

What is a Multimedia Application?

- DVDs
- Web sites
- Movie publicity sites
- Self-contained programs (e.g. iTunes Music Store)

A Definition

A multimedia application is *an organized, directed, and interactive collection of digital assets that provides something of value to its user*

“Organized”

- Not just a bunch of files
- Two levels of organization:
 - Internal — how the author puts them together
 - External — how the user sees them

“Directed”

- Not a shoebox — follows from organization
- The author imposes or proposes a structure through which the user experiences the application

“Interactive”

- Users are *active participants* of a multimedia application, not passive
- Listening to music, reading a book, or watching a movie is considered passive
- Passive activity occurs at the “leaves” of a multimedia application

“Digital Assets”

- Can be anything, really, that can be stored on and presented by a computer
- But, more commonly: images, sound, video, copy (text)

“Something of Value”

- What does the user get out of a multimedia application?
 - Entertainment
 - Information, Skills
 - Insight...? Transformation...?
- The bottom line: why would someone want to sit through your application?

Delivering Multimedia

- Multimedia applications are *delivered* or *deployed* in different ways
- Note how it is useful to view the *deployment mechanism* as distinct from the application itself

“source” application — raw assets, scripts, code



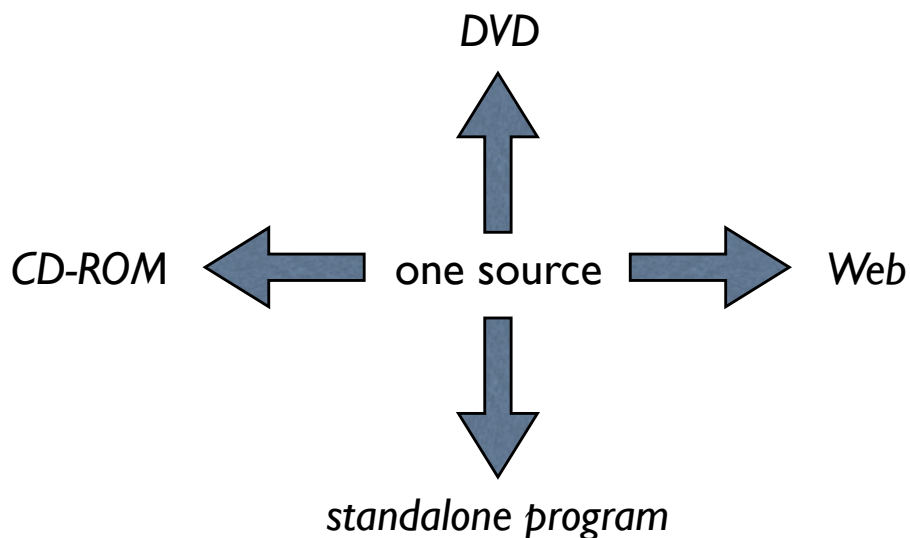
deployment mechanism — DVD, Web, standalone



user

Note how users don't typically distinguish the deployment mechanism from the application — but you're authors now, and it is useful for us to make that distinction.

Ideally, a single “source” application can be seamlessly delivered through multiple mechanisms.



“Seamlessly,” meaning “no extra work on your part.”
— Nice in concept, but not always true in practice.

- Frequently, the source application is distinct from its deployed form
- This is true of media delivery in general; for example, a burned audio CD:
 - Source — audio files on your computer (MP3)
 - Deployed — standardized format that is readable by CD players
 - Sound is *re-encoded* in a form that standard CD players can play back (AIFF)
 - CD structure, tracks/time, also included

A Sampling

Source	Deployment
iDVD, DVD Studio Pro project	DVD disc
Flash .FLA file	Flash .SWF file
HTML files (among others)	Web browser window
Program code	Double-clickable application

Terms Terms Terms

- Depending on the technology, the conversion of *source* to *deployment* can take on many terms:
 - Encoding — typically refers to digital assets
 - Compilation — deployment of program code
 - Rendering — usually refers to computer graphics

From Assets to Application

“Raw” Assets	“Camera-Ready” Assets	Structure
images from camera	clean, composited images	depends on the technology: DVD authoring, proprietary editor (e.g. Flash, Director), Web site editor, programming language
DV video	edited video	
recorded tracks	mastered audio	
words	proofread, perhaps formatted, text	

This is what we’re about — this is multimedia authoring.