

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTIMEDIA FOR HUMANITIES

October 5 - 8, 1998

PREAMBLE

Since 1994, the Centre has been associated with the UNDP/UNESCO assisted project "Strengthening of National Facility for Interactive Multimedia Documentation of Cultural Resources". In the Project Document, it was noted that financial and intellectual investment in comprehensive documentation of scattered and fragmented heritage is not matched by outputs due to lack of use of appropriate technology, suitable data models, encoding standards and trained manpower. It was envisaged that this project will suitably strengthen infrastructure and man power to give a substantial jump in the rate of systematic and integrated documentation and dissemination of cultural resources. Through its efforts, over the past few years, IGNCA seeks to provide a forum to make available resources to its users and it is working towards development of multi-disciplinary, holistic research. With this experiment, it is hoped that the analytical tools of high technology will change perception amongst scholars and educationalists in carrying out their research and reduce time and labour involved in library and field work.

Multimedia technology has made rapid strides and today encompasses almost all areas of human activity. The capability of storing text, images, sound, video on a single platform is forcing people to review their databases and augment them - in future, a database will be incomplete without multiple media. Multimedia technology is being used as a brand new way of human communication. Multimedia has launched a publishing revolution. Research works, reports, books, magazines, brochures, catalogues, directories, dictionaries and indeed all forms of printed communication are being packaged through digital interactive technology. As with all new technologies, multimedia users can be found at all levels. A strong multimedia based content presentation takes a long time to evolve. Multimedia is making possible applications that offer boundless opportunities in even "non-computer" areas such as music, story telling, literature and theatre. The energy and excitement that multimedia has released in art and humanities faculties is leading to a birth of new synergies between the computer scientists and the domain experts.

Since 1994, IGNCA has been actively engaged in the area of applying multimedia technology to the fields of humanities. As indicated, over a dozen projects have been initiated requiring a multi-disciplinary team of scholars, computer scientists and designers. The group involved has interacted with several experts of national International repute in different areas

In this connection, we will raise the following issues for discussion during the Conference:-

- (i) What novel features are being offered by interactive multimedia to enhance the quality of documentation, presentation, archiving and learning?
- (ii) How are Interactive Multimedia Authoring and production processes different from such processes in other media?
- (iii) What new synergies are being fostered by this technology and with what implications?
- (iv) Can interactive multimedia become the scholar's media or like audio-visual media will it be unable to compete with academic books?
- (v) Can this technology help in breaking the boundaries between disciplines?

(vi) Can Artificial Intelligence support the scholarly investigations and analysis?

(vii) What are the challenges and problems for copyright management of digitised resources?

(viii) What are the social implications of this technology?