

multimedia through traditional word processing, while the other “paper” illustrates a Web-based approach to a communication “package.”

The formulae for teaching how to produce multimedia-based papers is simultaneously simple and complex. It’s simple in the sense of this basic truth: The more multimedia skills you possess, the more effects you can incorporate into your “paper.” The complexity, of course, is in both acquiring and becoming proficient in those multimedia and embedding skills.

Many of today’s students (no big surprise) are ahead of us, already on their way to becoming a new type of communicator we might easily call a “GutenSpielGates”—a combination Johann Gutenberg, Steven Spielberg, and Bill Gates all morphed into one 21st century communication craftsperson. Naturally, we’ll always need to teach them the “Hemingway” parts of communication, but now we need to begin incorporating that “GutenSpielGates” factor as well. Because if not us, then who?

Transferability

The value of inserting pictures, sounds, illustrations, video clips, and Internet links into a “paper” in order to enhance its expository and descriptive mission should be self-evident. As such, every academic discipline and grade level could—and should—welcome the concept of incorporating multimedia as an expected and valued element of a student’s creative communication message (“paper”). Naturally, the higher the student grade level and/or computer expertise, the more sophisticated work one would expect. Yet to be fully transferable in as a concept, teachers must first transfer out any prejudices against nontraditional “paper” presentations. We must be willing to accept not only the concept of multimedia presentations, but also to encourage and, at times, even require it from our students.

Faculty Technology Skill

The faculty skill levels required for this module depend, of course, on the type and complexity of multimedia effects and techniques teachers expect their students to use. At the lowest level, even minimum word processing skills would allow teachers to demonstrate how to incorporate pictures, drawings, graphic elements, colors, different type fonts and sizes, and word art into a simple document. Incorporating site links into a paper is a small step up, but it’s only a moderate-level word processing skill.

Other necessary skills would include moderate Internet browsing and search engine knowledge and the ability to download and install common “plug in” files to facilitate sound and video files.

Embedding sound, animation, and video files are also fairly easy tasks, most easily learned again by following the **Help** commands of your word processor. Any additional problems or glitches might be best solved by asking a school computer technician for spot help.

Student Technology Skill

The same skills needed in relation to learning to incorporate these techniques into a paper for teachers are mirrored with students. Obviously, the greater the student’s familiarity and level of comfort with basic computer commands, the easier the work will be. Some students may need to be walked through a given process, while others may end up giving the teacher advice. That said,

much instruction of a given multimedia insertion task might be best accomplished by a simple step-by-step handout with examples to give students some quick short-cut training.

Faculty Equipment

Again, the nature of this module is more conceptual and abstract than task-specific and concrete, so the equipment necessary will always depend on just how far a teacher wants to go in incorporating this process. For probably 95% of the multimedia objectives in question, however, all can be accomplished with only .□□

- an Internet accessible computer (with speakers).
- a reasonably recent word processing program (e.g., *MS Word 2000* or *XP*).
- a color printer (optional, but nice).
- a scanner (optional; use to help students transform paper-based graphics into digital files)

Student Equipment

Same as above

Cost

This concept really doesn't call for any special equipment. Most of the tools necessary are now standard issue in most elementary, high school, and college-level classrooms.

Improvement on Teaching and Learning

Since this isn't a "presentation" module per se, what we can say in this category is that by incorporating multimedia elements into traditional text-only papers, students will learn that there are multiple ways in which to communicate—on paper—to others. The trick is to avoid loading up papers with needless multimedia effects just for the sake of doing so. What we must do is to teach students how to use a particular effect or medium to better convey what words alone might not be able to do. In a very real sense, we can go back and paraphrase the cliché that "not only is a picture worth a thousand words, but you can now also throw in sound, animation, graphics, music, and video elements into that formulae as well."

Nontechnology Comparison

For hundreds of years, we've been dependent upon communicating over time and distance with words alone; although, sometimes we accompanied those words with drawings and stand alone photographs. By contrast, today's technology offers—almost demands—that we rethink the very core of how we teach students to communicate. The ability to seamlessly weave sound, pictures, and instantly accessible global Internet sites within a paper creates the option and challenge to communicate on a whole new level of complexity.

Some writing instructors might experience a knee-jerk reaction to this idea with the thought, "Well that might be true, but computers aren't my area." The answer, as already suggested before, is that "If not writing instructors, then who?" The science department? Math? Social sciences? Business? A minute's reflection should reveal that, like it or not, composition teachers are the only reasonable forum through which to teach these emerging skills.

When we become successful at doing that, our students will learn how to compose papers that not only tell us their views, but also show us, sing to us, dance with us, and tell us all the places in the world we might go to learn even more about the topic at hand.

Pertinent Issues

The chief awareness issue of this module concept is the new way of thinking about communication, which teachers will first have to accept and learn and then learn how to transmit that new thinking and its accompanying techniques to their students.

As mentioned earlier, we have no verbs, and we have no nouns for this concept. An assignment that asks, “Please communicate to me a three-page multimedia-message by next Friday” obviously sounds a bit awkward. No appropriate verb, no appropriate object. In addition, we’ll probably also have to rethink the concept of “length.” A multimedia document that *looks* like it’s only two pages in length may, in fact, be much richer in content, superior in execution, and a demonstratively better communication effort than a traditional text-only ten-page paper. The real awareness issue here is to create a new instructional awareness for ourselves.

How to Use in the Classroom

Start slowly by showing students examples of what a multimedia paper might look like. The greater variety you can muster, the more creativity and understanding on their part you’ll engender.

To start them on their own path, show students how a text document could be greatly improved by simply adding an appropriate picture or two. Then, introduce the concept of searching for even more appropriate graphics (e.g., historical photographs, drawings, diagrams, maps, charts, and so on) through an Internet search engine such as Google.com, Yahoo.com, AltaVista, and so on. This twist is really just another aspect of outside research in disguise.

Later, show them how to make Internet links in their papers, which will create a bridge between the material and a much vaster information source on the Internet to heighten the reader’s understanding of the material at hand.

Then, show them how to incorporate a simple sound or pre-packaged video clip into their paper to help illustrate a textual point. Again, use a search engine to find appropriate materials if you don’t already have a standing clip file of sound or video clips in your lab.

Finally, introduce—and encourage—they to go to the next level by actually producing their own appropriate video or audio clips for their papers. Obviously, the skill and equipment level here will rise dramatically, but what seems a high-tech skill out of reach to students today will almost certainly be a commonplace tool within a decade.

How students physically present their “papers” is yet another issue in the evolution of modern communication. Paper is obviously still an option, but new formats might include floppy or zip disks, CD-ROM, or a Web-based paper. The final “best” format in which to view this new way of communicating is as fluid as the number of different multimedia elements we’re injecting into it.

Note: Be sure to see Appendix A and B below for multimedia sample papers.

Appendix A

Sample Multimedia Paper

The following paper was written using *MS Word*. It includes color fonts, pictures, a drawing, Internet links (text and photograph) to topic-related sites, an audio file, and a movie clip.

Important Note: To “read” this paper, you must first read it as a file on your computer while you are simultaneously connected to the Internet.

Second, unlike clicking on a regular web page link, an Internet link embedded in a *Microsoft Word* document requires you to **press the CTRL key at the same time you click the link** itself. Depending on the embedded file type, a recipient reader’s computer may or may not need to upload audio and/or video program “plug ins” that will play the embedded files. If you need one, these programs are free, standard, and most download and install automatically right from their respective websites.

The following is a three-page “multimedia text-based paper” on the life of John F. Kennedy as might be written by a typical high school senior.

[See <http://clconline.clcillinois.edu/mm/pt3/pinkham/KennedyTermPaper/samplePaper.htm> for a web version of this paper.]

John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917 – 1963)

A Short Biography

by Ima Student

On November 22, 1963, when he was hardly past his first thousand days in office, John Fitzgerald Kennedy was killed by an assassin's bullets as his motorcade wound through Dallas, Texas. Kennedy was the youngest man elected President; he was the youngest to die.



Of Irish descent, he was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, on May 29, 1917. Graduating from Harvard in 1940, he entered the Navy. In 1943, when his PT boat was rammed and sunk by a Japanese destroyer, Kennedy, despite grave injuries, led the survivors through perilous waters to safety.

Back from the war, he became a Democratic Congressman from the Boston area, advancing in 1953 to the Senate. He married Jacqueline Bouvier on September 12, 1953. In 1955, while recuperating from a back operation, he wrote *Profiles in Courage*, which won the



Pulitzer Prize in history.

In 1956 Kennedy almost gained the Democratic nomination for Vice President, and four years later was a first-ballot nominee for President. Millions of people watched his television debates with the Republican candidate, Richard M. Nixon. Winning by a narrow margin in the popular vote, Kennedy became the first Roman Catholic President.

His Inaugural Address ([click link for full text](#)) offered the memorable injunction: "Ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." During the speech he offered the help of the United States to any country that made a serious attempt to help themselves. As President, he set out to redeem his moving again, and his economic programs launched sustained expansion since World War II; before his massive assault on persisting pockets of privation and poverty.



Responding to ever more urgent demands, he took vigorous action in the cause of equal rights, calling for new civil rights legislation. His vision of America extended to the quality of the national culture and the central role of the arts in a vital society.



Click picture to link to JFK Center for the Performing Arts

He wished America to resume its old mission as the first nation dedicated to the revolution of human rights. With the

Alliance for Progress and the Peace Corps, he brought American idealism to the aid of developing nations. But the hard reality of the Communist challenge remained.

Shortly after his inauguration, Kennedy permitted a band of Cuban exiles, already armed and trained, to invade their homeland. The attempt to overthrow the regime of Fidel Castro was a failure. Soon thereafter, the Soviet Union renewed its campaign against West Berlin. Kennedy

visited Berlin in 1962 where he gave his famous "Ich bin ein Berliner speech," and then went on to reinforce the Berlin garrison and increase our Nation's military strength, including creating new initiatives in outer space. Confronted by this reaction, Moscow, after the erection of the Berlin Wall, relaxed its pressure in central Europe.



Instead, the Russians now sought to install nuclear missiles in Cuba. When this was discovered by air reconnaissance in October 1962, Kennedy imposed a quarantine on all offensive weapons bound for Cuba. While the world trembled on the brink of nuclear war, the Russians backed

down and agreed to take the missiles away. The American response to the Cuban crisis evidently persuaded Moscow of the futility of nuclear blackmail.

Kennedy now contended that both sides had a vital interest in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and slowing the arms race—a contention which led to the test ban treaty of 1963. The months after the Cuban crisis showed significant progress toward his goal of "a world of law and free choice, banishing the world of war and coercion." His administration thus saw the beginning of new hope for both the equal rights of Americans and the peace of the world.



Kennedy never got the chance to show what he would do with a second term in office. In November 1963, he was shot to death while riding in an open convertible through Dallas. He died in the arms of his wife. Jacqueline Kennedy's dignified mourning did much to soothe America's grief in the aftermath of the murder.

Hours after the president's death in Dallas, police arrested Lee Harvey Oswald, who was himself slain two days later while being transferred to another jail. For years, Americans have wondered whether his death really was the work of just one man, and speculation continues to abound, although a national commission headed by Earl Warren concluded that Oswald had acted alone.

Though his time in office was brief, JFK's charisma, popular appeal, and tragic assassination have established him as a compelling figure in 20th century American history.



Appendix B

Sample Web-Based “Paper”

Go to the web page from the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library given below. It’s used here to demonstrate an alternative way for a student to hand in a “paper” of a similar topic, but this time in a web page, or html, format.

John F. Kennedy, A Short Biography¹

Important Note: Again, unlike clicking on a regular web page link, a Internet link embedded in a *Microsoft Word* document requires you to press the CTRL key at the same time you click the link itself. Naturally your computer must already be in an online mode to gain immediate access to the link.

¹ With appreciation to the John F. Kennedy Library website in Boston, MA.