

## Section 3

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### Using Multimedia in Museums and Science Centres

Interactive computer programs and online adventures have become an important inclusion in exhibitions in science centres, museums and galleries. This section looks at some of the successes and shortfalls of digital technology.

The first article in this section by *Ian Allen* and *Brenton Honeyman*, describes the philosophy behind an award winning CD-ROM developed as part of the Australia on CD program – an initiative of the Australian Federal Government. This program allows the user to experience ‘real’ science and technology through a digital medium. It was awarded the 1997 ATOM Award for the Best Educational Title.

The next article, by *Brenton Honeyman*, discusses issues associated with the World Wide Web, in particular those related to science centre websites. The World Wide Web offers a myriad of opportunities to reach a large number of people who may not be able to take a ‘real’ visit to a science centre, but virtual experiences may not be pain-free. The final article in this section discusses some of the problems that may be encountered by museums and galleries particularly where the availability of resources may be limited. In their article, *Simon Yates* and *Sharyn Errington* highlight some problems which may arise in the development and implementation of multimedia programs for exhibitions.

One thing is certain – digital technology is here to stay. Most visitors to science centres, museums and galleries expect to be able to interact with a computer-based exhibit. We hope these articles give some insight into the advantages and limitations of computer technology as a tool for reaching a wider audience.