

the periphery of computer assisted learning, such as computer operating personnel and managers of departments in business and industry becoming involved in computer assisted instruction.

REVIEWER

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Interactive Media: Working Methods and Practical Applications (1st Edition) by Diana Laurillard, England: Ellis Horwood Limited, 1987. ISBN O-7458-0011-4 (\$68.95)

Reviewed by Penelope Anne Nicholson

The question of whether to integrate interactive media into education and training has been the center of much controversy. Issues such as the costs involved, manpower and resources needed, and the fear of the complexity of hardware and software have caused confusion and apprehension in an area where clear and accurate answers are needed. For those wishing a comprehensive insight into interactive media this book is a valuable resource. Its potential readership is vast due to the variety and levels of complexity of information presented.

The information presented throughout this book is representative of developments in interactive media for education and training today. Since the book was published in 1987, however, advances such as bar code access in videodisc, and compact-disc interactive (CD-I) are not discussed. Readers looking for a good background and valuable information in interactive media should not dismiss this book because it is three years old, but readers looking for only the latest advances in interactive media are advised to look elsewhere.

Through 15 chapters the reader is exposed to the work of a variety of authors who clearly present their experiences, recommendations, cautions, and opinions concerning the integration of interactive media into the classroom and workplace. All chapters are divided into subsections which are clearly marked in both the table of contents and in the chapters. Helpful illustrations are provided throughout the book, and a final section presents a descriptive background of each contributor. References are provided at the end of each chapter as well as at the end of the book. Technical information is provided and numerous examples of current videodiscs are discussed.

Some of the problem-solving discs which are discussed through their planning and production stages are the 'CALCHEM' disc (chapter 'The

Teddy Bear's Disc' (chapter 5), the "Who Do You Think You Are Talking To?" disc (chapter 8), "The Doomsday Disc" (chapter 14), and a disc created for the English Tourist Board (chapter 15). Content ranges from skills for bus drivers to deal with difficult customers, to tourist orientation to hotels and attractions in Britain.

The majority of chapters focus on interactive video with topics such as the selection of hardware and software, problems to avoid and helpful hints to use when setting up interactive videodisc projects, the issue of which level of interactivity to implement, and the potential of incorporating Conversation Theory into interactive video activities. The chapters which were of the greatest interest to me as an Educational Technologist, those concerned with the implementation and use of interactive media in the classroom, were chapters one, five, six and thirteen.

In chapter one ("Setting up an interactive videodisc project") Robert Fuller discusses video-disc based Physics lessons and provides very clear and helpful guidelines to follow when starting an interactive video project. Dr. Laurillard, in chapter five ("Pedagogical design for interactive video"), situates interactive video in the realm of Educational Technology and stresses the importance of evaluation of interactive media. In chapter six ("Why do instructional designers need conversation theory?") Gary Boyd and Gordon Pask discuss the use of conversation Theory in the instructional design of interactive media. They believe that interactive video supplies one with a medium which can store and retrieve vast amounts of information, but that this information needs to be brought together in well formed dialogue to be truly educational. In chapter thirteen ("Interactive video as a school resource: Rolls-Royce or Model T Ford?") Colin Mably discusses the general day-to-day usability of interactive video in the schools and focuses on considerations such as price, fears of some of the introduction of new technological innovations into the schools, potential school uses, and technical information regarding software and hardware use.

There is not one individual chapter in this book that I would single out as weak, however the book suffers from an unfortunate weakness of organization. The book is divided into two parts; the first deals with "Instructional Design and Development for Interactive Media", while the second deals with "Exploiting the Technology". Though the chapters in each of these sections fall under the stated headings and the text is informative, the arrangement of these chapters is not well thought out. The reader progresses through technical chapters, followed by chapters which present introductory information, which are again followed by technical chapters. It is not a practical suggestion to recommend the reader read the chapters out of sequence, but I feel it is necessary to warn readers that the ordering of chapters does not progress logically from simple and introductory information to more complex information.

This book is aimed at a wide audience and provides the reader with information about planning, producing, utilizing, applying, and evaluating interactive media, as well as information on hardware, and fundamental

aspects of interactivity. Though I feel the arrangement of chapters is not well planned, this book provides the reader with a look into the past, a sense of the present, and a clearer insight into the future of interactive media.

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