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Impact on Schools and Museum Studies

18 IMPACT ON SCHOOLS AND MUSEUM STUDIES

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Interactive multimedia has much to offer the educational world. The use of computer within the classroom is already well-established and within the university sector resources are being poured into the development of applications to enhance learning and supplement traditional teaching methods.

Museums too, are increasingly using interactive multimedia in exhibitions and other museum programmes. The introduction of such applications, however, has highlighted the need for museum staff who have the requisite skills to maximise the opportunities multimedia offers and the necessity for the role of the interactive to be clearly articulated.

The papers contained in this section present different perspectives on the use of interactive multimedia for educational purposes Freedman-Harvey gives a case study of a project undertaken at the California State University, Long Beach and explores the role of multimedia training which has been incorporated into a Art History and Museum Studies training programme.

Kissel's paper, addresses multimedia use in the museum, with a description of a pilot project to develop an interactive linked to the art collections of the State Russian Museum in St Petersburg. This paper identifies the need for museums to carefully plan how such as application will be incorporated into the museum environment.

Freedman-Harvey writes as a training provider, conscious of the diverse skills sets museum workers now require, but with a wider vision of how projects of this nature can build bridges between museums and training providers. Kissel's paper explores the use of multimedia, as a means of 'deschooling' the museum, so that a broad range of visitors can explore them at their own pace and according to their individual needs.

The success of multimedia applications in museums is dependent upon the skill sets of those responsible for initiating and implementing the interactives. Projects such as the one at CULB are important as they have the overall aim of producing students who are not only proficient in the more traditional museum skills, but who are also equipped to unlock the potential of multimedia.

The future is exciting in terms of the development of multimedia within training organisations and museums. It is now up to those involved to seize the moment and act upon it.