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## An Example of Multimedia Museum Documentation

### Summary

Because of the current museological tendencies to adjust museum institutions so that they can make use of the new digital media, the application of multimedia for the transfer, storage and distribution of data is taking on a new dimension in the rapid exchange of information between users and the museum documentation system. One such multimedia aid is the compact disc, which enables all kinds of information to be brought together onto a single medium.

In the example of a multimedia art monograph *Ivan Lovrenčić* (2004), it was possible to present all textual information as well as photographic and audio-visual material that had been collected for the exhibition project. On this CD ROM, the entire documentation of an exhibition has been preserved, and in this manner has produced interactive storage of the museum activity. Because of its ability to store a large number of data, with all the textual and photographic material about the life and work of the artist, AV files are stored on the CD which enable the reconstruction of the exhibition display and the events accompanying the vernissage, as well as archival and documentary files.

It has been proved that multimedia publications are taking on increasingly great documentary value, for this new medium, digital, interactive and dynamic as it is, gives undreamed-of opportunities for storing various kinds of information about a project, thereby facilitating the increasingly up-to-date functioning of the museum.

The ongoing trends in museology for museum institutions to make adjustments to the new digital media show that the adaptation of multimedia for the transfer, storage and distribution of information is acquiring a new dimension in the rapid exchange of information between users and the museum documentation system. One such multimedia aid is the compact disk, which allows for the combination and unification of various kinds of

information in a single medium. This is a medium that allows for the storage of all kinds of information: textual data, graphics, animations, video, photographs and sound.

Testing out some of the new opportunities inherent in the digital media, the Croatian Academy Print Room has issued several multimedia editions accompanying printed catalogues of editions and has actually supplemented them in several segments, the contents of which are primarily valuable as documentation. The multimedia visual art monograph entitled *Ivan Lovrenčić* (Croatian Academy Print Room, 2004) was capable of being used to present all the kinds of textual information, photographic and audio-visual materials that had been assembled for the exhibition project. All the materials collected for the project of the exhibition are contained on the CD ROM, which has accordingly come to constitute interactive documentation of all the museum activities related to the exhibition.

Since it is possible to store a large number of data, in conjunction with all the textual and photographic material concerning the life and work of the artist, the CD ROM also contains AV files that enable us to reconstruct the exhibition display, the events surrounding the vernissage, and archival and documentary files.

On this interactive CD ROM it is possible to obtain a complete review of all the textual materials that, as presenters of the artist's work, we collected (original texts, a selection of solo and collective exhibitions, a selection of reviews, a selection of the artist's poetry). The Quick Menu, apart from enabling rapid and simple navigation around the disk, also provides additional information: the biography of the artist, lists of the collective and independent shows, prizes, print albums, illustrations and names of the institutions and collections in which the works of the artist are held.

Since the occasion for the exhibition was in fact a generous gesture by the artist, who before his death gifted some two hundred of his drawings to our institution, the CD ROM of the exhibition shows every single drawing from the donation in a detailed catalogue entry with a photograph that can be enlarged. Thus one of the most rewarding capacities of this digital medium is actually the ability it gives for browsing through this virtual catalogue of great memory capacity, with the capacity to enlarge the works on the browser. In this way the whole of the artist's donation is made available, it is systematised according to the decades of the artist's work, in contrast to the fifty or so works that were shown in the physical exhibition.

A selection of photographic material presents a family album as well as the artist's most important projects (the painting of the church in Grožnjan, the painting of the curtain for the Croatian National Theatre, the painting of the Stations of the Cross in Trški Vrh, the appearance of the Ivan Lovrenčić Gallery in St. Križ Začretje) and a slide show of the opening of the exhibition which enables the people and the atmosphere of the vernissage to be called

retrospectively to mind. Also available is the possibility of a virtual stroll around all the rooms of the exhibition venue, which documents in perpetuity a 3D insight into the appearance of the layout of the exhibition. During the panoramic review of the display of the exhibition, each individual exhibit can be enlarged and studied in detail.

A step further in the use of the opportunities provided by this digital medium is the transfer and storage of AV files created in other media onto the CD ROM of the exhibition. These are shots of the introductory speeches and the musical performance from the opening, as well as excerpts from documentary films about the artist kindly made available from the archives of Croatian Radio Television. The great memory of the CD ROM, which enables the storage of moving images as well (films and videos) is capable of mirroring all the segments of a single project, and represents a source of incontrovertible documentary value for future users.

As well as those mentioned, other opportunities made available by the use of CD ROM are the choice of background music, the publication details, the possibilities of email and Internet communications, the ability to see the texts in English as well as in Croatian, and a detailed search mechanism. An insight into the Web presentation of the project is also preserved, although this was originally only meant as temporary notice concerning the exhibition and was removed from the Internet site after the closing of the exhibition.

The increasingly large area that is being opened up to the digital medium in museums is justified for a number of reasons. The new digital medium is capable of being used in interactive, multimedia and three-dimensional ways, and it is certainly the most complete supplement to a printed catalogue, and thus should enter museum practice as a standard. At the same time, it is very attractive as contemporary medium that in particular will attract the (younger) audience more accustomed to the technological capacities inherent in the computer and more inclined to media that provide a rapid and practical exchange of information. Hence multimedia museum editions that accompany the printed catalogues have a documentary, an educational and a scientific component, because they store a large amount of various different files on a single medium, making possible easier and more rapid exchange of data between museum and user. It has been proved that multimedia publications are increasingly gaining in documentary value, for this new medium, digital and interactive and dynamic as it is, gives undreamed off possibilities for the storage of integrated documentation about a project and thus enabling the increasingly contemporary working of the museum.