reviews 2005

- review 1

- review 2

- review 3

in response to review 1

a very encouraging review

- This reviewer makes the point that students will relate better to examples –

  answer: That is a good suggestion, and should not be too much work. I will make an effort to find out what my students actually use, and I will include references to what they encounter in commonly used tools (as for example the choice of formats in windows moviemaker).

- Making a commitment to keep the material current is deemed particularly important.

  answer: Indeed. The 'historical' approach taken is to some extent a safeguard. But, if succesful, an update of the book about every 3 years will be necessary.

- Usability should be covered.

  answer: I will include a basic discussion of usability, in particular the apparent opposition between task-related and fun-related usability measures. This will be done in the context of a more extensive case study that we did when developing a 'digital dossier' for the serbian-dutch artist Marina Abramovic.

in response to review 2

the reviewer comes from a business background, characterizes the book as taking a narrower, technical scope, but finds the aims of the book properly focused.

- suggests to spend a few pages on defining multimedia –

  answer: Such a discussion is useful, but should to my mind not be concentrated in one place in the book. I think it would be better to raise the issue in the preface, have some of it in chapter one (which already discusses business issues related to mobile multimedia) and elaborate on it in the context of the practical examples.

- Needs a teaching support framework - learning outcomes stated and addressed, assignments covering the outcomes.

  answer: Most of these frameworks are hardly ever used. Moreover, the basic questions section do to some extent cover this. And also the suggestions

for assignments. I propose to make the hypertextual version available as a zipfile via a password that may be obtained by lecturers using the book.

and: each chapter will start with a brief section *learning goals* indicating which topics will be dealt with, what are considered to be more specialist sections, and an indication of related material in the book.

additional comments

- Both Reviewers called for more illustration. Reviewer 1 made a practical suggestion of including classifications of multimedia systems.

  answer: both illustrations, and when appropriate, tabular overviews will be included, when re-working the manuscript. The number of illustrations will be limted though, about 5-10 per chapter. With regard to the production cost, the illustrations will, to my mind, be black and white.

  as a remark: the inclusion of much illustrative material would only be possible with editorial support (including layout) from Thomson.

- both reviewers liked the compact size

  answer: this should be maintained, in particular the academic focus of the book must be maintained, it is a book about multimedia and not a multimedia artefact itself!

in response to review 3

This reviewer is clearly taking a stance against my approach.

- the reviewer does have a point when it comes to the difficult parts, and for that matter also the issue of (bullit) style in the first chapters.

  answer: I will address the style issues when reworking the manuscript, and I will indicate in the text when it gets too specialized and what can or should be skipped by novice readers.

  in addition: I will strive for a more consistent and flowing style. This includes re-writing a number of the bullit lists into prose, and also the elimination of a number of citations in favor of a discussion of the topics addressed.

  As concerns the more specialist parts, however, it should not be strived for to use a laymans style throughout.

- some parts are too much for specialists –

  answer: in the 'learning goals' section at the beginning of each chapter, it will be outlined what reading route to take, that is which parts may be too specialized

  I think that omitting these sections would take some of the academic flavor of the book, since they provide worthwhile starting points for further research

by the students. Furthermore, it is my experience that the entry-level of many students is quite diverging. So I would prefer an explicit indication perhaps with some typographic support, instead of a radical rewording of the text.

- some topics are not treated or only indicated ...

  answer: I will extend the list of references. Moreover it seems wise to include explicitly an indication of what is not treated, preferably in th 'learning goals' section. For example, in the virtual environments section I briefly touch upon augmented reality, but I do not discuss it in any detail. (see also the comments below)

- the reviewer does the suggestion to re-think the structure and chapter titles of the book

  answer: I feel that this would jeopardize my approach.

  and: The style of giving titles suggested by the reviewer is what I would call reader-oriented, which also holds for titles such what is multimedia? or understanding multimedia. I prefer (what I would like to call) content-oriented titles, that represent the main issue that is treated, such as convergence, standards, etcetera.

how to treat missing topics

The issue here is how to deal with topics that are not dealt with in (much) detail.

I propose the following solution, with as an example *augmented reality*, one of the topics noted missing by reviewer 3:

..., the example of augmented reality is a good case. There is an extensive project in this area to which it is useful to provide pointers. The crucial issue in dealing with such side topics is, to my mind, that it is done consistently in the book, that is that an explanation of the general idea is given as well as a brief description of the technology, that some examples are mentioned and a reference to the resources. including technology and projects. For the example of augmented reality this can be done in the following way:

- general idea – part I – convergence

- technology – part II – standards applications – part IV – applications

- resources – appendix technology and tools

These subjects can be traced in the index or glossary of the book. For the online version of the book it would probably be a good idea to provide an explicit back-index for such topics, that is the topics the discussion of which is spread over the book.

some final comments on style

- Clearly the manuscript needs to be re-worked. However, it should be kept in mind that some issues are difficult to resolve, for example a detailed treatment of the definition of multimedia would lead as in many other books to a verbose and pseudo-philosophical exposition, which does not agree well will the compact style of the rest of the book.

- Illustrations may benefit the appearance of the book, but should be included carefully. The main strength of the book is, to my mind, that it touches upon many issues, including principled one, in a rather non-verbose low-key style.

review(s) 2004

- review #1

in answer to review #1: All in all I find the review quite encouraging, and I must admit that the review hints at some weaknesses of the book (the style I chose at that time) that clearly can and should be improved.

With regard to your markers:

- a division in parts – this is something I should think about. At this stage I still have a preference to extending the manuscript with some additional chapters, possibly transferring some of the technical material from the appendices.

- caption-stutter - this clearly needs to be looked at, and since the 'slide-approach' (which stemmed from my OO-book) might afterall not me the most effective for this book, readability should have the prioprity.

More in general, the technical updates and improvements in style the reviewer proposes are well-motivated and feasible. For example, both the sections on RM3D and the semantic web should be rewritten, to convey the change of scene over the last 3-4 years. In this process the interaction with a copy-editor will certainly be helpful.

All in all I am happy with the positive attitude the reviewer has to the introduction multimedia book project as a whole, since it seems to bring us one step closer to the realization of the project.

earlier reviews

- review 1

- review 2