UNIT 1 MULTIMEDIA

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Learning Objectives

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- understand what multimedia is;
- know what its role in anthropology is;
- know how vital it is in today’s world of using technology in studying anthropology; and
- know how it can be used as a tool in different occupations by practicing anthropologists.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this lesson we will learn what multimedia is and how it is used in anthropology. Furthermore this lesson will give us insights into various usages of multimedia in distinct avenues with the help of anthropological skills. To begin, we provide a description of multimedia and then proceed with an elaborate construction of different aspects of multimedia and anthropology. The lesson also mentions areas where anthropologists can practice multimedia as a professional medium. The learner should also take note that, in this lesson, we are primarily looking at multimedia usage in anthropology and not involving a discussion on visual anthropology alone, which also forms an important method of study in anthropology. The lesson proposes to look into the visual medium along with other mediums together, inducing an amalgamation of forms known as multimedia.
Multimedia can be understood as a combination of two or more media such as text, image, art, sound, animation, video and other interactive content forms. It is a medium having multiple content forms. The term is used in contrast to erstwhile media which use only rudimentary display such as text-only or traditional forms of printed/hand-produced material. Thus, multimedia is the media that uses multiple forms of information content and information processing.

In today’s world, multimedia is usually recorded, played, displayed or accessed by information content processing devices, such as computers, laptops etc. According to Fred T. Hofstetter “Multimedia is the use of a computer to present and combine text, graphics, audio and video with links and tools that let the user navigate, interact, create and communicate” (2001, p. 2). Hence for instructive technology purposes, multimedia refers to computer-based systems that use associative linkages to allow users to navigate and retrieve information stored in a combination of text, sounds, graphics, video, and other media. A computer which can actually allow this navigation and retrieving is called a multimedia computer. Such computers should have a Compact Disc or Digital Versatile/Video Disc read-only-memory player to read and write. Such CDs and DVDs should support 8-bit to 16-bit waveform audio recording and playback, MIDI sound synthesis, and MPEG movie watching, it should have a fast enough central processor and a Random Access Memory (RAM) large enough to play and interact with these media in real time, and last but not the least a hard drive large enough to store the multimedia works that the user creates.

The worldwide connection of millions of such computers give rise to the internet. The internet then recreates or redefines the multimedia systems, giving birth to new services like Voice over Internet Protocol and Internet Protocol Television. Hence in a general multimedia system there is a computer to coordinate what we see and hear, and interact with. Then, there are links that connect the information. Also, there are navigational tools that let us traverse the web of connected information. Finally, there are ways to gather, process, and communicate the information and ideas. (ibid). Such multimedia system has two components, viz. hardware and software. While hardware includes a variety of both basic and specialised equipment, software includes authoring languages, image handling software, and digital animation packages.

### 1.2 IMPORTANCE OF MULTIMEDIA

Multimedia is fast emerging as an important tool of research and as a basic tool of future life. Multimedia proposes to simulate human-like communication and services in an environment of “You see as I see” and “You feel as I feel”. Virtual reality is envisaged in multimedia services. (Bhunia, 2009)

Multimedia can stimulate more than one sense at a time, and in doing so, may be more attention getting and attention holding. Instead of limiting us to the linear presentation of text as printed in books, multimedia makes reading dynamic by giving words a new dimension. This is accomplished not only by providing more text but by bringing it to life with sound, pictures, music, and video. According to Computer Technology Research (CTR) Corporation report “people only retain 20% of what they see and 30% of what they hear. But they remember 50% of what they see and hear, and as much as 80% of what they see, hear, and do simultaneously” (1993).
With the use of multimedia, learners may gain knowledge profoundly in a shared independent surrounding. When we say interactive multimedia, it means multimedia which lets the user to have control. Learners and researchers can gain meaningfully while studying or investigating with the use of a combination of various media like, graphics, images, text, video, audio and the digital world which can enhance her/his prowess in academic and later in professional efforts. Multimedia activities encourage learners/researchers to work in groups, express their knowledge in multiple ways, solve problems, revise their own work, and construct knowledge. Suppose you read a lengthy document and want to refer back to the page on which a certain idea was mentioned, you check the index, but the topic you want is not listed. Try, as you might while paging through the book, you just cannot find what you read earlier. A multimedia document solves this problem by letting you search the full text for key words to find any topic or combination of topics. In fact, a multimedia document can refer not only to information within itself, but also to all the other documents to which it has been linked, and to all the documents to which they have been linked.

Multimedia is changing the nature of study of different disciplines. Fueling this growth are advances in technology and price wars that have dramatically lowered the cost of multimedia computers. Recent advances in digital technology and fiber optics have revolutionised the way we live and learn. There is no denial that we are all attached to the workings of multimedia today in our lives. We find multimedia being used everywhere, in films, in pedagogy, in performances, in entertainment, in advertising, in publicising, in videoconferencing, in teleconferencing, in communicative television, in the world of publishing etc. Putting to use the effectiveness of multimedia to information system can only lead to enhanced information and quality delivery of knowledge to people.

1.3 A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE USE OF MULTIMEDIA IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Use of multimedia in providing information about individuals and cultures has been done by anthropologists and para-anthropologists since the late 19th century. Photography, film and video as mediums were used to record socio-cultural life. Photography particularly was used to document types of ethnic groups as anthropology tried as a discipline to present itself as a scientific study of humans. It was also used to depict material culture of societies and provide a “visual notebook” By 1895 the portable motion picture camera was invented and anthropologists used film to record the same things but on film (Banks, 2001).

It was in the year 1898 that Alfred Cort Haddon used film for academic purposes to document his British expedition to the Torres Straits Islands. This was an ambitious expedition to scientifically study the Island people and for the purpose of filming their lifestyles, latest scientific recording equipments were carried along. The instruments were for taking photographic stills, making films and create experimental coloured photographs. This clearly demonstrates that visual forms were engulfed in multimedia in one way or the other from its inception. Such visual creation of the native life in the Torres Straits was seen as a part of methodology and a scientific approach of study (Pink, 2006).
During this time, other than Haddon, Franz Boas made use of multimedia too. While doing fieldwork ethnographers, Frank Gillen and Baldwin Spencer, made use of experimental visual techniques while observing the Australian Aborigines in the late 19th century (Morphy and Edwards, 1988). They were both advocates of using multimedia in not just researching but also as a tool to exhibit their product. That is they brought their findings to the public not only in the written textual form but also gave lectures with the use of film, images, sound etc, which we can term as “multimedia lectures” (Griffiths, 2002: 166). They combined this with ethnographic film screenings.

Coming back to Boas, his attempt at using photography on his subjects in fact started before Haddon’s voyage, i.e. in 1883. Boas’ use of the multimedia included images of body parts, material culture, ceremonies, portraits of people etc. Though many see Boas as one of the propounders of visual anthropology, Boas himself presented conflicting views of the use of visuals. He staunchly believed that humans are best understood by the medium of language. He was of the view that historical aspects of culture were not revealed through visuals as it only showed the apparent (Jacknis, 1984). Thus instead of promoting the scientific worth of photography, his views rather obstructed its growth. However his work in photography and multimedia did create interest among his students who carried forward his use of the visual media. One such student was Margaret Mead.

Anthropologists always kept questioning themselves about how to present their findings in the best possible way, a way which could give the public an absolute view or understanding of cultures investigated. This was one of the many reasons that influenced anthropologists to occupy themselves in the representation of culture, intellect and skills through the use of sensory means and imagery. It not only led to the creation of films and photographs on ethnography but also to anthropology of performance and exhibition. This though cannot be called multimedia anthropology, but this incipient intervention did introduce use of various media in anthropology. With the coming of computers in the 1980s and 90s, anthropology took a quick turn towards the application of multimedia or hypermedia in its everyday scholarly exercises. Digital media came to be accepted as an everyday process in the creation of anthropological writing and interaction. So, we can clearly say that it was in the latter part of the 20th century that multimedia anthropology began to be studied under the context of theory and pragmatics. (Pink 2006).

The use of sensory and visual was applied in anthropology in different ways as part of experimentation in the 20th century. At the advent of the 21st century, anthropology embarked into investigations with the help of new digital tools taking into consideration more of individualistic and reflexive approaches. Use of multimedia in anthropology cannot be denied anymore.

1.4 USING MULTIMEDIA IN STUDYING ANTHROPOLOGY

Multimedia combines several media as one. Thus it has obviously more sources of information. Due to this nowadays it is extensively used in the field of anthropological studies. Even in conventional anthropological methods small hand-held tape recorder were used for recording interviews and still cameras for
clicking photographs. As mentioned above, early fieldworkers used multiple media to collect ethnographic materials and combined spoken words with photographs, film and sound in their public lectures. These new photographic and cinematic techniques of research and representation were employed alongside the emergence of the ‘database’ academic book genre that used the multiple media of writing, photographs and diagrams (Cook 2004: 60). Now-a-days the anthropological need is not limited to this conventional method rather it demands integrated audio and visual media. The new multimedia techniques integrate all these media into one system.

There are a number of reasons to consider using multimedia as part of comprehending people and society. Multimedia aids in anthropological activities such as field survey, listening to case studies, observing peer behaviour, and conducting interviews. Multimedia technology is a natural fit for ethnography and other kind of areas where social description is needed. It can assist the visual ethnographic methods of research and representation, analysis of the field area, preparation of research design and various methods of data collection. Although anthropologists are encouraged to develop their own data, many excellent multimedia products are already known to exist which help in research methods and fieldwork techniques in anthropology. Modern Statistical Computing used by physical anthropologists relies heavily on statistical computer packages to explore different analytical techniques and approaches to their data. In the Population Genetics and Molecular Anthropology laboratory all the ancillary equipment required for DNA extraction, typing, sequencing, quantification and other types of analysis require well equipped computer workstation. Computer Simulation in Human Population Studies is very common these days. When the research is finally complete its presentation in form of a thesis can borrow comprehensively from multimedia tools. Multimedia thus offers unique advantages in anthropological studies.

Multimedia can also be applied in anthropological instruction, for affective and interactive skills. It can be used for interactive instruction in anthropological studies in a variety of creative and stimulating ways. People learn and generalise best when they are taught in authentic situations using a variety of formats. A text alone simply does not allow people to get a feel of any of society being studied. In teaching anthropology, a trainer cannot make a community of people alive in a discussion. Multimedia enables us to provide a way by which learners can experience their subject in a vicarious manner. The key to providing this experience is having simultaneous graphic, video and audio, in a sequential manner. Research studies report that interactive multimedia curricula, when compared to more traditional methods, are significantly more likely to increase learners’ knowledge (Epstein and McGaha, 1999), achievement (Erwin and Rieppi, 1999). Both theory and research suggest that when a learner interacts more with information, his or her interest in and understanding of information increases (Shavinina and Loarer, 1999). A theoretical framework can be established in anthropology for using multimedia in instruction. It may include various theories on learning styles and other modalities of learning. A multidisciplinary area of interest that focuses on uses of visual methods of research and representation in anthropology is developing.

Hence multimedia annexation in anthropology is a new found flavour among anthropologists. Contemporary societies are dependent on multimedia for
Diverse Arenas of Practicing Anthropology

Information storage and dissemination. That is why the present day anthropologists stream line their understanding of the full sweep and complexity of cultures drawing upon the knowledge of multimedia. Anthropologists of the twenty-first century are developing the use of new digital media, and applied visual anthropology in diverse ways from teaching it in the classroom to creating images and films to further the boundaries of anthropology.

Today among anthropologists who use the visual medium and multimedia extensively, names which can be readily cited are Sarah Pink, Marcus Banks, Andy Lawrence, Stephen Hughes, Christopher Pinney, Paulo Favero to name a few. These new age anthropologists have given a new meaning to the concepts of images, sensory, pictorial, films, video, graphics etc. They do not shy away from exciting and new forms of investigation and experimentation wherein multimedia or hypermedia is extensively used by them. A brief outline of these scholars with their specialisations have been mentioned below:

Sarah Pink who was a student of social anthropology and visual anthropology is now a professor of Social Sciences at the Loughborough University. Pink vigorously points out that writing and video may be combined together to create “sensory experience theoretically and ethnographically...This would involve producing multimedia texts that use both metaphor and theoretical argument to make anthropological statements about sensory experience, knowledge and memory that take advantage of the benefits both of ethnographic film and anthropological writing to represent sensory experience and make explicit the anthropological theory that informs our understanding of this.” (2001). For Pink, multimedia or hypermedia in ethnographic research, can be viewed as “multi-linear” and “multi-vocal”. These may include fieldnotes, interview readings, photographs, video, articles on the work conducted, and books. Along with these, the use of internet and its linkage to further connections may accentuate ethnographic study.

Another stalwart in the field of multimedia anthropology and visual anthropology is Marcus Banks, who is a teacher of Anthropology at Oxford University. His fields of interests are religion, labour, migration of families, ethnicity, racism and identity. He mainly concentrates on making ethnographic films where India plays an important area of his studies. He too like Pink, emphasises how the application of variant medias in visual anthropology and anthropology in general is key to the growth of this recent field. He also indulges in specific kinds of methodological interventions as part of research methods for visual anthropology, which also includes archiving and digitising of collected data.

Andy Lawrence who teaches visual anthropology at the Granada Centre for Visual Anthropology, University of Manchester, extensively makes use of anthropological theories and conducts ethnographic research to create documentary films of socio-cultural significance like on human life course, specially birth and death. He uses and stresses on the practice of different multimedia techniques ranging from text, digitised text, photographs, digitised images, films, narratives to sound etc., to put forward his anthropological explorations.

Paulo Favero, a young anthropologist like Lawrence, teaches visual culture at University of Lisbon. He clubs his role of a visual anthropologist and an “image-maker” by holding photo exhibitions on anthropologically relevant concerns like
Multimedia modernity in India. He has also produced video installations having socio-cultural relevance and has created a documentary on youth and globalisation, entitled *Fly over Delhi*. Interestingly much of Lawrence’s and Favero’s works are also based in India.

Stephen Hughes who teaches anthropology at SOAS, has his interests other than in anthropology, in history, religion, media and film studies. His place of study is the South of India where he has conducted research projects on the history and ethnography of media. This includes understanding the socio-cultural and historical metaphors of Tamil cinema, Tamil film music, the gramophone, radio, popular print work, coming of the satellite television etc. He also focuses on documentaries and ethnographic films.

And then there is Christopher Pinney, who along with being an anthropologist is also an art historian. He teaches anthropology and visual culture in University College, London. He advocates the use of multimedia in anthropological studies as he researches the art and visual culture of South Asia, with India being his main centre of study. His core interests are on the genesis and development of photography in India and chromolithography, i.e. the making of multi coloured prints.

Having provided an explanation of how multimedia in anthropology developed to how it is applied in anthropology or in teaching of anthropology, we now proceed to learn how multimedia as a tool can be used by practicing anthropologists.

### 1.5 MULTIMEDIA IN PRACTICING ANTHROPOLOGY

There is no denying the fact that practicing anthropologists lean on multimedia technologies such as television, computers, video, and internet in every activity they undertake. Practitioners take help of multimedia in formulating policies, programs, and plans to improve human well-being around the world. They are thus the creative applied practitioners of the subject. In the various projects which the practitioners undertake, multimedia provides a tool for analysing the problem by getting into and decoding data, managing the data, and demonstrating it. It empowers the practitioners to create device and construct rather than soak up representations generated by others. It thus fosters meaningful serious rationality and meaningful learning opportunities.

Multimedia also helps practicing anthropologists to work with the same data from many perspectives. The practitioners as researchers can locate and select the information that they need to understand the chosen research problem with the help of various multimedia tools. Again as authors/writers, these practitioners can find a way to fit the information to the container including the manner of linking the information for others to retrieve and what amount of information is needed to give their readers an understanding of the problem and its solution thereof. For all such work they select the appropriate media to share the topic/problem selected.

The application of multimedia by practitioners can be discussed under the following heads.
1.5.1 Project Management

Practicing anthropologists are found in all business, government, health, education, and human services domains. Working in hospitals, school, research and consulting firms, or state and local governments they come across various projects in day to day life. These practitioners can improve their project management skills with the help of the project management computer software which is used to manage and control tasks, to-do lists and schedules which are components of projects. This software is a computer run programme which assists researchers and practitioners managing projects to introduce, propose, perform, observe and finish projects of any magnitude or category. This application or software is made in such a way that it strategises and records all tasks associated with a project. It makes schedules, manages timelines, resolves problems related to a project, deals with risks and hazards, allocates budget and regulates it, creates feelings of teamwork among project participants, guarantees and manages quality, brings together project teams and coordinates human resources and of course shares material. Such a known software is the MS Project from Microsoft which provides a comprehensive set of project management tools. The MS Project can create tasks, formulate notes and documents, assess difficult routes, share project data, connect with users and do much more. Microsoft provides another software called MS Outlook which can be used to manage tasks and “to do” lists. They accentuate each other, where MS Project is a mixture of a complete set of project management software possibilities and traits, MS Outlook provides help in the management of tasks through regulation of emails.

Multimedia can thus provide the tools for assigning roles to team members, creating a timeline for the completion of the project and providing means and time to diverse sections of the project.

1.5.2 Research Skills

Practicing anthropologists use anthropological methods for conducting research and action around the world. These creative, critical professionals use multimedia to determine the nature of the problem and how research should be organised. With the help of various multimedia tools they can present meaningful questions about construction, patterns, cases, principles and functions. Computers and through it the internet assists them in looking for information through texts, electronic and graphic data sources which are certainly important for any investigation or study. The multimedia gear also supports in creating new data with the use of methods like interview, questionnaire, survey etc. The information collected can then be analysed and explained to classify and deduce patterns. Thus with the help of multimedia system the practitioners develop their research skill.

1.5.3 Organisation and Representation of Facts/Data/Findings

Multimedia data is stored in computer as different types of information viz, numbers, text, graphics of many varieties (stills, video, animation and sound). Such data is organised and represented by practitioners as geometrical diagrams, tabular diagrams, bar charts, and pie chart with the help of computer, the content processing device for multimedia. The computer is used to segment and sequence the data/facts to make it understandable. The practitioners here use various softwares for data representation of the information collected. The computer
Multimedia software such as Microsoft Office help the practitioners to decide how the information will be organised (hierarchy, sequence) and how it will be linked.

1.5.4 Presentation of the Facts/Data/Findings

Multimedia presentations may be viewed in person on stage, projected, transmitted, or played locally with a media player. The practitioners make multimedia presentation to provide representative graphics to illustrate concrete facts and concepts. The animation can illustrate processes, procedures, and principles. The genealogical drawing to show kin relations made with tools like Corel Draw can map the relationship as design. The interpretive illustrations of field maps can convey relationships between variables. It also helps in attracting and maintaining the interests of the intended audiences.

1.5.5 Reflection Skills

Reflecting on practice is a formal requirement for any professional employment. Although the ability to reflect is a learned behaviour that is cultivated by the individual over a period of time, yet designing appropriate learning experiences with the help of multimedia can develop reflecting skills. The practitioners in the various professional qualifications such as nursing, teaching, social work etc., take help from various multimedia tools to strengthen their understanding for evaluating the program and the process used to create it. Besides, reflection as a general skill can form part of the learning process and the ability to use this will enhance the quality of learning.

The ability to reflect on a specific problem is directly proportional to how much one already knows. The practitioners’ reflection on any topic goes beyond limitation if they depend on multimedia for this. This reflective integration of learning derived from multimedia provides ability to relate new information and increasing awareness of the values and attitudes that influence it. Exploring the foundations of that knowledge, helps the practitioners in revising the design of the program using feedback.

1.6 PRACTICING INTERNET: BUILDING AN ONLINE MULTIMEDIA WEB COMMUNITY

The internet is a vast and expanding computer network that has the potential to provide substantial resources for practitioners with unprecedented rapidity and economy. It promises, or perhaps threatens, to transform the character of academic/professional work. It provides a platform for the practitioners to get updated online information with a single keystroke. In addition, it has enhanced their knowledge as far as studying and research interests are concerned. It helps them in collecting updated data for the area where they are practicing the discipline. Multimedia and tools like the internet gives practitioners instant access to millions of resources. These materials can be called up instantly for cooperative learning, critical thinking, discussions, problem solving, and self-study. Internet also helps practitioners in understanding and familiarising him with other cultures.

The internet has propagated the networked anthropological resources which can be accessed by any practitioner who has a computer and an internet connection. Within anthropology, archaeologists have been the most active innovators.
Physical anthropologists and cultural anthropologists have made modest use of it. Some major forms of internet communication and presentation are e-mail discussion lists, USENET newsgroups, research consortia and collections, Scholarly journals and societies and online departments. An e-mail discussion list has created a unique form of academic activity through distributed discussion lists. Individuals subscribe to a ‘list’ devoted to a specific topic and automatically receive all messages posted to it. They can, accordingly, submit queries, answers, comments, notices etc. USENET newsgroups are simply discussion lists that are stored in an open central depository or bulletin board rather than distributed to subscribers. Research consortia and collections are attempts at developing anthropological databases and analyses through networked scholarship. The best-developed and best-publicised is the Human Genome Project, which has compiled an immense DNA-sequence database. Besides, cultural anthropologists have long maintained a major ethnographic collection in print form through Yale’s Human Relations Area Files. Scholars could compile an enormous cultural compendium cross-referenced through a hypertext linking system (Schwimmer, 1996). Use of electronic anthropological scholarly journals like the Jstor, Sage, and Wiley, in many departments have established a substantial online presence. They usually include only a listing of staff members, academic programs, course titles, and calendar entries. Internet has emerged as a source of developing social contacts among people where friends and families keep in touch through email and social networking sites like facebook, twitter, myspace etc.

1.7 VARIOUS PROFESSIONS OF THE PRACTICING ANTHROPOLOGIST

We can surely say that practitioners are researchers, however, more often than not, they do not simply study issues. They go a step forward than that. Once people with anthropological training are placed in any profession, where their expertise is required, they not only research problems but also create and bring about solutions. They deal with distinct hurdles as professionals yet they confront them sensitively by presenting their anthropological outlook, i.e. a perspective which reflects humanity and is based in the practice of cross-cultural knowledge and acts. All in all such professions are now blessed to have anthropologists who with their efficacy for solving problems or finding solutions with their knowledge of multimedia are benefitted immensely. Some professions taken up by anthropologists where they use multimedia are:

a) **Business and Advertising**

In business and advertising the use of multimedia by anthropological practitioners can change the face of business. Multimedia is used as a way to help present information to shareholders and coworkers. Geared with anthropological methods and knowledge in multimedia, can let the anthropologists practice in these different avenues gracefully. Advertising business runs on observation of situations, the natural environment where these occur and intimacy, where there is a one on one connection with the customer. All these effectively are areas where an anthropologist can blend in productively. Such methodology clubbed with the use of multimedia for creating presentations and communications to sell ideas etc can create wonders.
b) **Forensic Science**

Practicing anthropologists with a background in anthropology and specifically in forensic anthropology and multimedia knowledge can be of immense use in forensic science and its laboratories. Today digital photography plays an important role in the recording of crime scenes and thus helps in research and development. Such professionals build the scientific grounds for the preparation of digital forensics, which involves research and publication. They may even be a bigger part of forensic laboratories where they may conduct check on digital equipment, perform network analysis, examine and evaluate digitised numbers, images and test analog or digital audio/video to investigate legitimacy, augmentation etc. Practicing anthropologists as digital forensic investigators may be found in both public and private sectors. They are employed in police departments, legal agencies etc.

c) **Creative Industries and Fine Arts**

Creative industries are becoming increasingly important components of modern post-industrial knowledge-based economies. In the creative industries anthropologists as practitioners can use multimedia for a variety of purposes ranging from fine art, entertainment, commercial art, reporting, media and software services all depicting social structures in one form or the other. Many documentaries are made which are termed ethnographic films highlighting cultural and social lives or episodes of people’s or communities’ innate experiences. These anthropologists may or may not be a part of the academia and may use their abilities to use the best of both anthropological and multimedia know-how to weave stories technologically for the world. The emergence of multimedia has also altered copyright law’s association with technology and altered the creative industries.

d) **Mathematical and Scientific Research**

In mathematical and scientific research practicing anthropologists with a background in physical anthropology can use multimedia for modeling and simulation. For example, a practitioner can look at a molecular model of a particular substance and manipulate it to arrive at a new substance. One can know more about these in journals such as the *Journal of Multimedia*.

e) **Multimedia in Public Places**

Practicing anthropologists take help of multimedia to build stand-alone terminals or kiosks at hotels, railway stations, shopping malls, museums, and departmental stores, for providing information and help. Such installation reduces demand on traditional enquiry booths and personnel, adds meaning and works 24/7. By understanding the social milieu of an area, community, locality etc., issues in supermarkets, hotels and hospitals can be reduced. For example, digital screens which depict menus in the supermarket kiosk, or screens which show names of local restaurants, maps of the city, travel schedules etc., in hotels, or list of names of doctors for different ailments and their visiting hours on display in hospitals. Museum kiosks at many archaeological museums are not only used to guide patrons through the exhibits, but also provide great added depth, allowing visitors to browse through richly detailed information specific to that display. All these can be created by practitioners with clear anthropological skills.
1.8 SUMMARY

As you have learnt above, multimedia refers to the integration of multiple media such as voice, video, data, text, animation and graphics. Technology and culture can be combined to give the vision of the richness of culture. One important tool needed for the same is interactive multimedia design which can aid the practitioners in studying human society and culture.

Multimedia networks add an important dimension to practicing anthropologists’ workouts. It can link various societies into continuum and break down the distinction. Practitioners with an anthropological background can collaborate on worldwide projects. Applying multimedia reduces learning time and achievement levels are more than a standard deviation higher. When learners can put their cognitive resources toward building such active connections, they perform better in both retaining and applying information and the close pairing of text and illustrations and of narration and animation result in both better retention and increased transfer to the solving of new problems (Mayer, 2001). In education courses for example, skills and knowledge are too often taught out of context. To overcome this, practitioners use multimedia to bring into their classrooms real-world examples to provide a contextual framework important for learning.

The creation and expansion of multimedia services present many opportunities and challenges for practicing anthropologists. This new medium is ideally suited to the discipline’s character and methodology. E-mail can foster rapid and efficient communication within a dispersed and diverse academic community. Multimedia capabilities promise the creation of photographic, video, and sound archives that have never been adequately developed because of the high costs of publication and distribution. Hypertext publication opens the possibility for new forms of expression that are better suited to cultural data and anthropological methods than the writing of plain text. It allows for ethnographic presentations expanded and embellished by the inclusion of, field notes, case studies, corresponding texts and visual images. It allows the prospect for novel types of representation which can portray the varied level referencing and interconnectedness of convoluted emblematic and social arrangements. Accordingly, postmodernists might more easily realise their objectives of articulating numerous voices and perspectives without the restraints of linear exposition. Contemporary practitioners are now in the interesting position of experiencing, observing, and perhaps controlling and solving a problem they have often attempted.

The obvious barrier to the development of applied multimedia in practicing anthropology is the reluctance or inability of practitioners to learn to use and develop this new technology. Although most practitioners now own computers and have come to find them indispensable for their writing, actual use is limited to a few applications which take little advantage of the technology’s full potential (Bernard and Evans 1987). Computer use has been restricted to word-processing and statistical analysis. Also multimedia advantages may not be accessible to a large section of its intended users if they do not have access to multimedia-capable machines. Plus one must have the knack or enough computer literacy to run related soft-wares in computers which helps in multimedia usage.
There are spheres of activity wherein persons trained in the field of anthropology may apply the techniques of their science with respect to other developments in science and technology. Thus while applying multimedia the practitioners should be aware of copyright issues and infringements, especially when incorporating video, images, and sound from other sources. But we can definitely end the lesson by saying that multimedia and its technological applications are engulfed in possibilities of changing the way things exists socially and culturally. We can in fact say that this has already started occurring at a large scale in many domains though the potential for newer high-tech conception do not end. And it is in this that practicing anthropologists can be efficient contributors.

References


Suggested Reading


Sample Questions

1) What is multimedia? How can it be used in anthropology?
2) Tell us about the history of multimedia in anthropology?
3) How can multimedia be used in practicing anthropology?
4) What kind of professions can one get into where both multimedia and anthropological knowledge come handy? Talk briefly about two such professions.
Since Unit 6 regards the rationale behind the use of multimedia in education, it is possible to change the order of the units and provide it immediately after the introductory workshop. It is suggested to follow the so-called market metaphor (Figure 1), which means that the trainer can choose the order of topics according to his or her own needs. Module 1 MULTIMEDIA. Units 1 and 2: Student’s Book, Culture & Pairwork, Workbook, Wordlist. The Storyteller by Martyn Hobbs. Listening for communication & exams. Making Conversation, talking about a painting, working in a group. PRONUNCIATION. th = /θ/ Thursday or /ð/ there? | be, have (got) and do: strong or weak? | Stress in countries and nationalities. Introduction to Multimedia terms Learn with flashcards, games and more for free. A multimedia element such as a narration, music, or other sound clip. Text. A multimedia element consisting of alphanumeric characters. Trademark. A name, symbol, or other device identifying a product; it is officially registered with the US government and its use legally restricted to its owner. Video. A series of framed images put together, one after another, to simulate motion and interactivity. Unit 1: Introduction to Multimedia This unit introduces the students to the concepts of multimedia and examines the elements of multimedia. It concludes by enumerating some multimedia development applications. From the etymological analysis of the word, the prefix â€œmultâ€ comes from the Latin word â€œmultusâ€ which means â€œmultiple or large RaAz mediaâ€.