

Ervin Šilić
Designer, director
NOVENA d.o.o. - Digital Media Studio
Ogrizovićeva 28b
10000 Zagreb
Croatia
ervin@novena.hr

An Approach to Multimedia Presentations

Summary

Planning how to make a scenario for multimedia presentation of a museum we should ask ourselves whether we have used all the possibilities multimedia is giving us. The long time printed materials domination frequently results just in copying the content to the new media with a little or no change. Text, colour or photography reign in the print, while in a multimedia presentation we add the use of video, sound, animation, and the most important, interactivity.

Using all advantages of multimedia, the desired material can be conveyed to the user more realistically. The quantity of the material being presented is also a frequent issue. Too much material (text, photos, illustrations, etc.) can repel the user when he/she sees its range at the first sight, as it is the case with a printed publication which dimensions realistically illustrate the quantity of the material. With multimedia, if the content is well structured, such problems do not exist, since the user will consume as much as he/she is interested in, not knowing how much material is yet to be searched. By making the right scenario for multimedia presentation of some content, we will achieve much more than it has been the case with a printed catalogue.

Multimedia enables us to present the material in a more direct way becoming much more than a mere accompanying material of exhibition.

Introduction

In this short presentation I will try to convey to you our approach to multimedia projects and doing so to say something more about multimedia.

Novena is a digital media studio situated here in Zagreb with a long tradition and experience in producing creative, interactive and multimedia content for museums. Since 1996 we have made 39 projects for museums. Projects range from web sites to complex multimedia CD ROMs and presentations.

I would like to present you how we approach multimedia projects, how we plan them and what the production steps are and finally, I will show some of examples.

In order that you might get a glimpse of the whole scope of production, here are the main points of multimedia project development.

Before we start the project we try to get answers to three questions:

1. What is the purpose of the project?
2. What is the targeting audience?
3. What is the estimation of the budget for the project?

With these elements we can come up with the scenario of multimedia presentation. This will basically mean laying out the structure and scope of the information that will consist of images, text, sounds, music, video, animations, their interaction and interaction with the user.

After the scenario and calculated cost are accepted, the next step is the realization of the project.

Rough sequence of the realization of the project consists of:

- Design interface,
- Layout navigation structure
- Collecting data (text, print, pictures)
- Taking photographs
- Recording video
- Recording audio
- Composing of the music
- Designing and programming animations
- Programming databases
- Integrating all the elements in the interactive wholeness
- Testing – presenting to the client
- Production of a CD ROM

In this process of production there are some points that we do not want to forget. These points are:

1. multimedia is not a printed material
2. involve the user
3. attract attention and inspire
4. show more
5. intuitive
6. innovative.

These are very simple but very important points in building any multimedia project and therefore I would like to say a few words more about each of it.

1. MULTIMEDIA IS NOT PRINTED MATERIAL

It is very obvious that multimedia is not printed material, but I want to stress this because due to the ages long domination of print in the field of media world, it is quiet often the case that we take printed version of material and simply transfer it to the multimedia presentation really not taking all multimedia features into account.

Therefore we should never forget that multimedia is not printed media, but rather it is that and much more.

2. INVOLVE THE USER

We want to involve the user because when he/she is actively involved in gaining knowledge, acceptance of that knowledge is the greatest. One sample of that is presentation of an interior with video recording and presentation of the same interior with virtual panoramas.

It has been measured that our attention slips away from the object of the observation every 17 seconds. That happens when we watch the video and video is going on even when we are not watching it.

In virtual panoramas walk (VR) the pictures are not moving unless the user moves them. This small perceptual-motor interaction of user makes the great difference in the way the user appreciates the presented interior and make him/her feel he/she is there. In this way even the video can be made interactive.

3. ATTRACT ATTENTION AND INSPIRE

To inspire the user to go further in discovering the knowledge in the multimedia presentation, it is important to give him/her some attraction. Some small thing that will attract his/her focus and inspire him/her. Like a box that opens suddenly, by playing a sound in certain situation and other details.

4. SHOW MORE

The most important multimedia feature is ability to combine different media like a picture, sound, text, video and animation and present the topic in more comprehensive and attractive way.

Also multimedia is ideal for presentation of a big amount of data which can be tailored to fit the user thus making data more accessible.

Searching data in multimedia surrounding is much easier and faster than looking in at the bookshelves or pile of photos.

One of disadvantages of the multimedia, when large text is used, is the user's habit to read a printed version of the text on the paper rather than to read the text on the computer screen. In multimedia this can be overcome by introducing an audio record of somebody reading the text.

5. INTUITIVE

In most cases multimedia presentation is limited by the size of the computer screen that is usually too small to show everything we would like to present. Therefore, the clear, intuitive and self-explanatory navigation through the content is crucial.

6. INNOVATIVE

New technological trends are usually very quickly adopted in multimedia projects. This does not have to become the purpose by itself, but rather, it is a

reminder to look around and see what technological improvements can be used in an hour project that would improve presentation and make it more user friendly.

AIMS

Using all of the advantages of multimedia, the desired material can be conveyed to the user more realistically by involving more senses.

The quantity of the material being presented is also frequently the issue. To much material (pile of photos, shelves of books, etc.) can reject the user when he/she sees its range at the first sight. With multimedia, if the content is well structured, such problems do not exist, since the user will consume as much as he/she is interested in finding just what he/she looks for, usually not knowing how much material is yet to be discovered.

By making the right scenario for the multimedia presentation of some content, we will achieve much more than it has been the case by a printed catalogue.

CONCLUSION

Multimedia enables us to present the material in a more direct way becoming much more than a mere accompanying material of an exhibition.

Examples of CD-ROMs and a DVD illustrating the previous six points:

RE:member CRO
Dubrovnik
Zvonimir Faist
Technical Museum
DVD The Best in Heritage