

Freedom of Information Act 2000 and its likely impact on the users of information, library and information staff, records managers and other relevant groups. Peter Groves discusses legal issues of the Internet, while Adrienne Muir deals with digital library research. The *Handbook* ends with a redefinition of “information user” as an “information player” by David Nicholas and Tom Dobrowolski.

The papers are well presented and contain up-to-date references, including a considerable number of URLs. The 23-page index provides practical access points to the contents. However, it would have been better if the handbook had a hard cover to survive the frequent handling which it is sure to experience. Also, readers would have benefited from short abstracts for the articles. Nevertheless, as a whole this *Handbook* is a must not only for special libraries but also for other library or information professionals, particularly those interested in electronic information and information management.

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Design Management of Multimedia Information Systems: Opportunities, Challenges

Edited by Syed Mahbubur Rahman

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Keywords Multimedia, Design, Information systems

Multimedia has increasingly been used in most application areas, such as communication, education, entertainment and e-commerce. There is no doubt that electronic multimedia information certainly “enhances users’ ability to communicate and collaborate”. However, the media-generated data will not effectively meet user needs unless they are well designed and managed – hence the underlying value of this book.

The work is divided into six sections. The first, on modelling for multimedia communication, management and retrieval, contains six chapters. Chapter 1 provides fundamental terminology, definitions and theory of multimedia systems, and then more specific topics, such as architecture for media

content management, methods of extracting the content, design of the multimedia storage servers, etc., are presented in the following chapters.

The second section, on media retrieval and database access, contains four chapters that elaborate issues of data retrieval. The first of these chapters outlines the design and evaluation of a content-based image-retrieval system, and subsequent chapters discuss the design of multimedia document retrieval systems that can support both structure-based and content-based retrieval. The development of a content-based retrieval system for video documents and fuzzy query language for multimedia data are also discussed.

The third and fourth sections are devoted to aspects of application design. Section 3, which comprised four chapters, focuses on 2D, 3D multimedia and virtual reality applications. A case study on design and development of a multimedia dictionary of Slovenian sign language is used to help explain the theoretical concepts. Three chapters in the fourth focus on one aspect, educational multimedia. Such relevant issues as research findings from a pedagogical-related project, guidelines for the effective design and use, as well as questions and answers about the cost of production of educational multimedia are all addressed in these chapters.

The fifth section discusses temporal modelling in multimedia presentations. The three chapters here discuss temporal models, certain techniques of multimedia authoring, and research issues related to spatio-temporal data modelling. The last section is about multimedia copyright, which includes a taxonomy of copyright protection methods and protection methods for documents and software.

This volume offers comprehensive treatment of multimedia information management and design. The topics included are not only theoretical but also practice-oriented, which give the readers more insight into the topics. Additionally, the editor and the 54 authors responsible for the chapters have contributed different perspectives to the key issues, as they come from many countries – including the USA, Germany, France, Denmark, Australia, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Taiwan and Slovenia. All of the authors have extensive background in the areas of

computer science and engineering. This book is suitable for students, lecturers, researchers whose interests are in multimedia information systems, as well as computer specialists working in library or information centres or organisations offering multimedia information systems to their clients.

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Manual of Online Search Strategies. Volume 3: Humanities and Social Sciences

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Keywords Online retrieval, Databases

Previous editions of this title were published in a single volume; this is now impractical given the explosion of databases, Web sites, dial-up online services and CD-ROMs that the volume(s) seek to cover. Volumes 1 and 2 treat the sciences, and law, business and patents, respectively. Volume 3, under review here, deals with the humanities and social sciences. The second edition, in 1992, was at the dawn of the Internet, and a new edition is long overdue. For this third edition a new section on education has been added. The five chapters cover search strategies, citations, social and behavioural sciences, humanities, and education resources. There are separate database and subject indexes.

This work explains to readers, through well-structured argument and copious examples of actual searches, how to choose, locate and use databases. It gives sound advice geared to a range of different users on effective search methods. Chapter 1 (which appears in all three volumes) outlines basic search operations and language, vendors, interfaces and database evaluation methods. It includes examples of displays performed via the Internet, DIALOG, OPACs and CD-ROMs, and goes on to appraise critically these different means of accessing online information. The authors explain the underlying content and operation of these systems and the difference between, for

instance, natural and controlled language.

Chapter 2 analyses the world of citations.

The final three chapters are the core of the subject approach. The humanities chapter, which focuses on CD-ROM databases rather than Internet sources, provides a perceptive account of the nature of humanities research, how it differs from the sciences, and the implications for searching. Weaknesses of particular database designs are presented, arming the careful reader with valuable search hints, for instance in searching dates and names. This explication of the nature of databases and how to exploit them is a real strength of the book. A wealth of information is presented to enable the reader to choose which electronic tools might best be required in particular cases. The final chapter, on education, includes a useful section on resources for children.

The book contains many examples of searches, broken down clearly into sequences. It is a complex and detailed text, but then so is the Net! Less convincing is the claim by the authors that it can be used as textbook, manual and subject handbook. While the search strategies will aid students and librarians alike, and the large number of resources discussed lends it to being a kind of directory of recommended resources, the complex terminology and copious examples ensure it will be daunting to novices. Some subject specialists, on the other hand, might find it too basic. The sweep of the book is ambitious, and at times it is apparent that the authors would have profited from more consultation. Thus, they claim that “sometimes the only resource for education information in a particular place is a national or regional database or Web site” and proceed to cite various Web sites as preferred sources, apparently unaware of much richer burgeoning information sources. In the fast-moving world of e-information, it can be risky to commit to print, and parts of this work might better be manipulated on the Web. Why is so much attention paid to outdated applications such as CD-ROM journals that the market has left behind? Yet, the book is sensitive to the needs of different clients, some of whom may, for reasons of geography or income, have to rely on older technologies.

This book can be of considerable use to reference librarians involved with instruction in the use of databases and Internet resources,