Interactive CD for Teaching Development Based Subjects

Ben Singh-Cosgrave, Cameron Sinclair-Fox, Graham McLellan, Dr Samuel Mann & Dr Graham McGregor
Faculty of Art & Technology
Otago Polytechnic
Dunedin, New Zealand
smann@tekotago.ac.nz

There is much effort being placed into educational technology. While there are tools for generating html, and tools for the management of online delivery, there has been little in the way of development of packages to support the teaching of complex processes. Despite there being a vast store of expert knowledge available, there are few good information sources that take advantage of interactive media, and those that do have been produced largely by enthusiastic amateurs or professional developers. What is needed is a tool to support the knowledge of subject experts in an educationally sound manner.

The construction industry is an area where there are multiple layers of complexity, interacting roles, differing timescales and consequences of decisions. This is a prime target for a good interactive learning experience supported by technology.

The author s are undertaking a project to develop a tool for the display of information, much like a browser, and a code parser for the interpretation of information into code readable by the "browser" application.

The parser application idea came about due to the problem of experts in their respective fields not being "computer-literate" to the point of being able to enter information in a code readable by software applications. It is intended that the user will be able to enter text into one window of the code parser, click a button, and have it converted in a format readable by the display application. They will still, however be required to reach a rudimentary knowledge in the use of tags, as any additional images or animations to accompany the text would have to be added by the user in this way. It is intended that the insertion of information into the browser will be as independent as possible and be able to be used without the assistance of the applications' designers.

As the concept illustrated suggests, the browser will be used for the display of the information that is entered into the code parser. It uses a proprietary language and format, and reads and displays:

- Text
- Pictures
- Movies
- Shockwave files.

This project will benefit both students and people in the industry, as the software will be flexible enough to adapt to the learning level of the user. It is hoped that the product will be useful for the teaching of any development-based subject.

Acknowledgements

The support of the School of Architecture, Building and Construction and also the helpful input of Tony Condor and Russell Cooney at BRANZ are much appreciated.

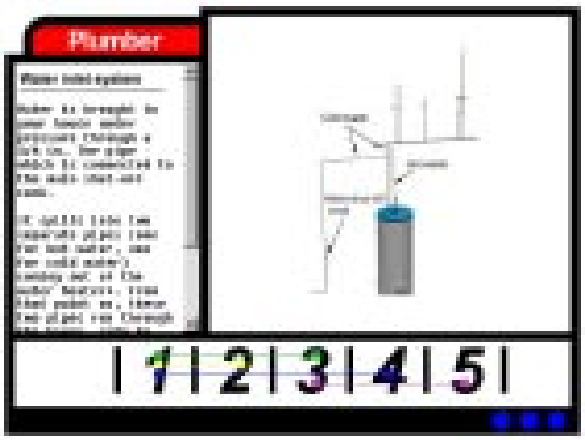

Figure 1:

The multiple roles and timelines upon which tasks occur can be seen in this prototype application.