

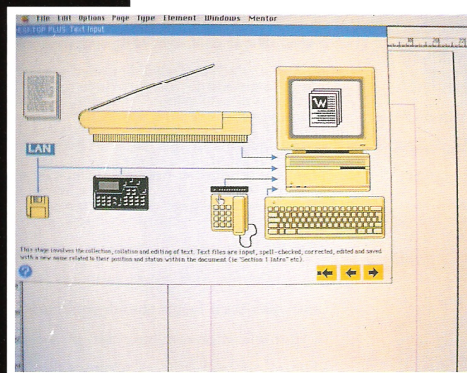
# LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

*The Desktop Publishing Graphic Design Mentor*

## NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR TEACHING DTP USERS

### GRAPHIC DESIGN OR DTP DESIGN

A number of sophisticated and powerful desktop publishing (DTP) programs have been developed in recent years. They extend the usefulness of even the simplest office computer system by giving users the potential to create page designs. Such designs can include anything from a simple order form or leaflet to a complex brochure or newsletter. While many DTP users from junior staff to senior managers have



successfully adapted to earlier technological advances such as the use of word processing facilities, few have any formal training in the necessary principles of graphic design. There is, however, a clear distinction between graphic design and DTP design, and this project has been developed with DTP users in mind. It has not in any sense been developed with the intention of replacing the

complex skills of the professional graphic designer.

### THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE TRAINING

One outcome of the increasing use of such desktop publishing programs is the very real need for effective methods of flexible learning for the non-designer who is expected to use such a system, and who wants to improve the standard of their work. The DTP Graphic Design Mentor applies the latest learning technologies to provide the ideal training solution.



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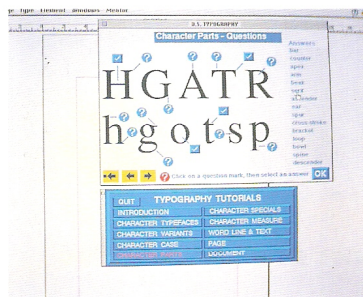
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LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES CASE STUDY

The project is based on the application of 'hypermedia' and CD-ROM. These are two important technologies with considerable potential as a method of providing effective flexible learning. They have both been successfully applied to many other training situations.

### APPROPRIATE LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

Traditional training packages based on text alone may not always offer the most effective or even stimulating solutions. By contrast, hypermedia allows the integration of various media: text, sounds, images and even animations can be combined in the one program. Advice is available as a 'voice-over' commentary to reinforce text presentations. Users working on their design tasks can select the various hypermedia elements that are required to introduce the specific design skills needed for the job in hand.



Making use of complex graphic images consumes a considerable amount of the data storage space on a typical computer system. CD-ROM has been chosen as the means of storing the vast quantity of data required. Hypermedia and CD-ROM have been

combined in this project to create an interesting, and effective form of training.

### A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM

An essential feature of the Mentor project is that it is designed to be available for use alongside conventional DTP software, and with a real design task in progress. Rather than progressing through a series of standard training exercises, this structure allows users to learn effectively as they are helped to design something they actually require. The cost-effective element of such training provision is considerable.

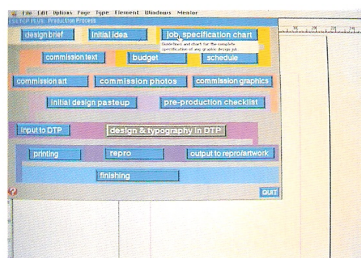
The system offers users a wide variety of features: they are all available as options alongside the PageMaker DTP program.

- The **Design Aid** facility provides users with appropriate advice and tips as they perform various actions in the main DTP program. This is intended to provide instant design help as the user's page design progresses.
- A **Design Index** gives an illustrated glossary of the graphics and typographical terms commonly used by graphic designers. Many of the definitions include an appropriate illustration, and sources of more detailed information.
- The **Design School** is a series of more detailed tutorials on various design topics. Questions are included to reinforce the tutorial information.
- **Design in Action** will offer suggestions as to the most suitable design to use for a particular project. Numerous categories of graphic design are available.

- **Desktop Plus** is a 'map' of all the necessary stages in any design process, from the initial planning to the final finishing processes.
- **Reading Graphics** offers designers' thoughts about how particular designs are created.
- **Status** records how much of each topic has been covered by the user.
- **Where Am I?** gives users a record of their progress as the program is used.

## HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE CONSIDERATIONS

Apple Macintosh is a popular choice of computer system for many of those working in the field of graphic design. The DTP Graphic Design Mentor prototype has been designed to operate on most Mac hardware with a minimum of 4 mb RAM, plus PageMaker software - one of the most advanced DTP packages. The system also requires access to a CD-ROM drive. These are readily available, and easy to add to any current Mac computer. The program was initially developed for systems using the A3 size colour monitors that are commonly used in graphic design studios, but it will also run on Apple 13" colour or greyscale monitors.



## THE THREEFOLD DESIGN STRATEGY

Any design project can be seen as a learning process for the designer. From this fundamental principle evolved the overall threefold strategy of the project. Firstly, DTP users without the benefits of any formal training in graphic design are given an understanding of the design process while they work on a design project of their choice. Secondly, the project provides users with a 'mentor' - a trusted and experienced 'adviser' who will offer information, tips, examples and advice as they work through the design project of their choice. Thirdly, users are presented with a variety of design solutions to whatever problems they face.

## A CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT

This eighteen-month project was funded by the Employment Department, and brought together a development team who shared their various analytical, programming and design skills. Together they created a demonstration prototype of a product that is capable of future development into a commercially important item. One such potential area of development considered by the team is to create a fully interactive version of the system that is capable of providing an evaluation of users' work. Further development could include the increased use of voice, image and animation techniques.