

# Multimedia Writing

The development of multimedia is a new and potentially lucrative market for writers. Multimedia writing is a collaborative enterprise in which writers (or, as they are sometimes called, ‘text providers’) collaborate with graphic artists, video clip makers, cartoonists and others to produce a work which does not have a linear format but whose structure is more like a maze with alternative paths which can be followed at any point along the way. This kind of structure will inevitably affect the kind of writing produced for multimedia.

Multimedia writers must learn to write for discrete screens, the basic ‘page’ of a multimedia work. These screens are not intended to be read sequentially but offer the reader a choice of pathways through the work. This is effected by means of “hypertext” – a series of links. Thus it is important for multimedia writers to bear in mind the potential departure points (or links) where the reader may want to digress, possibly never to return. This has the greatest implications for non-fiction writing, especially educational texts such as encyclopedias, which readily lend themselves to electronic browsing. Multimedia fiction allows the author to produce a multi-stranded narrative with various pathways for the plot to take and alternative endings to be selected by the reader.

Developments in interactive software have pushed the technology towards products which allow the user to play an active role in the process of consumption. All these products require writers to share the process of creating a complex package involving many creators. The challenge for the writer is to help integrate the cross-disciplinary strands of the work into a form that maximises the potential of the medium.

## **Further Resources**

The Writers’ Guide to Making a Digital Living  
<[www.australiacouncil.gov.au/writersguide](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/writersguide)>