums and galleries. [Bibliolinks](#)'s wide ranging list completes this issue.

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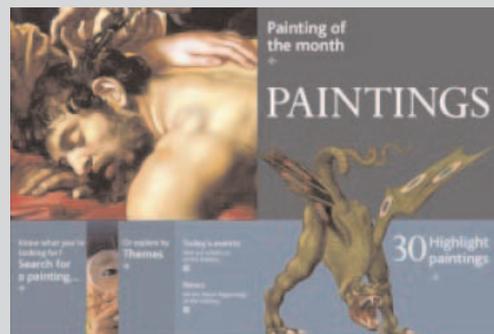
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Online Information 2005

The 2005 Online Information conference programme (29th November until the 1st December) contains a number of features of interest to multimedia users. Jimmy Wales, the founder of Wikipedia, will be putting in an appearance, and a conference blog will be running.

Pre-conference workshops will include Stephen Arnold on the Google legacy. Chris Sherman's Web Search Update 2005 will cover new search engines, new features on the invisible web, hidden gems including Y!Q and Google Scholar, and web nasties – phishing, pharming and spyware. All this is on Monday 28th November.

Track 2, of interest to information professionals, will cover the themes of library and publishing developments and emerging issues for the information professional. Michael Gorman's address will be on the challenge of digitisation, and Elizabeth Niggeman will speak on Digital is Different – Managing Change in Libraries.

Strategies for innovation will be served by Linda Stoddart's review of the transformation of the United Nations libraries, while Will Hay of the Westchester Library System in the USA will review the position of the library in the digital age.

Sally Morris will report the findings of the ALPSP/AAAS/Highwire study of open access, and Ben Lund's contribution will be on the new approach to publishing reflected in the development of an online social information management service.

Other areas of interest include Will Hann on globalisation, and there will be sessions on information overload. International perspectives will also receive attention.

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The National Gallery Portico

The Portico Entrance Hall of the National Gallery has been redeveloped and J. D. Crace's magnificent 19th Century ceiling has been restored. Dixon Jones Architects fielded a specialist team of conservation experts, including Purcell Miller Tritton as historical consultants, and interior designer David Mlinaric who advised on decoration and the use of colour.

The prospect for visitors as they enter the gallery now embraces a grand opening area in place of the restricted and cramped view before the project began. The original supports for the Portico Dome have been removed to create more space. Crace's original decorative scheme for the ceiling of the Staircase Hall has been reinstated, and the pink wall marble quarried in Tunisia has been exposed once again. But this is not all.

Below the Portico is the new multimedia area, Artstart and a coffee bar. Artstart provides access to the collection of 2,300 paintings via the latest touch-screen technology. It allows visitors, regardless of their knowledge of art or technical skills, to browse quickly and to find information on every painting on display easily.

The works of art have been scanned at very high resolution and can be examined in fine detail – from the wasps in Botticelli's Venus and Mars to the petals of Van Gogh's Sunflowers. ArtStart has taken three years of planning in collaboration with digital agency NYKRIS, and is the first system of its kind.

The overall objective of ArtStart is to improve the visitor's experience by offering an alternative, stimulating way to discover the National Gallery's outstanding collection of Western European paintings. No other art institution offers the chance, through technology, to get so close to its paintings. It is content-rich and easy to use, in order to reach as many of the Gallery's diverse 4.5million-plus annual visitors as possible.

The ArtStart Centre has benefited from the very generous support of the American Express Foundation, which has provided funding of £500,000. It is located on the first floor of the Sainsbury Wing and has been designed and refurbished to create a relaxed and comfortable environment. The 12 screen points each accommodate up to four people, and a printing facility. Four other screens will be placed at several key points in the Gallery, with plans to introduce additional screens in the future. Using ArtStart, visitors can, for example:

- Find out about the National Gallery's Painting of the Month
- Read a biography of Rembrandt
- Search the collection for all paintings by the artist
- Zoom in to minute detail on Rembrandt's famous Woman Bathing in the Stream
- Find the location of the painting, add it to My Tour, then print a copy
- Look up other Dutch paintings in the Time & Place section
- View special events and enjoy the free talks of the day
- Choose, if they are children, to search all paintings that have "creepy crawlies" in them

For more information, contact Louise Butler and her team at the National Gallery Press Office on 020 7747 2596 or 020 7747 2865.

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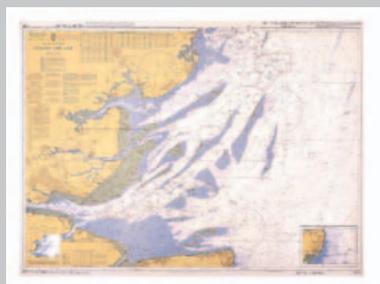
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Records Management for Those in Peril On the Sea

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has chosen TOWER Software's TRIM Context electronic document and records management (EDRM) system to manage its UK navigational charts and publications.



TRIM Context will be used as part of a Source Data Receipt and Assessment (SDRA) project, to capture all source data digitally and distribute it around the organisation. This should shorten the time scale for altering charts.

The project will digitise all analogue and digital source data, which will then be viewed from within a Geographic Information System (GIS) based on the ESRI technology. The information will be stored in an electronic archive.

TRIM Context will be used to manage the location of all source items, including Foreign Government charts and notices to mariners. This embraces sea depth changes, wrecks and new lighthouses, for example.

Led by TOWER Software's partners BAE Systems, the project is supported by T-Kartor of Sweden. BAE Systems will capture all the incoming hydrographic source data and, where required, convert it into digital format. Every aspect of the initial data assessment process will be streamlined, and direct comparison with existing UKHO products will be possible. Partners T-Kartor will supply their CPS NG product as well as providing an integrated workflow.

The SDRA system will incorporate a state of the art high-density secure storage and archive system pioneered by BAE Systems, and will be in operation early in 2006.

Putting You in the Picture — TASI Technical Advisory Service for Images

TASI Director Karla Youngs, and Technical Research Officer David Young provide a snapshot of what TASI does

Images are powerful things, as readers of MmIT will know. The Technical Advisory Service for Images (TASI) is a JISC core service, providing support and expertise for those who want to exploit the potential of images within the digital environment we all now occupy.

TASI supports a wide range of image needs – from large digitisation projects to lecturers who want to find a few relevant images and pop them into a Powerpoint presentation.

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TASI began in 1997 as a project to support digitisation activity within the HE community. In August 2000 it became a full JISC service, with its activities and remit extended. A workshop programme was introduced and the information available on the Web site greatly expanded (it currently represents about 500 printed pages-worth of information).

TASI's funding was renewed in 2003 for a further three years (until July 2006). Its future is dependent upon the ongoing funding and support of the JISC. TASI's objectives are to

- Encourage the creation and use of high quality digital images within education
- Promote good practice by encouraging and supporting the use of relevant standards
- Promote technical expertise within the FE/HE communities
- Encourage networking and the building of an imaging community.

TASI provides five main services to the education community: an extensive Web resource, a helpdesk, training courses, an email discussion list and consultancy.

TASI's Web site, which readers will find at <http://www.tasi.ac.uk>, provides a rich source of information for anyone wanting to make, find or use digital images. Information is available for those who are new to digital imaging, and for those with more advanced experience and needs.

Advisory documentation is grouped into a number of sections on managing, creating, delivering, and finding and using digital images. In 2003, TASI's remit extended to include vector and animated graphics, and there is a new and growing section covering these topics.

Readers should note that TASI does not cover moving images, which fall within the remit of the British Universities Film and Video Council.

Alongside its in-depth reports, the TASI Web site includes a Resources section, with practical tools, such as a file size calculator, and useful signposting to funding sources, book and journal recommendations, links to controlled vocabularies and image search engines. A separate Image Sites database provides annotated links to hundreds of online image collections.

The Helpdesk is available for those who need more tailored advice. In addition to its online information, TASI's helpdesk provides more assistance for people with particular concerns about digital images (info@tasi.ac.uk).

TASI receives a wide range of queries, ranging from "what is a JPEG?" to "which digital camera should I buy?" or "which metadata schema do I need to use so that my image collection is fully interoperable?"

TASI

Hands-on practical experience

Technical workshops

Helpdesk

Web information

Advisory documentation

In-depth reports

Image sites database

Email discussion lists

Consultancy services

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Helpdesk users can expect to receive an acknowledgement within one working day and an answer within five, although most queries are answered within a day. If TASI does not have the answer to hand, it either does the research or refers the enquirer to someone else who can address the problem better.

TASI is frequently asked for advice on purchasing hardware or software. It tries not to recommend specific commercial products, but provides the enquirer with a list of features they will need and questions they should ask.

Training courses provide hands-on, practical experience. The programme of technical workshops and seminars covers a variety of digital imaging issues. Most workshops run for a full day, offering hands-on learning in small classes with lots of tutor support. Some courses stand alone. Others, like the Image Capture series, offer a progressive programme of learning.

Kaitlan looks after the library's special collections. She has been approached by an academic who wants to put in a joint application to the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding to produce a digital edition of one of the library's manuscripts. Nobody involved has a clear understanding of the technology required or how long it might take to digitise the manuscript, yet this information will be required for the application. TASI is able to provide advice on these things and once the project is up and running might also be available to provide tailored on-site

Most workshops are run at TASI's training suite in Bristol, but are sometimes offered in other locations. During 2004-05 TASI has re-written many of its workshops and added several new courses, including Improve your Photoshop Skills and Building a Departmental Image Collection.

The email discussion list is run with the needs of an imaging community in mind. TASI manages a discussion list, hosted by the JISCMail service (<http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/tasi.html>). This enables people to keep in touch with new TASI resources and with the workshop announcements.

It also provides another forum within which people can ask questions and share their experiences. Asking a question of the TASI helpdesk will draw on the expertise of a handful of people, but TASI's email list has hundreds of members, many with significant experience with digital images.

Consultancy services provide in-depth support or training. Sometimes institutions need support on a particular aspect of a digitisation project or digital imaging issue to a degree which cannot be provided by the TASI Helpdesk.

In these circumstances, TASI may be able to provide consultancy services. The work is undertaken around TASI's core funded work, and where there is a real benefit in being able to pass on the service's experience and knowledge to the rest of the community. TASI specialises in a number of areas within its consultancy services, and further details are available at <http://www.tasi.ac.uk/consultancy.html>

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Although TASI is JISC-funded to support the higher education community, it recognises that there is no comparable service for further education and the public, non-profit and cultural heritage sectors such as museums, libraries, and archives.

It is therefore able to provide limited support for these sectors as well. This includes access all the Web resources, membership of the email list, participation in TASI training courses and the use of the TASI Consultancy service. There is also some limited support from the Helpdesk.

TASI responds to changing needs in a number of ways. It invests a lot of energy and resources in keeping its information up-to-date and relevant.

Many Web resources have also been added or revised, with particular attention being given to the section on Finding and Using Images, which is at <http://www.tasi.ac.uk/advice/using/using.html>.

Readers of Multimedia Information & Technology who are responsible for maintaining subject pages for their students and staff are likely to find some useful pages to explore or link to in this section.

TASI strives to offer the best quality service possible and welcomes feedback from all those who use its services – and from those who do not . . . yet.

Matt is a research assistant in an environmental science department which has an enormous number of digital photographs taken on field trips, but these are sitting in folders on servers and c:drives, without any real organisation or indexing. Matt has been given the task of organising these, but is feeling overwhelmed.

TASI's web site has a lot of information that will assist Matt, including resources on file management and archiving, metadata, and also image management systems. He could also ask specific questions of TASI's free helpdesk service.

Enhancing Learning With a Creative Media Laboratory

Nick Brealey of Sprunt and Deborah Gray of Deborah Gray Public Relations discuss the challenge of transforming restricted inner city space into a vibrant multimedia learning resource centre

The world of media is changing faster than ever. More recently it has again been enhanced by an exciting new learning laboratory in the heart of London's Soho. This is dedicated to training both students and professionals in new media technologies.

01zero-one, which is the latest addition to Westminster Kingsway College's learning portfolio, comes by courtesy of urban renewal specialist Sprunt.

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Experienced in designing and delivering up-to-the-minute educational resource centres of all kinds, the London-based architectural practice has completed the innovative, self-contained Creative Learning Lab in Peter Street, Soho – a multi-media environment housing a TV studio, editing suites and exhibition space.

The Problems	Working to an extremely tight deadline – the building programme was limited to only twelve weeks over the summer holiday period to make sure it would be open in time for students when term began – and within the further limitations of a basement position in a city centre location, the site has been successfully transformed from a language school into a dynamic and professional media training lab.
City centre location	
Basement site	
Difficult physical access	
Some physical facilities to be relocated	This creative space, supported by big names such as the Central London Partnership, Channel 4 and Creative Arts, offers workshops, courses and studio facilities not only to Westminster Kingsway students but to media professionals, newcomers and freelancers wishing to enhance their skillsets.
Premises still in use	
No street level entrance	Jeremy Gould, former ITV head of Film, PSC and Post-Production, and a TV tutor at the centre, played a vital role in planning the facilities. Media giant Sir Michael Grade is a patron, as is Chris Smith, MP, the former Minister for Culture.
Acoustics	
Asbestos	
Tight schedule	01zero-one's vibrant multi-media arena is situated in the hub of London's film and TV business. Once a series of language classrooms, the space now houses a compact TV studio with

control room, two fully equipped digital suites supporting Mac and PC, a creative workshop, an exhibition and events space, and landscaped area.

Besides its core training function, it is used for presentations, product launches, receptions, conferences, rehearsals, TV and digital production, workshops, video conferencing and meetings. It offers courses from DJ skills to digital editing, all in a professional learning environment.

Sprunt was a natural choice for Westminster Kingsway: the college has an existing three year framework agreement with the architects, and the practice had already revamped and reworked reception areas in all seven of the college's centres, spread across north, central and south London.

At the Vincent Square campus for example, Sprunt successfully redesigned and refurbished the Vincent Rooms restaurant as well as introducing a mezzanine level learning resource centre to the campus's Grade 2 listed library. Coupled with its reputation for delivering lasting urban renewal strategies, holistic solutions and sustainable educational buildings, once again commissioning the practice to carry out this important refurbishment project was an obvious choice.

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Nevertheless, the scheme presented a number of design challenges. Although construction was scheduled for the summer break, the premises were still in use for summer classes. The ongoing activity on the upper floors of the building made health and safety concerns a real issue.

The constant to-ing and fro-ing meant security had to be kept tight, and before work could begin in full, a number of activities had to be relocated elsewhere on the site. Offices on the basement level had to move to the first floor, where a storage space was imaginatively transformed into an office, with all the decoration and rewiring that this entailed. Cooling and ventilation systems were also needed together with new toilet facilities.

The site's location was also problematic. The existing classrooms were at the basement level of Westminster Kingsway's Peter Street campus, surrounded by typically narrow Soho streets. The tight alleyways and the restrictive parking regulations made it difficult to arrange delivery of materials.

For example, all floors would normally be levelled with concrete, delivered by a simple pour from a mixing lorry. Yet this would have required the lorry to park adjacent to the site – and permission was not forthcoming. Man-handling the concrete into the building in wheelbarrows was not an option due to time constraints. As a result, concrete flooring had to be restricted to a few small areas where it could be mixed locally.

To reduce the volume of the concrete required further, polyurethane boards were laid down beforehand.

Worse still, the basement site had originally been a playground, floored in tarmac. This meant that the existing surface was not smooth, its height varied from level to level and there was no solid foundation on which new floors could be built. With the simple solution of pouring concrete not available, the entire design team, together with the contractors, had to constantly review and rethink their methodology on site.

The key parameters were the intended use of each individual space and the available budget. Naturally, the TV studio floor had to be completely level and as smooth as glass. Needless to say, flooring for the social areas, exhibition and events space had also to be completely level as these would eventually be covered in vinyl tiles or carpet.

The Solutions

A flexible approach to technical issues

Innovative approach to the use of space

Flexible methods

Integration of internal and external space

Close collaboration with technical advisors

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The final solution was to use three different types of flooring: poured concrete on polyurethane boards, raised access flooring, and a self-levelling screed as a form of underlay.

The low ceilings of the existing site presented their own difficulties, not just in terms of manoeuvring materials and equipment. As Nick Brealey, associate at Sprunt pointed out: "Working in a tight basement with low ceilings can be quite a challenge."

And that was before asbestos was found insulating the heating pipes. The ensuing removal process left some areas completely out of bounds for some time, and pushed the already-tight building schedule further back.

As it was initially just a part of one of Westminster Kingsway's campuses, 01zero-one's site did not have the advantage of its own entrance: it was not even visible from street level. To address this issue, Sprunt cost-effectively transformed an existing fire escape into a new entry to 01zero-one from Hopkins Street. A new illuminated 01 sign today hovers above the new entrance, distinguishing it from the rest of the campus, and cleverly emphasising the modernity of the facility.

At entry level, however, the under-utilised outside space provided the potential for innovative solutions (right). Sprunt created a new entrance area featuring a glazed roof, which integrated exterior and interior space. The striking bespoke glass canopy, supported by metal rafters, provided about 40 square metres of extra space.

But, more importantly, the new zone provided a link between internal areas, providing a way for students to circulate, socialise and relax. Light and airy, it combines the roles of social space, exhibition and events space – with data points for web access as and when necessary.

Sprunt worked closely with Westminster Kingsway College's technical advisor Jeremy Gould on the TV studio and attached control room. Gould advised on the full technical requirements and the basic acoustic considerations.

Acoustics were the single biggest issue when it came to equipping the TV studio, with the uneven flooring presenting a further challenge. Brealey observed:

Not only did we have to reconcile the different levels of floors, but specifying the correct acoustic panelling to ensure adequate soundproofing while keeping the outside traffic noise to a minimum was obviously of paramount importance.



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Outside noise, in fact, came from three separate sources. Firstly, there was the continual sound of traffic, passers-by and the panoply of London life. Secondly, above the Creative Learning Lab was a college centre, replete with student hubbub and live load noise. Finally, the studio had to be soundproofed against air-borne noise from the surrounding circulation areas.

With the exception of the studio doors, supplied and installed by IAC, Sprunt handled all the soundproofing in-house. The team conducted extensive research into the correct materials for use in such a sensitive environment and installed all to the manufacturer's requirements.

Sprunt selected 400mm thick insulated twin frame metal partition walls, heavy-duty acoustic doors and acoustic panels for the walls and ceiling. Panelling of the walls and ceiling was especially important to minimise reverberation within the studio and control room.

The Results

Comprehensive state-of-the-art compact television studio

Two fully equipped digital suites

serving Mac and PC

Creative workshop

Exhibition and events space

Lanscaped area

Other significant changes were required to transform a simple language classroom into a functional professional environment. The architects had to level the floor to a glassy smooth finish. Barrels needed to be mounted to the ceiling and studio lighting fitted to them, including a pulse lighting rig. A new cooling and ventilation system was installed, and walls painted matt black.

For the compact control room, dimmable lighting and new ventilation were required. As with the studio, the acoustics had to be secured, the floor levelled and the space decorated throughout. A double-glazed window was installed, providing a view over the action in the studio.

The end result was a complete but intimate presentation TV studio, which provided good virtual TV and video conferencing facilities, perfect for shoots, meetings or rehearsals. The control room has on- and off-line recording and editing facilities, along with full playback. Not just an enviable teaching facility, it is also hired out by professionals.

Sprunt also designed a digital suite, levelling the floors, installing new state-of-the-art plasma screens, fitting dimmable lighting, rewiring, fitting secondary glazing and redecorating. 60 square metres of space, tailor-made for workshops and multi-media projects, now houses a high-speed network of PC work stations, all running up to the minute multi-media software.

Besides its interactive presentation facilities and white boards, the suite features a small break-out brainstorm area.

A second suite is now in use as an editing studio. The architects provided the electrical set-up, space layout and vital infrastructure for this high-end Mac-based operation. The 60-square metre facility allows for specialist editing, post-production and DVD authoring, and includes 3D editing software. It features LCD projection facilities, a break-out brainstorm area, and direct access to the landscaped area.

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01zero-one Interior

Whilst one of the other spaces is now in use as a creative workshop, featuring soft seating, white boards, large screen display and fast internet access, it is the exhibition and events space, with its spectacular glazed canopy and folding doors opening onto the courtyard entrance space, which best showcases the building's aesthetics.

Here, a glass ceiling and doors provides a feeling of an open, friendly and approachable space, with versatile lighting making it flexible enough to be used for presentations.

High-spec features include surround sound, plasma displays, a fast wireless network and internet access. There is capacity for 70 seated or 150 standing.

As elsewhere in 01zero-one, the beauty of the building's original 19th century brickwork has been highlighted by exposing it and painting it in hues of white and fuchsia pink, 01zero-one's corporate colour. This was incorporated into the final design to express the corporate nature of the project, and also as a means of navigation for the visually impaired.

Much thought also went into the execution of less high-profile spaces. The office areas were completely redecorated, their floors levelled, and fitted out with new lighting, new data points and trunking. Circulation zones also benefited from the levelling of floors, new furniture, innovative lighting, contemporary décor and data points for workstations. A new kitchenette was installed – a vital addition to the centre.

All in all, the project presented a number of challenges – some of which, as so often, were unexpected. The glazed roof which enclosed part of the courtyard presented a number of logistical conundrums.

The entire basement space had to be rewired to meet the demands of its new studio use. New dado trunking was installed to house the sophisticated data cabling and modernised wiring. Décor had to be hardwearing and practical, and all this had to be achieved in only twelve weeks.

So the Creative Learning Lab is now operational. It has created a space for innovation, new thinking and new practice for all the creative industries. Students and professionals are working on film, TV, interactive and new media, games and digital design – or simply enjoying the networking opportunities the exhibition and events space has provided.

In the words of Michael Grade:

The Creative Learning Lab is an exciting and innovative project that will make an important contribution to skills development in London's digital media sector.

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Technology Jane Rowlands

Genesys Interactive Software
Antenna Multimedia Tours
Washable Keyboards
HP Starter Printers
Mothers Exploit Internet

Interactive Course Work With Genesys

London Business School is taking the lead in promoting work-life balance by enabling 74 students on its world-renowned Executive MBA programme to manage their course work, job commitments and personal lives more effectively by using a real-time collaborative study platform.

A partnership with Genesys Conferencing is providing students with Genesys Meeting Center, which allows students to hold interactive course work study meetings with fellow students anywhere at any time, directly from their computer desktops.

With students drawn from companies across the world, and the demand for intensive course work and weekend tutorials, the new virtual study groups will give students a greater capacity to manage their work-life-study balance.

Genesys Conferencing offers students a three-in-one solution – audio, Web and video conferencing – for real-time presentation and document sharing. This supports collaborative working by allowing students to see one another's comments and changes as they are being made, and communicate face-to-face in discussions, via their PC or laptop.

Genesys Meeting Center helps arrange study sessions and complete course work faster and more efficiently. The service is integrated with existing computer desktop functions.

With two thirds of the students based in the UK and the remainder coming to London bi-weekly from Europe and the US, the new service also reduces the need for travel to the campus for group study sessions. Access to Genesys Meeting Center will be via a free-phone number for those based in the UK and a local number for students elsewhere.

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Multimedia Platform for Museums and Galleries

Antenna Audio, the world leader in audio and multimedia interpretation in the cultural sector, is now licensing Node's new location-based media platform for use in many of the most prestigious and well-known museums and galleries across the world and, in what is a world first, to manufacture multimedia players specifically designed for the cultural sector.

The development is designed to offer the visitor a deeper, more tailored and more reliable experience than has been available anywhere to date.



Node's leading-edge web-based technology platform builds and stores, then distributes, context-sensitive multimedia tours to handheld players on-site, and can be edited in real-time from any web-enabled computer.

The player, conceived and designed by Node, and built by Antenna, is designed for intuitive and easy use, is called XPvision™, and joins Antenna's award-winning X-plorer™ family of audio players.

Location-aware, weather-tested and rugged, the XPvision™ powered by Node, tracks and analyses visitor behaviour on-site, and is optimised for outdoor as well as indoor use. A prototype of the new device has been available for demonstration since August, and MmIT is hoping to review it in 2006.

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Spillseal Washable Keyboards

A computer keyboard which can be washed in the sink is the latest weapon in the battle against the spread of germs in the home and office. Launched this year by Unotron, the revolutionary SpillSeal Keyboard uses UK-patented technology, and has already been welcomed by health experts in Britain and in the USA.



The innovative SpillSeal keyboard comes at a time of heightened concern about hygiene in the home and office, with recent research revealing that an office keyboard is 14 times more contaminated by bacteria than a typical toilet seat, and that a flu virus can live on a keyboard for up to 150 minutes.

The keyboard has been identified as one of the most germ-laden objects, and until now the only certain way of cleaning them properly has been to use anti-bacterial wipes or hire a specialist IT contractor.

With one tap of the keyboard the types of illnesses which can be transmitted include skin diseases, rashes, hepatitis, salmonella, herpes, blood poisoning and much more. With new figures revealing that secretaries and typists touch their keyboards more than 40,000 times per day this should be a cause for concern for small and large offices alike.

The SpillSeal Keyboard costs, looks, feels and acts exactly the same as any other keyboard, and is fully compatible with all PC hardware.

Although spill-resistant keyboards have been available for some time, these offer only limited protection as they cannot be fully immersed or deep-cleaned.

For further information go to
<http://www.unotron.com/UK/index.htm>

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Simple Versatile and Cheap Starter Printers From HP

The HP Officejet 5610 All-in-One is an affordable, versatile printer, fax machine, scanner and copier in one neat compact package. Ideal for businesses looking for a complete all-in-one solution, this device features fast printing, scanning and copying capabilities as well as an integrated junk fax barrier for added day-to-day efficiency.

Whether the source is a book, photo, report or even a 3D object, the HP Officejet 5610 All-in-One makes high quality scanning simple. At 1200 x 4800 dpi optical resolution and 48-bit colour, photos, images and documents can be captured and stored digitally for long periods. The HP Deskjet 5440 Photo Printer is a versatile printer which produces high quality photos and documents.

The HP Deskjet 5440 Photo Printer (at £59.99) offers the key benefit of being able to print photographs as easily as it does letters and e-mail. With impressive print speeds users can produce a 10 x 15 cm photograph in 27 seconds on any size of paper from 10 x 15 cm to large panorama (215 x 610 mm). Using HP Vivera Inks, users can print in 4-ink or optional 6-ink colours.

The HP Deskjet 5940 Photo Printer is a versatile, all round device for quickly printing a range of documents. It provides outstanding versatility at breakthrough speeds, with documents produced at up to 30 pages per minute (ppm) in black and 24 ppm in colour. Users can again print on a range of paper types and sizes to complete a wide variety of tasks. The 5940 costs £79.99.

Housework Becomes Mousework

A recent report from Demos suggests that mothers are taking control of the Internet. The research, commissioned by AOL, was based on an in-depth anthropological study of five UK families over a period of six months. It was combined with nation-wide polling, and reveals that

- One-third of mothers work online with their children, to help them with homework or to play.
- The Internet is also used for instant diagnosis of family illness.
- 80% of women who go online use it as a substitute for the telephone.
- 50% of the female home-users of computers log on before breakfast, and 20% get up in the middle of the night to surf the web.
- Apart from homework, home-based computer use by women tends to be predominantly for bargain-hunting, and can also be prompted by a desire to keep up to date with gossip.

The research also goes on to suggest, quite straightforwardly, that broadband connections are improving women's ability to "build networks that work for them".

Contact james.ralph@bluerubicon.com

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Banish Blue-rinse Blues on the Web: How to Make Surfing Easier

Kevin Curran and David Robinson take a look at some famous websites, and some less well-known others, in a two-part research report

Older adults are becoming online users in ever increasing numbers, and there are web accessibility barriers which prevent these users from accessing web content (AoA, 1999). E-commerce sites are losing customers because of this, as adults who have developed disabilities, such as deteriorating vision and impaired hearing, find it increasingly difficult to navigate web sites.

Irresponsible and inaccessible web design causes unnecessary problems to all of the users of a Web site (Allen, 2004). It is a truism that an accessible web site should allow all the potential users access to all the information they need. Accessibility within web projects has a low priority because designers underestimate the number of people who are affected by design problems. By applying the Web content accessibility guidelines to a web site, the number of possible users who can successfully view the content of which site will increase.

Web site accessibility can be broken down into two themes.

These are:

ensuring graceful transformation

making content understandable and navigable

Some of the issues are obvious. For example, Web accessibility for blind people requires a text alternative to images, allowing the latter to be presented as audio or legible text by specially designed screen reading devices (American Foundation for the Blind [AFB], 1999). Partially sighted people may be especially reliant on a bigger typesize and an effective colour contrast. People who are dyslexic or have cognitive impairments will benefit from the use of simple English and alternative text formats. Easy Read is a text format which can be especially beneficial for users with these impairments. The use of plain English may also be indispensable to those whose first language is British Sign language.

Manual dexterity impairments make the clear and logical layout of a website important for people who navigate with a keyboard rather than a mouse. Yet computer designers often assume users possess certain capabilities, such as the ability to view a monitor or use a mouse and keyboard. Audio files, for example, can cause problems for people with hearing impairments and highly animated graphics can cause difficulties for screen readers used to describe written content for blind users.

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In October 2004 the final stages of the Disability Discrimination Act came into force (DDA, 2004). The act was passed in 1995 and the key provisions have been implemented in stages to allow different sectors of society to prepare for compliance. In December 1996 it became unlawful to treat disabled people less favourably for reasons related to their disability (DDA, 1995). From October 1999 organisations had to start making adjustments to ensure people with disabilities could access their services, yet the web still remains a major concern.

To provide proper access for all users, accessibility requirements first of all need to be defined. Existing accessibility guidelines used by other countries are some help here. The Irish National Disability Authority (NDA) IT Accessibility Guidelines (2005) state:

it is not enough just to have guidelines and advice. To create accessible services within time and resource budgets, developers need to follow an effective and efficient development process.

The following list sets out the accessibility requirements, recommended by the NDA, which should always be taken into consideration when designing for a specialised user group. The key points they include are:

- Specify measurable accessibility targets
- Specify how the service is going to be tested for compliance
- Plan for maintenance and expansion
- Follow an inclusive, user-centred design process
- Carry out testing with real users.

The minimum requirements for the development of an accessible website include: a home page, with links to services and further information; websites developed using HTML and delivered via the World Wide Web must follow guidelines to ensure accessibility by all users including those with disabilities. Against this background, this paper will present the results of an investigation into site accessibility and, in particular, the issues which affect older adults.

Websites can be called accessible when individuals who suffer from age-related problems, or have disabilities, can access and use them as effectively as people who do not have disabilities. Accessibility is about making web sites which do not exclude people with visual, aural, or physical disabilities. It means making resources usable by the largest number of people possible.

The Internet offers an opportunity for everyone to access information. Following web accessibility rules and procedures allows this potential to be realised, because it offers disabled and/or elderly people easier access to web content which was once unavailable. This impediment was caused by online obstacles, and stemmed from bad design.

Web site accessibility can be broken down into two themes. These are ensuring graceful transformation, and making content understandable and navigable.

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Ensuring graceful transformation allows content to remain intact, regardless of how it is accessed. A web page designed to work only when a user has flash installed and JavaScript enabled will not be accessible to users operating without these features.

To access content online, users with impairments rely on assistive technologies which include screen readers, touch screens and head pointers. Any website which prohibits the use of these technologies is excluding a selection of online users. Navigation is important because impaired users will navigate the page by using methods which are different from those used by unimpaired users who will navigate via a keyboard and mouse.

The minimum requirements for the development of an accessible website include

A home page with links to services and further information

Adherence to disability guidelines for html and web delivery

Usability studies have established some efficient ways of providing understandable navigation, and of enabling UK-designed websites to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA, 1995). Since October 1999, the DDA has forced service providers to consider making reasonable adjustments to the way they deliver their services, so that disabled people can use them. It is therefore important that organisations ensure that their Web sites are accessible and that Web developers are themselves aware of accessibility issues.

Most of the legal requirements of accessibility are concerned with meeting the needs of people with functional limitations or disabilities (Henry, 2002). Functional limitations can be physical or mental, and are normally related to problems such as blindness or limited use of the hands. So functional limitations can be visual, auditory, physical, or cognitive.

Being compelled to use certain resources under unfavourable conditions is a situational limitation. This can affect anyone, and not only those who have a disability. Examples of situational limitations include mobile devices, such as a mobile phone, obviously having no mouse. The term can also cover working under constraining circumstances, such as trying to interact with the web via an interface which is built into the interior of a car dashboard. These circumstances mean that use of the hands and eyes are limited.

In developing guidelines for accessibility, it is easy to become confused between the meanings of usability and accessibility, because many design aspects which are good for usability are also required for accessibility. An example of one design aspect which is not only good for usability, but vitally important for accessibility, is consistent navigation – ease of moving around the page to find the required information.

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If a user has good vision and is using the site on a high-resolution monitor, then inconsistent navigation is a minor inconvenience as it only requires visually skimming the page to overcome it. However, if a user has no vision at all, or a lesser degree of visual impairment, then inconsistency will be a greater problem. This will happen if people who are blind, and use a screen reader, hear only one word at a time, for example (Henry, 2002).

	Total	No. With Disability	% With Disability
All Ages	267,665,000	52,596,000	19.7%
Under 15 years	59,606,000	4,661,000	7.8%
15 to 24 years	36,897,000	3,961,000	10.7%
25 to 44 years	83,887,000	11,200,000	13.4%
45 to 54 years	33,620,000	7,585,000	22.6%
55 to 64 years	21,591,000	7,708,000	35.7%
65 years and over	32,064,000	17,480,000	54.5%

Figure 1: Disability Statistics in an Aging Population (Andrew, 2004)

The first guideline for all user interface design has always been simplicity. This is true whether designing for blind users, old users, children, international users, mobile users, soldiers on the battlefield, or even the average business executive accessing a Web site or the company intranet on a laptop, via a slow modem line from a hotel room, during a business trip. Simplicity helps everybody (Slatin, 2002).

One answer is User-Centred Design, although this is not a guarantee that a site is accessible for all visitors. User-Centred Design (UCD) is an established and proven process for designing mainstream hardware, software and Web interfaces. It places the person in the centre of the design process instead of the actual object being designed, and considers usability goals and the users' characteristics, environment and tasks being undertaken. However, when a user analysis is conducted as part of the design process, designers tend not to include people with disabilities, or people operating in more unusual environments. In summary, it is logical to state that usability is how well the user understands the user interface, and accessibility is the ability to use the user interface in the first place.

What Are Accessible Websites?

Web sites can be called accessible when individuals who suffer from age-related problems, or have disabilities, can access and use them as effectively as people who do not have disabilities

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According to the Disability Rights Commission (DRC, 2005), a person is disabled if they have a mental or physical impairment which has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This means that at least one of the following activities must be badly affected: mobility, manual dexterity, physical co-ordination, continence, ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects, speech, hearing and eyesight, memory or the ability to concentrate, learn or understand, and the ability to understand the risk of physical danger.

The broader category of disability contains several kinds of disability: visual impairments, hearing impairments, motor impairments and also cognitive impairments. The percentage of people who have to deal with a disability of some kind increases as they become older. The increase in disabilities in an aging population is shown in figure 1 on the previous page.

Why is Accessibility Important?

Increasing middle-aged and elderly population with declining physical mobility and chronic health conditions giving rise to problems in web use

Improved survival rate for handicapped children needing access to education via the web

The ability of older adults to use the web deteriorates as they age, and the Web is being accessed by a vast and increasing number of 60+ users, with a growth rate amongst this section of the populace of 15% per year (Coulson, 2000). This group uses government resources for self-diagnosis and treatment of illness.

They also go online to file taxes, vote, obtain social services and voice their opinions (Becker, 2005). They seek to improve their quality of life, and use the web to search for information to support this goal. In the United States, 20% of the population will consist of older adults by 2030, according to the Administration on Aging (AoA, 1999).

Further factors adding to the importance of web accessibility are firstly a sizeable, aging and affluent, middle-aged population which will begin to experience a decline in physical mobility, thus increasing the attractiveness of online shopping. This demographic group is also likely to develop chronic health conditions, such as impaired vision and hearing loss. So they will undoubtedly present formidable obstacles to Web use unless some significant technical accommodations are made.

Secondly, over the past two decades improvements in medical care have boosted the survival rate of children born with disabilities. These children will go on to become adult consumers with the increased spending power which this implies (Schmetzke, 2001).

Major corporate players with online presences may not have sufficiently recognised the importance of these customers with disabilities, and are consequently in danger of overlooking this significant market. An organisation's image is enhanced because of the goodwill generated by maintaining an accessible website. This can lead to increased market share and solid profitability.

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The barriers which are preventing aging users from accessing Web content can be attributed to vision, cognition, and physical impairments. All of these are associated with the normal aging process. Vision changes include not only a decline in the ability to see objects clearly, but decreasing capacity to focus at close range, or increased sensitivity to glare from light reflecting or shining into the eye (AFB, 1999). The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB, 2003) describes diminishing visual capacity in terms of visual acuity, contrast sensitivity, glare sensitivity, visual field, and ability to discern colours.

As well as visual decline, older users will experience a decrease in motor coordination. This will make it more difficult to move a mouse, scroll down a web page or click on standard-size links.

People with memory impairments may rely on consistent navigational structure throughout the site to allow them to navigate within the pages efficiently. The ability to perform spatial memory tasks declines with age, as does the ability to discern details in the presence of distracting information.

As a result, complex navigation layouts, poorly designed search capabilities and cluttered web pages will affect an older user's website experience (Becker, 2005). Other potential web usability barriers which affect older adults according to Becker (2005), include:

- Advertisements, or features which look like advertisements. These can affect the usability of a site negatively by adding clutter. They often link to an external site, which may confuse the user. Both features may result in a page which is less intuitive to use.
- Links. Older adults find visual clues which differentiate between visited and unvisited links helpful when navigating a visited site.
- Search. The use of the standard search box location at the top of the page minimises potential confusions which may arise from other designs.
- Mouseovers. Older adults with unsteady hands can find the small movements required for highlighting and selecting objects difficult. Where this is so, mouseovers may therefore pose a barrier to older adults.
- Font size. Small fonts – eight to ten point – are virtually unreadable to anyone with poor vision.
- Patterned background images. Patterned backgrounds will also affect readability negatively if they are used with small overlaying text.
- Diminishing visual capacity. Diminishing visual capacity has a variety of causes, and declines in terms of visual acuity, contrast sensitivity, glare sensitivity, visual field, and the ability to discern colours (The AFB, 2003).
- Glare sensitivity. This makes it difficult to distinguish objects on screen. The thinning retina, smaller pupil size and thinning cornea are factors which create this problem. A badly designed web page may be even more inaccessible to older adult users because of their generally deteriorating vision.
- Colour Discrimination. The amount of light perceived by a 60-year-old compared to a 20-year-old is reduced by two thirds (Weale, 1961). For many older adults, colour combinations which are similar in hue, or low in saturation, may render a web page unreadable.
- Visual Field. Web objects, such as navigation buttons or search and help facilities, which are placed on the periphery of a web page, may be difficult to find. If the font size is small and the font colour does not contrast sufficiently with the background, this is more acute (Echt, 2002).

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To overcome these difficulties, the font must be of an adequate size and the foreground and background colours of a web page must contrast. Specialised hardware and software can also be used.

These tools are known as assistive technologies and include screen readers and head pointers. A head pointer is simply a stick which is placed in a person's mouth or mounted on a head strap. The user can then use this to manipulate a keyboard or a touch screen. Users can also use keyboards instead of a mouse. It is also important to ensure that essential components of the page can work without a mouse.

Yet some web developers design sites which make this impossible. This means that rollovers, drop down menus and interactive simulations are all redundant. Thoughtful design would include tab keys and the enter key to make use of links, form controls and embedded objects. Movement between frames can be achieved by pressing the control button and tab button together.

Meaningful commands, menus and icons, a well-designed navigation system, and comprehensive feedback messages help to reduce the amount of cognitive and physical effort required from the user.

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Oyston, E. (ed). *Centred on Learning: Academic Case Studies on Learning Centre Development*. Ashgate, 2003. isbn 0750608050

Gorman, G.E. (2005) *Scholarly Publishing in an Electronic Era (International Yearbook of Library and Information Management 2004-2005)*. Facet Publishing, 2005. isbn1-85604-536-6.

Pedley, P (ed). *Managing Digital Rights: a Practitioner's Guide*. Facet Publishing, 2005. isbn 1856045447.

Poulter, A., Hiom, D., and McMenemy, D. *The Library and Information Professional's Internet Companion*. Facet, 2005. isbn 1-85604-509

This issue is very much a mixed bag as far as reviews are concerned, with books on learning centre development, knowledge management, research methods, e-journals, digital service delivery and a four-square deal all vying for attention, but first up is *Managing Academic Support Services in Universities: the Convergence Experience* (Hanson, T. (ed)., Facet, 2005 isbn 1856045250).

After reading this book I sat down to work through my notes in some confusion and a little annoyance, which I will come to later. Between the two introductory chapters — setting the scene and in Field's case providing answers to many of the questions the book raised — and the three final chapters reviewing the Australian, European and American experiences, there are 16 case studies of convergence, or not as the case may be. With one or two notable exceptions this makes for some pretty monotonous reading. Perhaps a thematic treatment might have removed some of the sameness which seems to pervade the lengthier passages.

In many ways trying to deal with convergence is like trying to have an argument with a cloud of smoke. There are so many senses in which it is all things to all men, and yet so many similarities in the way in which it is approached.

On one level the book reads as a reasonable primer for introducing what should be arguably the most significant programme of organisation development ever embarked on in university information services. Although it is sometimes quite repetitive, it is possible for the diligent reader to tease out many key principles in change management.

On another level, it was somewhat dispiriting to see some of the convergence myths repeated almost 20 years after the concept first began to be investigated. For example, the view that cultural differences between computer services and libraries present problems was aired again by one or two contributors. Contemporary management theory asserts that differences like this are assets. It is from such happy conjunctions of differences, and the proximity of different cultures and perspectives, that creativity and innovation in organisational development can emerge.

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“Creative abrasion” is a term used increasingly in other knowledge sectors, and we have known about creativity in organisations for about 60 years. Not only that, in 1999 just after the high water mark of the first wave of convergence, Gryskiewicz wrote *Positive Turbulence: Developing Climates for Creativity, Innovation, and Renewal*.

Other recollections of the start of the process are sometimes more about a somewhat scruffy but appealing brigade of institutional scallywags and a slightly more ambiguous beginning

This volume explained, in the context of chaos and complexity theory, how to turn organisational unrest or “turbulence” into positive forces for change. To rub salt in the wound, most converged library services claim to be team-based. The genesis of teams is to be found partly in Lewin’s work in the 1950s, and his views on group coherence were based on the idea of a common purpose and a shared “fate” which was the fate of the group as a whole, irrespective of any commonality between the members. There was not much comfort there for valuers of cultural uniformity.

I occasionally suffered some pangs as well, because the sanitised version of the birth of convergence clearly still holds at least some currency. In his comment on the “foresight and wisdom of vice-chancellors and principals”, Hanson reflects one view of the start of convergence, but there are always different perceptions in cases like this.

Other recollections of the genesis of the process are sometimes more about a somewhat scruffy but appealing brigade of institutional scallywags and a slightly more ambiguous beginning. Other writers, among them one or two big names, if I remember correctly, while not exactly talking about “smoke-filled rooms” have been quite clear on the closed decision making, and the mix of principle and opportunism of several sorts, which coloured some of the early convergence processes. One prominent director of information services once went on record with his view of convergence as the “classic university fudge”. Another, commenting on the inheritance of a converged information service after the first assault, said “the blood was still on the carpet.” Yet another averred that “any fool can merge a computing service and a library”, but who added “and frequently does”? Not all of the culprits are represented in this volume.

Underlying this criticism is the view I formed from the book that the idea of convergence as a major strategic issue for university library services and universities themselves did not always come through with the power I think it should have. The mix of motivations and intentions was indeed complex. Yet, the book is good and clear on blow-by-blow accounts of how convergence was implemented — what a colleague once called papers written on the lines of “How we do it good at —”.

With some notable exceptions, the work also lacked an adequate theoretical base for justifying convergence. There is now no shortage of significant ideas which can underpin the exercise and illuminate the direction convergence should take in terms of organisation development, but this was not covered well. Without an understanding of the underlying theory, which is nothing directly to do with information strategies, changing learning patterns and the like, we will continue to make heavy weather of optimising the opportunity convergence represents. And what is more, the many misunderstandings of things like cultural differences and team-based organisations will surely persist.

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It would also have been helpful, I think, if more space had been devoted to voluntary forms of convergence, of which some do actually exist. It is not a pattern I would recommend, but it does represent the other end of the spectrum.

Having said this, the book is informative on the lessons to be learned, as well as the basic process of introducing convergence. In these two areas, it is to be recommended. It is also necessary to observe that the process of implementation is crucial, and its treatment of this aspect of the phenomenon lends the book much value.

The lessons coming through in this account of what has been done so far are unambiguous: Field's comments on setting objectives, the strength of the process followed at Hertfordshire, the several references to the absolute necessity for physical convergence, the significance of participation — and money, the need to attend to psychological issues, are all relevant and illuminating. I would also add one writer's aversion to the "Big Bang" process of change, although not everyone will agree.

There were some individual contributions which stood out amongst a generally competent set of papers. Field's history of convergence was much more than that, offering a strong rationale and a set of criteria upon which convergence could be judged. There were also a number of perceptive insights.

Di Martin called her piece Flagship Learning Resources for the 21st Century at the University of Hertfordshire, and with some reason. Extending over a period of 10 years, this was a project which embodied much that is good in the practice of organisation development, and could serve as a model. The attention to communication and participation was exemplary. Her frank discussion of the psychological issues surfacing in the reaction of LIS staff also rings very true, and contrasts with accounts where no resistance was ostensibly encountered.

Law's contribution was trenchant, utterly realistic and sharply focused. There was some underlying dour humour which went down well, but that might just be me. It was also honest in its appraisal of how much needs to be done to extend the benefits to researchers.

It is impossible to avoid commenting on West's use of the Frank Dobson quote, which marred an otherwise sound contribution which had something to say about the really difficult part of convergence — user-facing, front-of-house or ground level convergence. The information services of my experience were vibrant places where colourful industrial language was sometimes used with humour and to good effect in certain circumstances. As an ex-rugby player and long-time sailor I am certainly no prude, but the use of the quotation on page 124 is crass, quite ill-judged and gratuitous. Fine in the saloon bar if that is your taste, it is inappropriate in this context. It will hopefully still cause a few raised eyebrows, even in today's climate where the force of the word is dissipated by over-use in the wrong circumstances. In an academic/professional collection, it is neither funny nor clever, some readers will certainly find it offensive, and it fails to make any point at all. Neither West nor Hanson (the editor) should look at it with any sense of achievement or satisfaction.

One editorial oddity struck me: the first page of a number of the contributions is on the verso. Facet, not to be outdone, and in common with convergence, is being innovative again.

Reference: Gryskiewicz, S. Positive Turbulence: Developing Climates for Creativity, Innovation, and Renewal. Jossey-Bass, 1999.

★★★ Lyndon Pugh

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Edward Oyston's gathering together of case studies on the development of learning centres in some ways overlaps with and complements the previous work. It is a thematic approach to developments at Sheffield Hallam, Leeds Metropolitan, Aberdeen and Lincoln Universities (Oyston, E., (ed) *Centred on Learning: Academic Case Studies on Learning Centre Development*. Ashgate, 2003 isbn 0750608050) and it is unfortunate that it has taken us so long to get to it, but late as it is, it is worth the effort nevertheless. Where specific chapters are attributed to individuals in this review, these are the editors. Each piece is the work of a number of contributors, and the full list is unfortunately too long to include.

A thematic treatment, this is not a work to really get under the skin of organisation development in university information services, but it is a valuable source for any manager or other professional looking for examples of particular characteristics and conditions in UK Learning Centres.

I am not certain about the use of the term "academic case studies" or how they can differ from other case studies, which are presumably non-academic. Perhaps it is shorthand for case studies in academic information services. I suspect also that practitioners with long memories might feel that a lot of what is included in this book is a repackaging of things which have always been done by all academic librarians who were worth their salt. For example, there were many attempts to embed subject specialists in faculties and schools from the 1960s on. At least one institution — not represented here nor in the previous review — but which pioneered convergence, enjoyed considerable success in this respect.

It would also be hard, I think, to sustain the view that this book takes "a wider view of student learning support than is normally associated with academic library services, taking into account other services, such as IT and media production." What is convergence, now practised, however it is defined and counted, by about half of the university information services in the UK if it is not this?

Nobody should be put off by these comments. The value of this book lies first of all in the sheer volume of material it contains about organisational structures (or frameworks, as they would have it), changing student and learning centre staff perspectives and the physical and learning environments in particular.

After Oyston has set the scene, Claire Abson begins the serious work by putting things in the higher education context. This is very much a standard treatment, but is done thoroughly and with insight. Some questions are asked, but these also are not new, including "When do LIS staff become teachers?" One answer is never, another is that they always have been, and this argument is one that librarians cannot win and therefore should not enter into.

I suspect also that practitioners with long memories might feel that a lot of what is included in this book is a repackaging of things which have always been done by all academic librarians who were worth their salt

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The tone set by Abson is maintained through the treatment of the main themes, providing in total a comprehensive, predominantly factual and detailed picture of operational conditions in four organisations which between them cover a broad spectrum of operational types.

Where the contributors venture into analysis they are usually discriminating and critical. Even so, the canard about avoiding cultural conflict is again repeated. While Norry was guilty of this in her contribution on the changing staff experience, she was also very sound on skills development and the embedding of learning advisors or subject specialists in academic departments.

The student experience was covered by Alison Ward, and was good on drop-in sessions, interactive learning packages, distance learning and disability support (in particular) and integration with academic teaching, but the two scenarios on page 99 are hilarious. I never quite saw the need in 1991 for crowd control outside the library to deal with the pre-09.00 queues. If they existed at all they were more likely to be made up of locked-out librarians defeated by the security, and the 2002 scenario is equally over the top. Even so, it makes the point. It was also good to see the student experience given emphasis.

Other strengths of the book were in the treatment of collaboration and partnerships edited by Kay Moore, the physical space by Roger Hinds, and Alison Hudson's learning environments. All three were expansive and conveyed some considerable shifts in emphasis. I felt that these three chapters formed the core of the work.

Graham Bulpitt took on the self-avowed risk of making some predictions in the concluding chapters. Real and virtual learning, the skills issue and staffing were given a thorough yet concise airing.

I could not honestly say that this book presented any new insights. Most of what it covered will, I am sure, be familiar to most managers and others who have been involved in this sector over the years. Where it scores above other accounts is first of all in the collection of much related and useful information in one place. It also places an emphasis on the key issues, and it is good on relating practice to the contemporary environment.

The work is often copiously referenced, and the appendices contain yet more useful information. Perhaps its greatest value is in the way it makes connections across organisations and between the learning centre and the institution:

The learning centre rationale is geared primarily to institutional teaching and learning strategies; it anticipates the growing importance of communications and information technology (C&IT) to learning; it is concerned with learning activities, not just the supporting resources. It is not just the sheer breadth of role, in terms of resources and activities, which makes the learning centre concept distinctive. More fundamentally, it is how all of these resources and services interact. All of these characteristics, with a strong emphasis on integrated provision, are central to the visions.

For learning centre read convergence. The very best of the latter will exhibit the same characteristics, and other similarities stem from their genesis in the development of information strategies after Follett, the impact of digitisation and C&IT and the perception that it was necessary to develop integrated provision. This book will be useful for practitioners, academics and students alike.

★★★ Lyndon Pugh

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Gorman, G.E. (2005) Scholarly publishing in an electronic era (International yearbook of library and information management 2004-2005). London, Facet Publishing, 2005.

The latest in the annual series of themed publications in the field of library science and information management, this book presents an excellent treatment of the many issues surrounding scholarly publication, and features several of the most prominent writers and thinkers in the field. It divides into four parts, each representing a particular sub-theme: an overview of scholarly publishing in the 21st century; institutional perspectives; access and preservation issues; and models and economic issues. The allocation of articles to sub-themes does, however, appear somewhat arbitrary. What do e-books (Louise Edwards) and the economics of open access publishing (John Houghton) have in common, for example, in the final section? And why is John Cox's article Evolution or Revolution in Scholarly Publishing: Challenges to the Publisher included in the section on institutional perspectives? There does in fact seem to have been some very "light touch" editing applied, with many typos which are something of a discourtesy to the contributors, whose work is of a high standard.

Associate editor Fytton Rowland provides a comprehensive history of scholarly publishing, which serves as an excellent general introduction to the contributions which follow it. Alicia Wise, formerly JISC Collections Manager and now Chief Executive of the UK Publishers Licensing Society exploits her earned role of "poacher turned gamekeeper" by calling for greater collaboration between academic libraries and publishers:

It seems to me that librarians and publishers have more in common with one another, and more to gain from collaboratively addressing shared challenges, than from attempting to do one another out of existence.

How far collaboration is possible between parties who have a seller-buyer relationship is not really addressed, and other contributors do rather ignore her plea, which makes for some entertaining polemic.

this book presents an excellent treatment of the many issues surrounding scholarly publication, and features several of the most prominent writers and thinkers in the field.

. . The allocation of articles to sub-themes does, however, appear somewhat arbitrary.

Colin Steele's typically well-referenced and thoughtful article raises the idea of libraries as publishers, and the revival of the monograph. Could libraries in fact be re-inventing an ancient role as "digitariums" of the 21st century? However, we must not stride boldly into the future by abandoning the central ethics of library service. Steele points out one of the dangers of doing so, raising the awkward but important question of library service for independent "walk-in" scholars.

If we are obliged to put all of our e-content behind authorised access walls, how do we fulfil our obligation to independent research?

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Looking at scholarly publishing from the publisher's perspective, John Cox gives publishers the creative role, as "midwife to and curator of" scholarly literature. Libraries stand further accused:

It is simply undeniable that university libraries have not succeeded in selling the value of the library to the university community at large, and the faculty in particular.

Referring, as did Steele, to the non-academic users of scholarly content, he points out that 25% of journals are purchased by non-academics, and that their revenue would be lost to the industry under an open access regime in which authors pay to publish. Although far from convinced, therefore, that open access will succeed, Cox is cagey in warning mainstream publishers not to be complacent, pointing out that the traditional airline industry did not expect low-cost airlines to succeed.

SPARC Europe Director David Prosser gives an incisive presentation of the issues of open access, and how a "pure" repository-based open access system could work with "classical" peer-review. Stephen Pinfield writes about the hard graft which libraries have to put into getting authors to deposit content at the present time. "Inertia rather than opposition is the biggest barrier to self-archiving at the moment." The only answer is "sustained advocacy".

Australian economist John Houghton provides an excellent analysis of the economics of journal publishing with an overview of business models. It is refreshing for librarians to have to think about journals as a product alongside other market goods, governed by the three "pillars" of the market exchange system: excludability; rivalry and transparency. Discussing author charges, he cites the "Matthew Principle":

For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath (Matthew 25:29)

In a pure system, author charges prevent poor authors from publishing – a negative effect which must not be forgotten by those of us keen to point to the advantage to Third World researchers of being able to access research outputs freely on the web. At the present time, however, this problem is taken care of by fee waivers.

Other contributions are useful indicators of changes in the environment, without any need to become embroiled in the libraries versus publishers arguments which, despite Wise's pleas, do characterise the territory. Chowdhury's examination of usability issues is in that category, as is Louise Edwards' article on electronic books. Peter Shepherd, COUNTER Project Director, gives a very useful overview of that project's sterling work in developing an international code of practice for the recording and exchange of online usage data from vendors. He points out that usage, of course, if it can be standardised, is an alternative way of assessing the "quality and value of individual articles and journals".

In his introductory article, Fytton Rowland makes the suggestion that if COUNTER-compliance actually becomes widespread, it may change the traditional library practice of subscription payment in advance to one of annual retrospective pay-per-use. This may be attractive in terms of value for money, if worrying for librarians who generally cannot deal with budgetary shocks in the form of unpredictable costs.

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For librarians keen to see reform, however, Prosser's article perhaps gives the most hope, placing a lot of emphasis on the evidence now emerging to support the case that open access publication leads to higher impact. He presents interesting figures from the *Astrophysical Journal*, 72% of whose papers are in arXiv, and are cited on average twice as heavily as the remaining 28%. Other figures from BioMedCentral seem to bear this out. As academic authors begin to catch this message open access may really start to take off, and the low-cost "no frills" form of scholarly publishing may eventually become the web's favourite scholarly publisher.

★★★ John MacColl, Head, Digital Library Division, University of Edinburgh.

Pedley, P (ed). *Managing Digital Rights: a Practitioner's Guide*. Facet Publishing, 2005, ISBN 1856045447.

The task of explaining copyright law is already an incredibly complex one, so combining it with various aspects of digital rights, and why "digital is different", was never going to be an easy task. With so many resources now available electronically and the current proliferation of digitisation projects going ahead, it is clear there is room for a book providing guidance on all aspects of digital rights and their management.

This is exactly what this book claims to offer. It states that it is intended for those working in libraries, archives and museums "who want to know whether they can digitise their collections, and if so how to get the rights to do so". In order to do this, over five chapters it addresses five different aspects of digital rights.

The first chapter covers the background of copyright law, and how these laws are different for digital products. It does this by first illustrating why digital is different, and then discusses the various licence agreements and rights management systems available. The second chapter builds on this, highlighting how the same issues differ in other EU countries, the USA and Australia. Both chapters are extremely effective in conveying detailed information in a clear and concise way.

Chapter three applies itself to the more practical issue of those wishing to digitise material they already hold, and provides a thorough breakdown of all aspects to be considered. The book then uses this information, and takes further and higher education institutions as a working model, to highlight factors to be covered and exceptions to the rules. The final chapter considers the point of view of those holding corporate rights, and outlines their priorities when considering whether or not to agree to material being digitised.

Just by looking at the diverse range of information this book covers, and seeing that it is such a slim publication, demonstrates what a mammoth task the contributors are trying to undertake. For such a small book it contains a great deal of valuable information, and each chapter manages to explain effectively the complicated background of copyright law, digital rights and aspects to consider in each stage of the process of obtaining those rights, while never over-simplifying what it covers.

However, just how useful people will find this book will all depend on how much knowledge of digital rights negotiation and management they already have. For those who want an overall view of what will need to be considered when embarking on a digitisation project, this book is ideal. Having said that, I believe it also provides a valuable working checklist of things to be covered at any level of digital rights management.

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The preface says that the book “has been written in order to provide a practical guide to the use of digital content”, and I cannot fault this statement. Yet, for those who have a lot of experience in this area, I feel the text may raise more questions than it answers. For example, in more than one chapter different digital rights management systems are mentioned briefly, but without a great deal of explanation. For those who are interested in very specific elements of digital rights, the wide range of topics covered seems to impede the in-depth treatment of particular issues.

What this book will provide the reader with is a solid background of digital rights, and an excellent starting point for obtaining further information on specific areas of the process should this be necessary. As with any book trying to cover a subject this complicated, it cannot provide definitive answers in every instance, but it succeeds in making many issues clearer.

It is very comprehensive and well-written, and considering this subject is not an easy one to convey, it does an excellent job of providing a concise overview of all aspects of digital rights management.

★★★ Lyndia Thomas, Senior IT Assistant, The Law Society of England and Wales

Poulter, A., Hiom, D., and McMenemy, D. The Library and Information Professional's Internet Companion. Facet, 2005. isbn 1-85604-509-9

This is a four-square book – externally and internally. It covers the World Wide Web; Creating web pages; Designing and publishing websites; File transfer technology; E-mail; Conferencing; Real-time systems; Networking technologies; Libraries and the Internet; Internet applications in Libraries.

Each chapter is well laid out, and written in a clear and unambiguous style which is easy to follow even through the more technical aspects. This is the first time I have read a description of html tags which made me want to get out there and write a home page (time forbids ...).

At the end of most chapters there are short bibliographies where relevant. There is a fair amount of technical information, for example in File Transfer Technologies, Client-side programming and USENET conferencing, but readers can sail through the emboldened terminology confidently if this book is within reach.

In a world where instant out-of-dateness is the norm, the authors have done their best to include all relevant current applications at July 2005, such as VoiP, blogging, phishing, podcasting and camcasting.

The majority of pages have information bars where websites are used to illustrate the point made in the text, though they are not separately indexed. There is also the occasional TIP box to emphasise a point related to the text.

The introduction contains a useful discussion of the changing role of the LIS professional, now having a vast range of resources instantly available, which may be aggregated with traditional resources to provide high quality and speedy reference services.

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The nub is, as explained more fully in Chapter 9:

At its core the role of the librarian and information professional has not changed in the digital age. What has changed is the mechanism for delivering the information to the customer.

And this does not mean just Google; as the authors point out, even the best search engines only cover 20-30% of the web. MmIT readers in particular will be aware of this, and of most of the theory and applications in this book. It is at refresher course level for them, but an excellent introduction for those new to the area.

In conclusion: "it does what it says on the tin".

Is it a square deal at £34.95 (£27.96 for Cilip members) for a paperback? Well, I would have expected a hardback for this price, but the content cannot be faulted. Highly recommended.

★★★★★ Chris Leftley, Wycliffe College, Oxford



Federico Fellini's 1955 film *Il bidone* (The Swindlers) is the middle film of his "trilogy of loneliness", between *La Strada* in 1954 and *Nights of Cabiria* which appeared in 1957.

Broderick Crawford plays the character of Augusto, the leader of a gang of con men who spend their time trying to trick poor and ignorant people out of their savings. He is aided and abetted by Richard Basehart's character Picasso, struggling to earn the money to keep his wife and small daughter, and Roberto, played by Franco Fabrizi.

Initially a light-hearted story, the mood deepens as the cruelty of the gang becomes more obvious, and the action is by turns comic, bitter and tragic.

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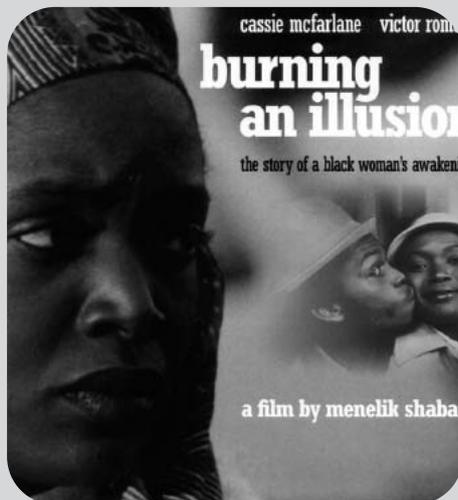
The performances of Crawford (seen right in one of the most well-known stills from the film), Basehart and Fabrizio are of high quality, the characters are sharply observed, and the music is exuberant. Fellini's wife, Giulietta Masina, plays the part of Picasso's wife.

The dvd was released by *bfi* Video at the end of August, and there are a number of extras included in this black-and-white film which runs for 109 minutes, and has English subtitles:

- An exclusive interview with Fellini's assistant director Dominique Delouche
- A stills gallery
- Film historian Geoffrey Nowell-Smith's illustrated notes, a film review, biographies and an extract from the diary Dominique Delouche kept while the film was being shot



Burning an Illusion (see image below) is the second dvd in the Black World initiative led by the British Film Institute. Looking for Langston was listed in MmIT vol 31 no 2 in August. Supported by the Arts Council England, Black World will continue until early December.



The first feature by Menelik Shabazz, the original was shot amongst the communities of Notting Hill and Ladbroke Grove. It is said to mark "the coming-of-age of black British cinema."

The themes of transformation and identity are developed through the telling of a love story which traces the emotional and political growth of a young black couple in Thatcher's London.

For the first time in British cinema, the film also gave a central voice to a black woman. Pat Williams, played by the actress Cassie McFarlane, is a character whose journey to emotional maturity, emancipation and political awakening is charted by the film.

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A London girl with a caring family, her own flat and a job she enjoys, at the start of the film Williams looks forward to a comfortable married life. All this changes when she succumbs to the charms of Del, a disaffected toolmaker played by Victor Romero.

After moving in together, and with Del losing his job, the couple begin to challenge their assumptions about each other, and reconsider what they want to do with their lives. *Burning an Illusion* won the Grand Prix at the Amiens Film Festival, and Cassie McFarlane won the Most Promising New Actress Award presented by the Evening Standard. Extras on the dvd include:

- A filmed introduction by Menelik Shabazz
- Commentary with Menelik Shabazz, Cassie McFarlane and Victor Romero
- The short film *Blood Ah Goh Run*, by Menelik Shabazz in 1982
- An eight-page illustrated booklet containing film notes by Bonnie Greer, a biography of the director, a film review and essay written by Inge Blackman

Horace Ové's landmark films *Pressure* (1975) and *Baldwin's Nigger* (1969, right) are out together on DVD forming the third release in the bfi's Black World programme. The DVD has been available since the end of October.

Hailed as Britain's first black feature film, *Pressure* is a hard-hitting, honest account of the plight of disenfranchised British-born black youths. Set in 1970s London, it tells the story of Tony, a bright school-leaver, the son of West Indian immigrants who finds himself torn between his parents' church-going conformity and his brother's Black Power militancy.

As his initially high hopes are repeatedly dashed – he cannot find work anywhere, and potential employers treat him with suspicion because of his colour – his sense of alienation grows. In a bid to find a sense of belonging, he joins his black friends who, estranged from their submissive parents, seek a sense of purpose in the streets and in chases with the police.

An angry, but nevertheless sincere and balanced film, *Pressure* deals with the identity struggles which many children of immigrants have to face, and Horace Ové makes the most of his combination of professional actors and local non-actors from the streets of London.



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Baldwin's Nigger is a striking portrait of the writer James Baldwin at his sharp-witted best, addressing a group of radical West Indian students in 1960s London. Accompanied by comedian and civil rights activist Dick Gregory, Baldwin discusses black experience and identity in both Britain and America. Impassioned and entertaining, this is a fascinating snapshot of one of America's most powerful novelists and spokesman for a generation. Extras include:

- Stills gallery including examples of Horace Ové's photographic work
- Film notes by Derek Malcolm, director biography and filmography, film review and feature, biography of James Baldwin and interview with Horace Ové on Baldwin's Nigger

In conjunction with Black World, *bfi* Video has also released Isaac Julien's Looking for Langston and Burning an Illusion by Menelik Shabazz. Both of these releases were featured in Vol 31 no 3 of MmIT in August. Further titles will be announced this Autumn.

For further information on the *bfi* releases featured in this column, please contact Jill Reading, Press Officer, *bfi* Video Publishing, at jill.reading@bfi.org.uk/blackworld

Early Cinema Primitives and Pioneers is a series of short films first released between the years 1895 and 1910. This collection of 60 shorts, all made before 1911, has been released on dvd in order to widen access to some of the extraordinary film material held in the National Film and Television Archive (see MmIT vol 31 nos 2 and 3, May and August 2005).

Much of the material in this release has been restored, and the dvd is unusual in that it includes fiction films. Most films made during the period represented in this collection were actualities or newsreel footage.

The set of two discs reflects, in an entertaining manner, the invention of techniques such as the close-up, the cut-away and editing. These devices were in use by filmmakers before the turn of the century. Some of the most interesting items in the compilation are:

- 13 shorts by the Lumière brothers, which were part of the first projected film show to a paying audience in Britain. This was at Regent Street Polytechnic in 1896.
- George Méliès' Voyage à Travers L'impossible
- Birt Acres' Rough Sea at Dover
- Nine Pathé Brothers films, including Ali Baba et les Quarante Voleurs and Peeping Tom – an example of early film voyeurism
- Five films from the Hepworth Company, including the highly successful kidnapping drama Rescued by Rover
- An actuality publicity film commissioned by the biscuit manufacturer Peek Frean and Company and produced by Cricks and Martin with the title A Visit to a Peek Frean and Co.'s Biscuit Works (1908)
- A Day in the Life of a Coalminer, a Kineto Company documentary from 1910
- Dewar's – It's Scotch, which is said to be the first advertising film; Edwin S. Porter's The Gay Shoe Clerk, The Great Train Robbery and The Dream of Rarebit Fiend, a popular adaptation of Winson McCay's comic strip
- Films by R. W. Paul, George Albert Smith, the Sheffield Photographic Company, Walter Haggart, James Bamforth and James A. Williamson.
- All the films are accompanied by new scores by Neil Brand, John Sweeney and Stephen Home, who are pianists at the National Film Theatre.
- Extras include a voiceover commentary written by Barry Salt, the film historian, and a 24-page illustrated booklet with filmmaker biographies and film notes.

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Interesting titles include *How it Feels to be Run Over* (1900) and *That Fatal Sneeze* (1907) from the Hepworth Manufacturing Company, *Ladies' Skirts Nailed to a Fence* (c.1900) from Banforth and Company Ltd., *The Big Swallow* (c.1901) released by Williamson's Kinematograph Company and *The Miller and the Sweep* (1898), *The Countryman and the Cinematograph* (1901) and *A Chess Dispute* (1903) from R. W. Paul.

All of the *bfi* Video releases reported on this page are available from all good DVD retailers, or by mail order from 0845 458 9910. They are also available online at www.bfi.org.uk/video

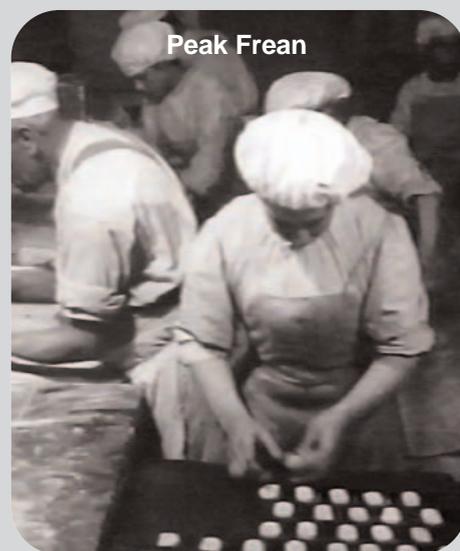
Pathé's Oliver Twist

The Roman Polanski-directed version of Dickens' *Oliver Twist*, (below) with the screenplay by Ronald Harwood, was released nationwide by Pathé Distribution in October.

Sir Ben Kingsley appears in the role of Fagin, Barney Clark as Oliver and Jamie Foreman as Bill Sykes, ably complemented by Harry Eden as the Artful Dodger and Leanne Rowe as Nancy.

While the story is universally-known, production designer Allan Starski has provided an invigorating and spectacular "composite set of mid-19th Century London streets, constructed on the studio Back Lot . . . amongst the most ambitious ever conceived for a motion picture."

Extending over five main streets, squares and side streets, there are also other features which existed in Dickens' time. Some of the shops still exist today.



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In the film their shelves display genuine items from the time, including hats, boots, furniture and tobacconists' wares. All these were raided from their respective archives, and add considerable veracity to the setting.

In making the film, Polanski set out to create a family film for a young audience, a complete contrast with *The Pianist*, evoking his wartime Polish childhood. Eventually his wife persuaded him to make *Oliver Twist*, and the result is an emphasis on a story told for children, with a mixture of realism and fantasy, huge characters, much humour and typically Dickensian eccentricities. Cinema patrons will not be disappointed.

The film was released on the 7th October and is PG.

MovieMail

Moviemail Film First have also released *Il Bidone*, and their World Cinema releases for the Autumn also include *Brotherhood*, *Christmas in August* and Ozon's *5 x 2*.

Brotherhood is a story of two brothers who were caught up in the Korean War. As their family suffers, a story of heroism and the "triumph of the human spirit" unfolds. There is also a spectacular backdrop of battle scenes and excellent photography.

The production is available on two discs, and includes a commentary, documentaries and other features. *Brotherhood* was released in September.

Directed by Hur Jin-Ho, *Christmas in August* (below) revolves around a shopkeeper who struggles to keep the secret of his terminal illness from his family and friends. Attempting to live life as if there was nothing wrong, his plans are wrecked by a meeting with a woman whom he falls for. In an "endearing and powerful film" the shopkeeper is forced to confront the seriousness of his situation when reality hits him.

The DVD also contains the director's commentary and trailers.

5 X 2 follows Francois Ozon's *8 Women* and *Swimming Pool*, both of which were considerable hits, and "entertaining and well-acted [though they] lacked substance."



This work is said to be more complex, and is reminiscent of "Ingmar Bergman's superlative *Scenes From a Marriage*". The similarities are found in the analysis of marital breakdown over a period of years, but there are also differences in the narrative structure. The story in effect begins at the end, with the divorce of the two main characters, and pans through a dinner party, the birth of a child and then the wedding.

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This technique helps the audience to contemplate the factors which led to the breakup, and to perceive the multi-dimensional nature of both of the protagonists, both of whom are a mixture of good and bad characteristics. There are parallels with the marriage of the woman's parents, and a gay relationship. The final image also has an impact:

The obscenity of the final image – Marion and Gilles walk hand in hand into the sunset, blissfully oblivious to the pain and cruelty ahead – leaves a bitter aftertaste . . . This poignant dénouement, the high-class acting (Tedeschi's wistfully melancholic performance as Marion in particular) and sensitive dialogue make 5 x 2 one of the most interesting French films of the year. (written Alex Davidson, Moviemail August/September 05)

Extras include cut scenes, a commentary, a documentary on the making of the film, and a gallery. Go to www.moviemail.com

Opinion — No Other Way Now But Down

Lyndon Pugh

From the early 1980s ONWARDS, indeed even earlier, more than one researcher and commentator started issuing warnings about libraries ceasing to be the primary or sole source of information, and pointed to librarians facing the day when they would no longer enjoy their pre-eminent roles as the unique gatekeepers of information. One writer commented that

The sum of all these changes is to create a fast-changing academic environment where the librarian or media specialist no longer has a monopoly on information provision. It is now within the power of the individual teacher or department to control access to information themselves . . . the need is for organisations that are able to see and respond quickly to changes in their environment, that are able to act in the increasingly politicised decision-making processes, and that can bring to bear, at the point of use, a combination of professional, technical and subject skills that can be deployed to continue to shape and direct the educational process. (anon, 1990)¹

Over 10 years earlier, Hickey (1977), while looking forward to the year 2000 in academic libraries, did even better in anticipating the emergence of various forms of technology, in the educational sphere, which would rival the library. He also avoided the hindsight-induced, cringe-making and over-ambitious claim in the quotation above, that libraries actually could significantly shape and direct the educational process and were central.

The pace of the changes generally alluded to has increased rapidly over the last few years. We are now hearing of the contracting out of library services, the outsourcing of functions and processes – arguably even worse than selling everything, but given a “cautious welcome” in some quarters – the jettisoning of professional expertise, rumours of the possible sale of major collections of national and international importance and the running down of others, stories of “secret plans” to get rid of senior professionals and increasingly strident calls, à la Tim Coates, for the introduction of more commercial principles into library operations.

How far we have already gone in being seduced by the sloppy buzzwords of commerce is a matter of conjecture, but when it is possible to read of a “Director of IT Solutions” in a university information service (this was not made up) the position does not look too healthy.

Opinion 2 

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Australian writer Don Watson, in his latest book (2005) actually illustrates the decline in the use of language and the “weasel words” in areas where they should never be, by using libraries, museums and galleries as examples. He also reports the astonishing and terrifying experience of his young grand-daughter, at the age of eleven required to produce a personal mission statement, as well as write an English essay supported by a Powerpoint presentation.

Once this trend has started, it will spread, if the evidence of the number of “paradigm shifts” we are encountering is anything to go by, so we will have more and more solutions to problems we did not know existed, and it will be a fair bet that some of these were actually caused in the first place by the solutions peddlers.

Many of these solutions will be the wrong ones, and it is also a fair bet that some of the problems will be the wrong ones as well. Shot-blasted onto my consciousness is the searing memory of the first of these “solutions” I ever encountered. Early attempts at a form of voluntary convergence involved the willing, indeed library-initiated, transfer of responsibility for the library computer system to an institution’s computer service. At 9 pm on a Friday evening, all was normal. By the following Tuesday afternoon the service was crippled, and a deputy director of the computer service solemnly intoned: “This is a very sick library system.” Within two days it was back under the management of the library and functioning normally, while the cause of convergence in that place was set back for a while.

This trend in terminology is not going unnoticed in the wider world of management. Some voices are increasingly being raised against the

mirrors, labyrinths and forking paths of management, which often seems to be constituting a similar parallel world with its own hermetic laws and behaviours. One of the telltales of this world is a language that has become untethered from normal meaning. Sometimes it floats free of reality altogether. (Caulkin, 2005)

The comments above produced an agitated response from readers, which Caulkin summed up:

The depth of concern about what is being done in the name of management, among both managers and managed, was sobering and unmistakable. . . . “We’ve failed,” said one educator simply, convinced that . . . management is worse now than it was a century ago . . . making it ever more difficult for the voice of real management to be heard among the cacophony of fads, numbers . . . meaningless exhortations. (Caulkin, 2005a)

You could argue that we have done our bit to create this parallel world through the way in which we have ourselves distorted meaning, in order to describe things we have always done but which we now feel need the urgency of novelty, or to ape today’s argot, by succumbing to the sad tendency embodied in the awful and wholly inappropriate phrase to “make libraries sexy”.

I would not automatically set my face against at least one or two manouvres to bring the positive features of business management into libraries, except, and most emphatically, the one above. It can at least be argued that a few other areas of the information, knowledge or creative sectors have made a better and more imaginative job of developing ideas to handle the management of technology and its organisational and human resource implications than we have, for example.

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I would also concede that there is much we have yet to learn from the selective use of marketing functions, as another example.

This area can in fact stand as a motif. The successful adoption of marketing techniques depends on our ability to take a realistic view of what the discipline, and other areas of management outside our own, can usefully give us. It also depends on an acute understanding of their limitations in the library environment as things stand at the moment

It is inconceivable that remarks like Caulkin's could spark off a similar debate about library management. Paradoxically, it has always been obvious that too little attention is paid to some management theories in business sectors where there are conditions similar in some ways to the operating environments of libraries, and too much to ideas which we mistakenly assume will enhance our status or give us a boost in some way. On the other hand, we sometimes either ignore or misunderstand some of the more imaginative and relevant ideas to be found in general management.

Even allowing for all this, we have bought into "management-speak" and corporate language, and everything else which goes with it, and this is the real root of our problems.

We not only need to find new ways of doing things but also a simpler, more human language to describe what we *are* doing.

Watson (op cit), clearly an extensive library user himself, has written a book which has sold tens of thousands of copies and earned effusive reviews. How many of those readers are our users, and agree with his strictures about the language we use to describe what we do?

What is happening now – the contracting out of whole systems and the already-mentioned outsourcing of parts of the library, and the deliberate deskilling being practised in several forms – will have devastating effects. When we start to outsource core processes like collection development, or procurement as some people will have it today, we are flogging off the family silver, and at a knock-down price.

The quality of the service will suffer as skills and experience are lost, opportunities for rounded personal and professional development will be diminished, motivation will become even more problematic as morale suffers, and more of the same will be recommended as a solution for the problems which will undoubtedly arise.

It is also worth pointing out that what is often lost in "reorganisations" is not just skills, experience, expertise and specialist knowledge, it is influence as well. I will come back to this point, which is central.

Australian writer Don Watson, in his latest book (2005) actually illustrates the decline in the use of language and the "weasel words" in areas where they should never be, by using libraries, museums and galleries as examples.

He also reports the astonishing and terrifying experience of his young grand-daughter, at the age of eleven required to produce a personal mission statement, as well as write an English essay supported by a Powerpoint presentation.

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The response we usually make to these events will not work, for several reasons. We are unavoidably reduced to a statement of what is to us a reasonable, well-argued – but ineffective where it counts – assertion of the essential value and indispensability of libraries.

All this gets us nowhere. It is almost as if people still believe there was a golden age of academic librarianship when libraries really were universally acknowledged as the heart and soul of the learning system, and that dishing out a very stiff talking-to will get us back to that situation. . . pointed out that there never was a golden age in academic librarianship

This is ineffective because it is often too little and too late, however well-crafted, impeccable, vigorous and positive the interventions are. But it is also ineffective because the people we speak to neither hear nor believe us, so it is like a dose of valium after half a bottle of Glen Fiddich or Aberlour.

It is self-evident that I have made my share of anodyne statements myself, but all this gets us nowhere. It is almost as if people still believe there was a golden age of academic librarianship when libraries really were universally acknowledged as the heart and soul of the learning system, and that dishing out a very stiff talking-to will get us back to that situation.

I think it was Don Davinson who pointed out years ago that there never was such a golden age in academic librarianship.

Observing the scene today he might well add that now there never will be. Where there are undoubtedly some institutions with an enlightened, progressive and totally supportive attitude to the library, in the UK at least the truth has sometimes been closer to a grudging acceptance of the fact that they could not manage without us, and there are even signs that some of them are now beginning to doubt the validity of part of that statement.

The trouble starts long before they shut us down. The tragedy is that we have never had a better opportunity to assume a leading role, but we have misjudged it.

We were ideally placed to occupy critical areas of development permanently. Many academic libraries were amongst the early adopters of some extensive and powerful information technology to a greater extent, and much sooner, than some teaching departments, and the developing awareness of the power of information put us in a potentially crucial position.

That we had been around for a long time, had some political advantages over the competition, and were handed the convergence issue on a plate, could have cemented this in place. Much of the participative work done on information strategy at service and organisational level opened up further opportunities.

Chief librarians did not exactly explode onto the corporate management scene of academic institutions in great numbers as a result of these things. There was no intrinsic reason why they should have done, but where they did, it was usually due to the exercise of a much more subtle and personal influence brought to bear on things which sometimes had only a general or tangential link with libraries.

To put it simply, some library directors were “in the loop”, but not necessarily by virtue of their office. Nevertheless, there were still positive developments.

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One major difficulty is that no amount of information strategy, or any kind of involvement in formal planning procedures, necessarily embeds a library in the life of an academic institution, or for that matter any other organisation. Some of the time spent on these activities, and the effort expended on securing or retaining a place in the higher councils of institutions, is boring and might actually be better used.

Some exemplary libraries which were an integral and totally enmeshed part of academic life were in existence long before information strategies were even a twinkle in the eye of the chairman of some committee of inquiry. Some of them, whisper it quietly, were not even managed by professional librarians.

Returning to the point about influence, I would argue that when libraries become umbilically-linked into organisations, the single most important factor in determining their inseparability from the rest of the organisation is nothing to do with membership of strategic planning groups, senior management teams or academic boards. It is everything to do with the personality of the library manager and the personalities of his or her senior colleagues.

This is what ultimately dictates the character of the library service, and partly so because it dictates the nature of the informal links which can be built up independent of formal structures and power centres. Cross (2003) and Cross and Parker (2004) set out the nature and significance of informal networks in organisations:

network analysis can be very helpful in revealing patterns of connectivity in specific functions, divisions, or business units. Many groups found on an organizational chart can benefit substantially when viewed through a network lens. These groups include certain departments in a core business process, distributed practices in professional services, and critical support functions such as research and development. More often than not, however, important networks in organizations don't exist on the formal chart and are certainly not on most executives' radar screens (Cross and Parker, 2004)

These networks are made up of informal social, professional and communication patterns. They cut across organisational structures, and they link power brokers and influential figures who operate outside the formal structure. In our context, they can certainly operate inside the library and between the library and other sectors of the parent institution. Wherever, they also contain what Klein (2004) refers to as the Outsider-Insiders, those people who display objectivity and adopt an attitude of disinterested commitment.

This, to an extent, accounts for their ability to make connections, to influence and sometimes even to lead opinion both inside a service and across the institution. They

are able to see connections that pure insiders miss because they have a different way of seeing the world or explaining why things appear to happen as they do... At the same time, they are able to leverage the existing culture by living within the organization. (Cross and Parker, 2004)

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Developing the informal network both inside the library and in the wider organisation is often a more potent and vital way to exert influence than formal position or the development of formal strategies, important though these are. Yet the former may well be comparatively neglected because of the traditional managerial culture of library services.

The other problem is to do with how we have handled technology. This is a sweeping statement, appropriate for a polemic, but our approach has so far been marked in the main by specialisation and differentiation.

There is an argument that technology only becomes embedded in an organisation when it is an integral, significant, indispensable, central and inseparable part of the working lives of most of the people who inhabit that organisation. It also becomes embedded when it is inextricably linked with more conventional tools, skills and knowledge.

Therefore, as well as making technology an inseparable part of all the key systems, this means combining traditional librarianship skills with ICT skills – and combining traditional librarians with information technologists in ways which actually mean something to the users and to the other participants in the experiment. It is much more than neat boxes and lines of authority and communication on an organisation chart which invariably does not show key relationships and connections.

There are now any number of theoretical positions which support the development of this kind of organisation (Pugh, 2005). The point is that this view of how library organisations are configured can be applied to everyone: to threatened species like subject specialists as easily as to other vanishing animals such as cataloguers. Cataloguers, in case we forget, are the people whose knowledge of the collections is more useful to users than most other things in a library, yet whom we often fail to utilise where it really counts, in direct contact with patrons.

As far as both of these groups are concerned, the idea of embedded professionals can be taken a stage further, for multitasking and multiskilling in teams is also possible. In the case of cataloguers, Gorman made this clear many years ago (1979), but it is also clear that multiskilling is regarded as an open door to shedding staff. If so, this is a perversion of a concept which is complicated and is to do with increasing flexibility, organisational, personal and professional development, and not denuding an organisation of resources. Given the historical position of staffing levels in most UK libraries, it is amazing that multiskilling could be thought of as a way of cutting the establishment, although it sometimes looks suspiciously like that.

But if we took the collective multiskilling, the multitasking and the embedding of technology in the working life of everyone really seriously, it would be much harder for anyone to consider a single group of professionals to be disposable. It would be much harder to trade off conventional skills against digital databases and it would be much harder to disentangle and sell processes and dismember parts of the library. It would, in general, be far tougher to separate specific functions and processes from the vital systems of the library and then cheerfully privatise them, for that is indeed what it amounts to.

It would also make life inside our libraries more fun, and we should all remember that organisations as they are sometimes constituted today should carry health warnings, and need an injection of fun.

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It is finally worth noting some of Caulkin's remedies, from W. Edwards Deming, which might also help us tell people what we are doing in ways they understand:

- Build quality into the service from the start
- Transform management from top to bottom
- On-demand training on the job
- Place leadership at the heart of everything, but leadership which is remorselessly and exclusively focused on helping everyone to do a better job
- Stop making people afraid
- Create process-based organisations: that is, abolish departmental boundaries in a way which actually means something
- Get rid of slogans, exhortations and targets
- Accept that management is the business of everybody in the service

As Caulkin said: "It's hardly rocket science, is it?" (Caulkin, 2005a)

The end results would be a bit more gaiety, a lot more clarity (the "get rid of slogans, exhortations and targets" bit), the preservation of an endangered form of life and the continuation of our role as gatekeepers, but with much greater dynamism. A member of faculty at Johns Hopkins University said recently:

Our library has the most effective search engines yet invented: librarians . . . highly skilled at ferreting out the uniquely useful references. . . . Massive information overload is placing librarians in an ever more important role as human search engines. . . . Today's technology is spectacular — but it can't always trump a skilled human.

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Note: 1. This quotation is taken from a restricted-access research thesis completed in 1990. It is restricted because the sources of some comments could be identified.

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Powerpoint for Tyros: How to Prepare a Simple but Effective Presentation

Ken Cheetham

This article is intended to help readers avoid some of the pitfalls of presentation applications such as PowerPoint, and to be able to produce straightforward presentations with a minimum effort. I define a presentation in this context as being an oral communication to a particular audience on a specific subject within a given time-frame. The approach is based on the assumption that there are essentially two kinds of presentations: those that set out to inform and those that intend to persuade. In both cases, it is the message or content that is significant and the presentation itself must not interfere with the clear delivery of the message, but merely provide a suitable vehicle for its transmission.

I am using PowerPoint as an example because it seems to be the most widely available package, and is the one on which much of my experience is based. Anything written here may apply equally to any presentation software, and that statements relating to communications theory, such as information regarding visual perception for example, will certainly apply to all.

This is not a guide, or set of instructions, to using PowerPoint. It does not set out to answer questions such as how to achieve specific effects. It does what the title of this article suggests, and has been used successfully in teaching academics, students and support staff alike.

To begin seriously, I am using PowerPoint 2003, so some detail might be different for users of an earlier version. It does not matter, because the article looks at principles, and users need merely to apply the basic ideas, using whichever version or application is available.

- Open PowerPoint and click File–New
- Choose Blank Presentation

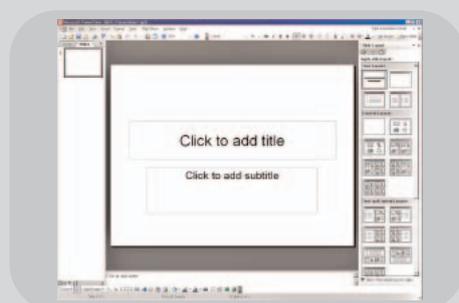
and sets of layouts will appear. Let the pointer hover over any of these and its name appears. Eventually, the choice may depend on the kind of material it is desired to show. For the time being choose the Title Slide (top row, left).

The presentation will be open in Normal View, Outline or Slides. Select the Slides option. Then move on the menu bar and select File–Save As. Enter the location and file name chosen for the presentation.

- Click the Save button

and revert to the Slide View. Everything is now ready to begin compiling the slides, remembering to save the work regularly. At this point the presentation will look as it does in figure 1 above. On the menu bar

Fig 1 Title Screen



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- Click on More Colours

and select the background colour from the Standard Palette. Dark backgrounds are preferred, as they cut screen glare and are more relaxing for the audience.

- Click OK
- Click Apply to All

and the background will fill with the chosen colour, and will be the same for all the slides.

- Then SAVE.

Some years ago, Polaroid Land introduced a 35mm camera film for transparencies which rendered dark colours as white and light colours as dark blue. A word typed in black on white paper was reproduced as a white word on a dark blue background, and the slide could be projected as part of a presentation. Because the eye is most sensitive to yellow-green light, the use of blue, its opposite colour on the spectrum, where there is no message, allows that area of cone-shaped colour receptors to rest and the dark blue background reduces eye strain. White, bright yellow and orange text will give maximum colour contrast and aid legibility.

- Click in the title box as instructed and type in the title
- Repeat the process in the sub-title box

Now highlight the text in the title box and on the menu bar

- Select Format-Font-Font Name-Regular -Colour-More Colours

and select the colour from the Standard Palette, then save.

For reading from a screen, use sans serif typefaces throughout, as this aids legibility for many viewers, especially those with visual impairments. Avoid blocks of upper case because mixed cases, which give words and sentences a shape, are much easier to read. Look at TONGUE and Tongue, for example. Also, use bold characters to highlight; underlining and italics reduce legibility, causing words to run together.

The slide now looks as it does in figure 2 above, and there is something wrong with it. This is a question of proper placement of the text. Centrally placed objects or lines across a rectangle usually appear slightly lower than they really are. This well-known visual effect is exacerbated in this slide as the sub-title box adds further weight and tends to visually drag everything towards the bottom, reducing the value of this, or any, statement. PowerPoint got it wrong when designing the title slide layout, but correcting it is simple. Go back to the slide and click in the title box.

- Click on the edge of the box and hold where the four arrow points appear.
- Drag the box upwards by its own height.
- Repeat the process with the sub-title box, dragging it upwards by about 75% of its own height.
- SAVE

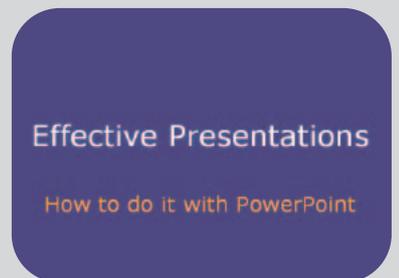


Fig 2 Incorrectly Placed Text

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The slide now looks as it does in figure 3 on this page. The value of the statement is given meaning, and the slide does indeed look like a title with sub-title. This simple change also allows room along the bottom of the slide to insert logos or other images, but these should only appear on opening and closing slides. They are not part of the essential message but are peripheral to it. When included on each of the slides in the main body of the presentation, they create clutter and reduce the space available for the all-important content.

Constructing the first content slide of the presentation comes next. On the menu bar

- Click on Insert–New Slide
- Choose Title and Text from the layout selections

The actual choice may of course be determined by the content you need to exploit, but this choice allows the construction of a simple bulleted list.

Note that the background has remained blue. Text colours can be changed, for example by reversing the title and body text colours. The slide titles will now be orange, and the body text white.

The body text is the more important information and will be clearer on the slide. This is not so important on the title slide, and building in this change adds visual variety without detracting from the message. Clearly this involves forward thinking, never to be ignored when constructing presentations.

- The slide title, and the information to be presented as bullet points can now be typed in.
- SAVE

The bullet points are already formatted in the slide, and

- Return brings up the next bullet at the same level.
- Return–Tab takes the user to the next level down.

Any bulleted text can be moved up or down levels by highlighting the text and using Shift + Alt with left or right arrows. Now the content slide may look as it does in figure (right). If it does, there is too much information on it.

The two bullet points at the bottom of the slide should be removed or, if they are necessary pieces of information, moved to the next slide. This will avoid clutter and make it easier for viewers to take in the information.

Creating a Bulleted List

- Type as in Word
- Highlight the text
 - Choose Format : Font : Colour : White
 - To move to a lower bullet level, hit Return then Tab
 - To change bullet levels, highlight text then use Shift + Alt with left or right arrows
- Note there are no stops at ends of lines!
- Don't forget to save your work

Fig 3 A Bulleted List

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Proceed in this way until all the slides are completed, then finish off with a closure slide. The example on this page is based on the original title slide.

- Go to View-Slide Sorter
- Click on Slide 1
- Then Edit-Duplicate
- Click and hold the duplicate and drag it to the end of the slide sequence

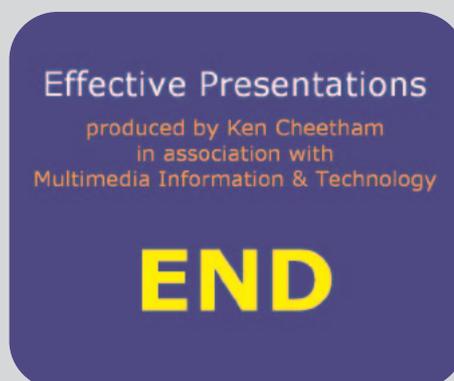
Let go and it will stay in its new position. This is a very useful way of sorting slides into different sequences when you have changing programme needs.

- SAVE.

Double-click on this last slide in order to return to the Slide View. Enter text as preferred, perhaps giving credit where appropriate – but not too much text or it will not be read.

I choose to use the same format as the title slide, so that the original title is repeated and in exactly the same position on screen. The final slide may then look as it does below.

One final point should be made. The style which is presented here, with light text on a dark background, is best suited to dark rooms and the principle should be reversed for light rooms. Perhaps a further note of caution is also necessary. Many of the devices and colour schemes offered as built-in elements of some presentation applications are worse than useless and seem to be based on no recognisable principles of design or perception at all. Use them at your peril.



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