

Part II Multimedia Presentation Building Blocks

Chapter 4. Building Blocks: Text

Why convert a text to electronic forum, unless one can do more with it than with the printed version? - Raymond W. Smock

From the beginning of history humans have used graphics and text to communicate experiences, and knowledge, feelings. Since the invention of the press by Guthenberg, text has been one of the primary means of human communication. With the advent of multimedia technology text can be used in combination with other medias in an extremely powerful and meaningful way. This chapter explores the ways text can be utilized as one of the multimedia building blocks.

To explore more about the use of text in the development of multimedia applications open the Interactive Guide to Multimedia CD-ROM in Chapter 4.

Chapter Objectives

After completing this chapter you should understand and / or recognize:

- How to design text as part of a multimedia application;
- Character attributes;
- The use of text special effects
- Character formats
- Font moods

Text Design Considerations

Text is one of the fundamental building blocks of multimedia applications. It is recommended to keep in mind that text is not the only building block in a multimedia application, you must be able to integrate and orchestrate other components such as graphics, sounds, animation's, video and others with text. If you are unable to integrate these other components you have lost the opportunity of the value added to the message or information conveyed by the use of multimedia technology.

Text and the Program Intended Use

One of the key elements in the planning and design process of the multimedia application is the program intended use. This is specially true when considering the use of text. The amount of text, font selection, font size and color are important design elements which will be affected by the program intended use.

In general, we can identify two primary uses of the majority multimedia applications, these are: applications to be used by individual users and applications to be use for group presentations.

Please make reference in the Interactive Guide to Multimedia CD to see examples of these types of applications.

There are some fundamental differences between these two different intended uses in relation to

the use of text. For example, when designing an application to be used by a single user in front of a computer you can consider the use of extensive text and a smaller font size as compared to group presentations. On the other hand, if the application is intended to be used in front of a group in a presentation mode, the amount of text should be kept to a minimum, limited to bullets and/or short paragraphs. The size of text should be at least 24 points. It is important to mention the fact that when a presentation for a large group is designed the amount of text should be kept to a minimum due to the fact that the content is to be provided by the presenter and not the computer application.

The above differences and design needs are related to one common factor, the distance between the audience or user and the display or computer screen. This parameter, distance, dictates font size, color and amount of text to be use in the development of the application.

Text Formats

As you recalled, the Content Specialist should supply the information in the form of text that is intended to be included as part of the proposed multimedia application. The members of the design team (Content Specialists, Instructional Designer and the Multimedia Architect) are responsible of analyzing the text submitted by the Content Specialist and decide the amount and format to be use according to the program design and intended use.

As presented in the above section, depending upon the application intended use, the text to be integrated as part of the application could be in two forms: text bullets or paragraphs. Text bullets are short lines of text that are usually use to describe a concept. When presenting these bullets usually they are preceded by a bullet mark. A bullet mark is a graphic, a symbol, number or letter which serve to organize, dramatize or highlight the bullet. The following are some examples of bullet marks:

-
- *
- 1.
- 1)
- ®
-
-

Paragraphs, are blocks of text composed of usually more than one sentence. Depending the application intended use they might have different lengths. As part of the composition process you have various options in terms of the paragraph structure. Paragraphs can be aligned in three ways: left, right and center. The following represents examples of different alignment styles:

Left Aligned

In general, we can identify two primary uses of the majority multimedia applications, these are: applications to be used for individual users and others for group presentations...

Right Aligned

In general, we can identify two primary uses of the majority multimedia applications, these are: applications to be used for individual users and others for group presentations. There are some

fundamental differences between these two different intended uses in relation to the use of text. ...

Center Aligned

In general, we can identify two primary uses of the majority multimedia applications, these are: applications to be used for individual users and others for group presentations. There are some fundamental differences between these two different intended uses in relation to the use of text....

As part of the design and composition process of your text, you can combine different text alignment styles with the use of character formats. The following is an example of this combination.

Drop Case

In general, we can identify two primary uses of the majority multimedia applications, these are: applications to be used for individual users and others for group presentations...

Scrolling Text

The incorporation of large amounts of text into a multimedia application design for individual users is facilitated by some of the features available in the authoring program. Large amount of text can be handle using the scrolling text capability. Specifically in Macromedia Director, you can assign a text cast member a scrolling style in the style pop-up menu (this will be discussed in Chapter 9). This feature will attach a scroll bar to the right side of the text box. The following figure (fig. 4.1) presents an example of scrolling text.

Figure 4.1 Macromedia Director scrolling text.

Please look in the Interactive Guide to Multimedia CD Chapter 4 to see examples of scrolling text.

Text Special Effects

Text can be made more dramatic, interesting and even fun when is manipulated by graphic and text manipulation software or by using text special effects features available through the authoring language. For example, Macromedia Director provides the capability of animating bullet charts, develop text special effects, and the addition of sound effects to text . The following figures (fig. 4.2 and 4.3) presents the windows from Macromedia Director which provide the above mentioned features.

Please make reference to the CD to see examples of these text effects.

Figure 4.2 Macromedia Director bullet chart text animation dialog box.

Figure 4.3 Macromedia Director text effects dialog box.

If text is developed as a graphic element or converted to graphics, it can be manipulated using

several different computer applications. Among the software capable of performing text manipulation are Microsoft WordArt, Typestyler, Fontographer and Adobe Photoshop. These applications are capable of dramatically customize type styles, freely bending, slanting and stretching, resizing, changing colors, adding fills, and shadows. The following is an example of text stretching and shadow application using Microsoft WordArt,.

μ §

The above was produced using the simple and user friendly interface provided by Microsoft WordArt, The following graphic (figure 4.4) is a screen picture of the interface use in WordArt with the text manipulation tools.

Figure 4.4 Word Art dialog box.

This application allows you to add a variety of graphic features such as adding shadows to text using simple and intuitive steps as illustrated in figure 4.5

Figure 4.5 Word Art shadow dialog box.

Font Type and Point Sizes

In general, there are two kinds of fonts available for your computer. Bitmap fonts are stored as single characters made up of dots that are called to your screen as you use them. Outline fonts (true type fonts), which are composed filled-in outlines, are built as you use them.

Both, bitmaps and outline fonts are available in a number of sizes. Outline fonts no matter the size always look smooth and well-shaped, no matter the size. If you use a bitmap font in a size not installed in your computer operating system, the computer will have to create the new size by scaling - mathematically creating the new size base on the closest available size. In some cases, these scaled fonts have a rough, more jagged appearance. For developing multimedia presentations outline fonts are recommended for developing your text needs.

It is highly recommended to examine the application playback computer and take out of the operating system non-true type fonts. This will ensure that text will look as it was designed.

The selected font and font size establish the basic look of your text in your multimedia application. A font is the design of a set of characters. Some common fonts are:

Times Times Roman Geneva
Helvetica Minstrel Century Gothic
Palatino Courier Chicago
Stencil Arial Book Antigua
eyautrg (Symbol) qwertyg (Zapt Dingbats)

All fonts comes in a range of point sizes. A point is a typographical measurement approximately equal to 1/72 inch. In most computer applications you can use any whole-number point size

from 4 (1/8 inch) or greater. Some examples of font sizes are as follows:

7 points	10 points	12 points
18 points	24 points	36 points
48 points		
60 points		
72 points		

Keep in mind that as part of your design you can combine different font and sizes in order to create the special effect that is necessary to convey your message. The following is one example:

About

The word “about” is written using two different fonts with two different font sizes, these are “kino MT” for the letter “A” with a point size of 60 points and “Times” for “bout” with a point size of 24 points.

Character Formats

Almost all computer applications that provide text entry capabilities allows you to integrate into your documents, paragraphs, or text bullets different character formats to emphasize text and create special effects. The following are some of the character formats most widely available:

Bold	ALL CAPS	CAPS ON CAPS	
Italic	Underline	Subscript	
Outline	Strikethrough	Condensed	
Character Spacing	Superscript	color	
Shadow	Double underline	Dotted underline	

You can use the above character formats by themselves or combine several of them in order to develop the effect that you want to create. The following are some examples:

Bold Italic	Outline Bold	Double underline bold
Character Spacing Bold	CAPS ON CAPS BOLD	
CAPS ON CAPS BOLD COLOR		

When developing mathematics or science and engineering presentations you will need to master the use of subscripts and superscripts. Commonly your word-processing application will position characters as superscripts and subscripts either 3 points above or 2 points below the base line, as shown below:

..... Normal Text (baseline)

..... $x = 2ab + y^2$ (superscript 3 points above the baseline)

..... H₂O (subscript 2 points below the baseline)

..... H₂O (subscript 4 points below the baseline)

In developing titles for your presentation you might like to consider the use of spaced characters

as part of your design. By default most word-processing applications automatically adjust the spacing between characters to one (1) point. (Adjusting space between characters is called kerning). As part of your design you can expand the space between your characters of a title to make the text more dramatic, as for example:

THE WORLD OF MULTIMEDIA

Times, 18 points, default spacing

THE WORLD OF MULTIMEDIA

Times, 18 points, 3 points spacing

THE WORLD OF MULTIMEDIA

Times, 18 points, 5 points spacing

Tip: Font selection, character format, color selection, and special effects must be part of the overall strategy to develop the theme of the multimedia application. Keep in mind that text will be use in combination with graphics and backgrounds. Your design must take into consideration all of these aspects.

Font Moods

Font moods refers to the feeling associated with a type style. The particular mood projected by a font style is in part the result of social and technological conditions that affected the original design. Mood is also said to be dependent on the individual reader or program user and their personal taste, experiences, educational and cultural background. The use of a particular font style cannot change the meaning of the words, but it can enhance the message.

Please make reference to the Interactive Guide to Multimedia CD to see examples of these font moods.

The following are some of the font moods most commonly used:

Trendy: This font mood represents a popular look of the time. For example, Impact it is simple to use, its geometric styling looks new and refreshing.

New Trends in Sociology

Nostalgic: Fonts that are nostalgic makes us think of the Victorian Era and early twentieth century, For example, you can use Bodoni to create the eclectic designs of that era.
Victorian Reflections & Co.

Traditional: The user feels at ease when the mood is traditional. A traditional mood is accomplished when using a font like Bookman:

Acme Incorporated Annual Sales

Classic: A classic mood brings a quiet natural balance to the typographic composition. New York is capable of creating this mood.

galeria
annual sale report

Playful: A playful mood is entertaining and relaxing. Minstrel is representative of this mood:

The Villa Annual Expo

Aggressive: An aggressive mood demands attention and response from the user or viewer. There is a sense of importance and truth implied in the composition. Helvetica create this mood, for example:

Evaluation and Assessment
The Mac Arthur Group

Friendly: This mood is comfortable, it is easy to read and personally appealing. Arial is representative of this mood:

arnold and associates

Informative: In this mood the type composition implies that the transfer of information is the most important task. This mood is represented by the use of Times Roman:

Williams & Company
Office Supplies

Sophisticated: The sophisticated mood suggest the idea of something beautiful. A font like Wide Latin represents this mood:

Carter Productions

Remember The most important rule in the typesetting of in a multimedia application is very simple:

The user or the audience must be able to read the text !!

Excercise

Using the information provided in this chapter you will have to continue the development the interactive multimedia presentation for your imaginary client. In this excercise you will define

the text characteristics for your application and will type the text provided to you by the “content specialist.” At the end of this exercise you will have completed the text entry of your project. Remember: keep a paper trail of all documents and screen prints of your project in a three ring binder.

1. In the development of your proposed application define the type stting characteristics that will define the mood and tone of your application.
2. Using a word processor type the text to be included in your proposed application. This text will be imported into the authoring language,