MULTIMEDIA PROJECT MANAGEMENT

THE CONTRACT

For Independent Filmmakers, producers, directors, and production managers

What needs to be covered

- A **contract** is an agreement between parties that defines the benefits and responsibilities for those concerned.

- Multimedia contracts will involve several documents and several parties.
  - The agreement is not only with the clients but with the staff and with any companies that we work with during the project

Background to multimedia contracts

- Multimedia development is a combination stages from different media production processes
  - Difficult to apply one form of agreement
  - Clients may have well background in experience in commissioning some of the media components
  - Clients may have expectations from previous work practices they have encountered.
- It is difficult for a client to trust something that is expensive and unknown.

- Inexperienced clients
  - Exert more control on multimedia projects
  - Want to understand the processes lie behind a project development
  - Want to feel they are getting their money's worth
  - As a result, they query more, they hesitate o make decisions, and they want justification for actions
- Because of this climate of uncertainty, it is important to agree how to work together to help smooth the production path.

Agreeing how to work together

- Contracts are agreements with responsibilities on both sides
  - Agreements are made on understanding, understanding comes from knowledge
    - How to give clients knowledge about working processes of multimedia development and their responsibilities on it.
- It is easier to reach an equitable agreement if both sides understand what is involved and what each one is expected to contribute

Agreeing how to work together

- Larger companies(developers & clients)
  - Have a set of standard terms and conditions
    - Set out the general way the company deal with contractual agreements
    - The first part :outlines a set of principles that will applied to each contract
    - The second part: drafted according to the principles specifically for each project.
      - Times, cost, deliverables…
- However , terms and conditions rarely explain in enough details the development in actual practice.

Agreeing how to work together

- The proposal documents is often used as the basis for the agreement of the second part of the set terms and conditions, even when there are more formal contractual arrangements.

- Once the proposal is accepted, the successful completion relies on both parties

Agreeing how to work together

- At certain points, the development company has to pass control to the clients and cannot proceed without agreement and the subsequent handling back control

- Real problem lie in the definition of clients role:
  - They hold the balance of power because they are paying the service
  - Customers is always right from retail perspective.
  - But in collaborative process, if depending clients to provide material and decisions according to the schedule, we should not held responsible for deficiencies that originate with the clients.
  - it is perfectly acceptable for the responsibilities of both sides to be agreed.

- The clients responsibilities need to be defined, get their agreement that they will accept the consequences of time, cost and quality changes if they do not fulfill their side of bargain.
  - The company and project manager have to accept the responsibility and liability for not fulfilling their own responsibilities.

Agreeing how to work together

- Another aspect to account in clients relationship
  - Even the client has agreed to defined dates and processes, the project may be revised in terms of the priority level it receives from them because of other factors.
  - Contacts within the client company will be subject to their own pressures from their own organization and internal matters will often given priority than external projects.
    - We need to understand their pressure they are under, because these will affect the project.

Agreeing how to work together

- Every multimedia project is unique because the products are tailored to circumstances.
  - Follow certain stages and rely on certain points of agreement or acceptance
- The way of working may not be defined in a company but it will help our role if we explain the way that we want to work with the clients
  - We can show the prior example to the clients
  - It is our interest to encourage the management to define the documentation and the ways of working.

Agreeing how to work together

- As long as these remain defined at the level of guidelines, they will be flexible enough to allow the project manager to decide exactly which combination may be right for a particular project.

Agreeing how to work together

Developer

Client

Collaborative agreement

Shared responsibilities

Project control

Project completion

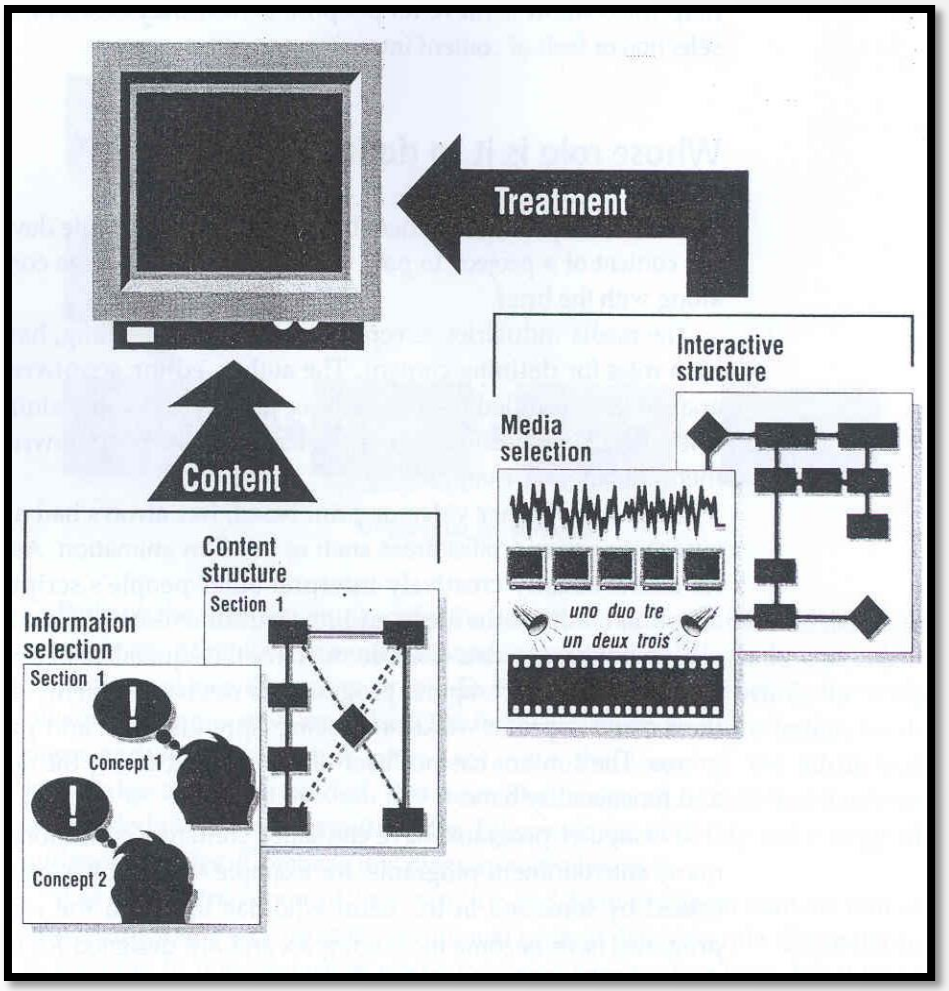
- Agreeing the content
- Communication
- Stages of the project
- Responsibilities

Agreeing the content

- **The importance of content:**

Design quality is defined in terms of **content** and **treatment.**

Content : the message or information contained in the product.
Treatment : the media, the techniques associated with the media, and the interface.
Despite its centrally role in the most multimedia projects **the content is often neglected**. More importance is given to the visual treatment than the messages.



❑The quality of the content depends on:

- The selection
- Breadth
- Depth
- Appropriateness for the audience
- Pace of delivery
- The sequence in which it is presented

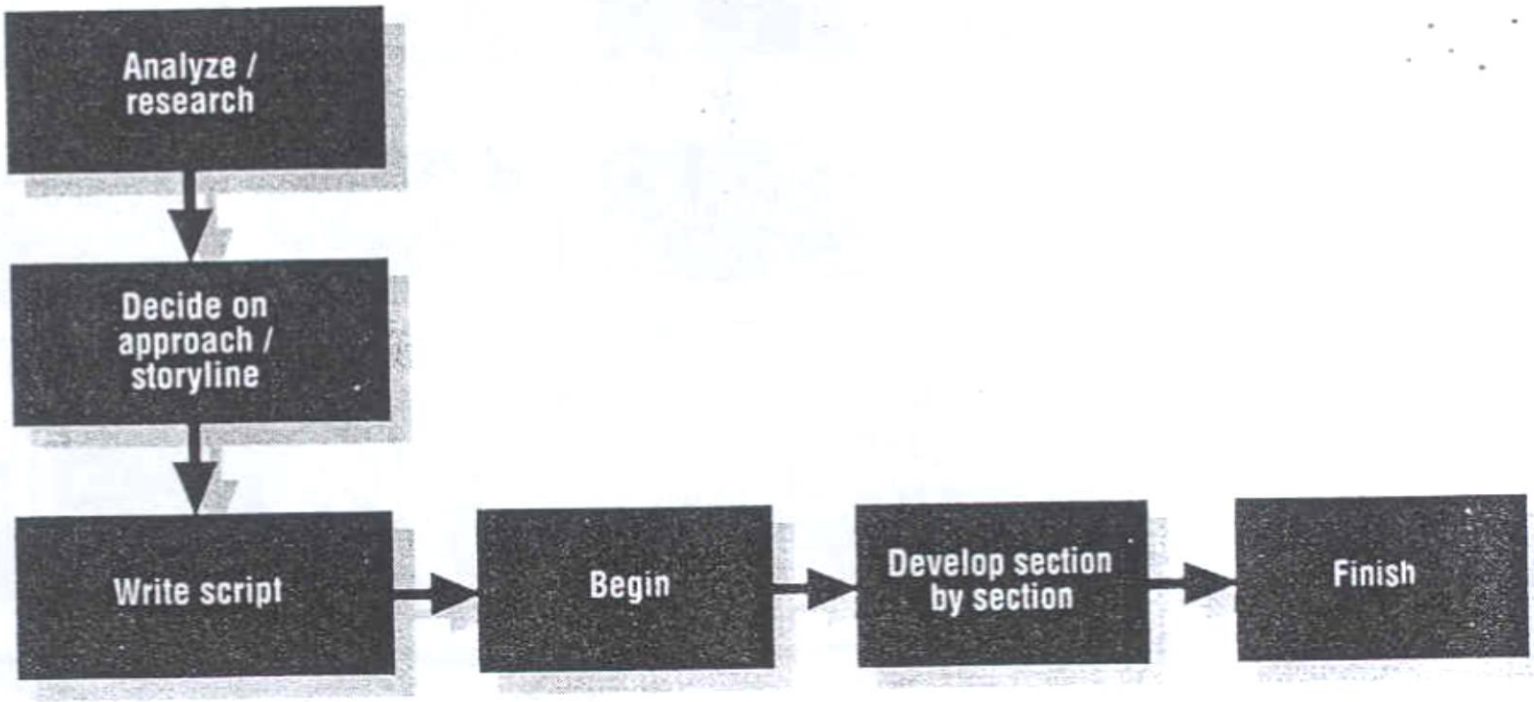
The media techniques can only serve to help the content achieve its purpose better, they can not make up for poor selection or lack of content integrity .

Whose role is it to define content?

- In new media production there has been no specialist role devoted to defining the content of a project. It may because of the additional skills that are needed in compare with scripting for linear media.

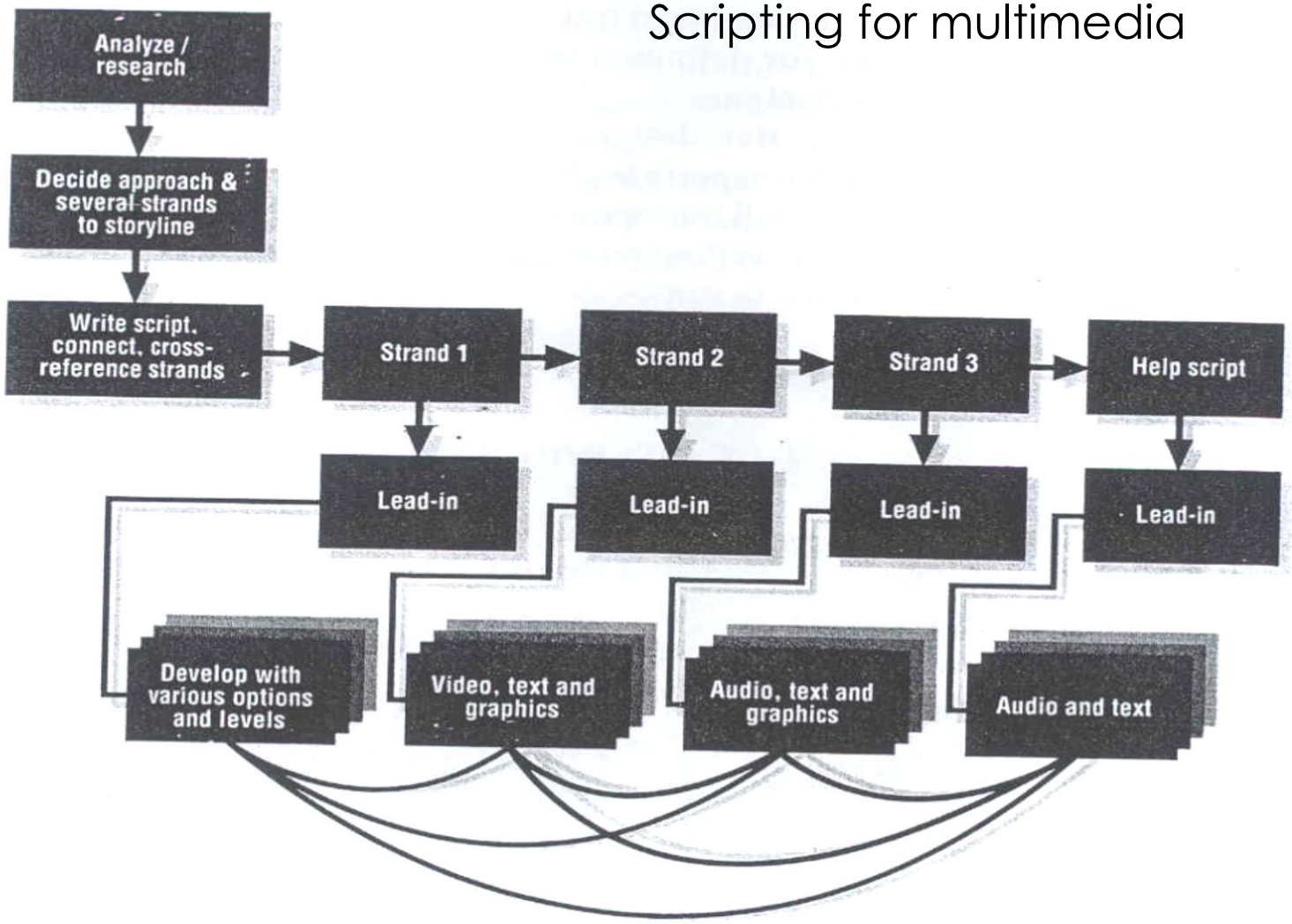
- It is not meant to belittle the skills of working in one medium, which has its own complexities but in multimedia it is more like designing a relational database of knowledge on a subject suitable for different level of ability and a range of audience profiles. By comparing the diagrams we can see how these two are different from each other.

Scripting for linear media



Scripting for linear media.

Scripting for multimedia



Scripting for multimedia.

Skills needed for multimedia scripting

There are many types of scripting projects and since scripting for multimedia is complicated it needs a complex set of skills which include:

- making decision on what material is relevant
- Deciding which media would be right for the purpose
- Scripting various levels of materials in different media
- Providing a unity between the levels by providing navigation diagrams

Skills needed for multimedia scripting

- Understanding the user and the implications of user choice on material
- Being able to communicate
- Keeping the vision of the whole project
- Organizing the material into a detailed design document

General principles for establishing the content

- The purpose drives the selection of content
- The age range of the intended audience can influence content selection
- Market trends can influence content selection
- The companies culture can affect the content
- The purpose of the project which will indicate the length of time the user spend on the system, determines the depth and breadth of the content
- Content that dates quickly should be avoided, or put in a format that is easily updatable.

Communication

- During a project we face to different changes that have different causes. But one of the most common is an alteration to the work specification.

- The computer industry has had to developed some form of control, this is called **change control** or **change management.**

- Communicating the changes may seem trivial, but the team is usually an extended one in which some processes are performed off site.

- Contacting several people to communicate a change and ensuring that they remember to carry it out is not trivial. Even identifying the change can be problematic. Unless each component has the identification code .

Apart from informing everyone any documentation will need to be revised and extra copies given out. This documentation for multimedia project can run into several hundred pages.

- On the other hand clients need to understand the possible consequences of changes.

- So documenting the changes and reporting the in an organized way is difficult.

Software engineers recommend using a **change request form,** which would have the following features:

- project name
- Date
- Change initiated by
- Change description
- Requirement affected
- Other program effect
- Other system effect
- Planned start and completion resources affected
- Approvals

➢This make it clear that any change needs to be considered by all involved for the possible impact and the time for implementing the change to be agreed. Although the this form will not be useful completely for ever type of multimedia projects but The similar process is needed in multimedia developments.

Stages of a product

- **A product generally follows these stages of development:**

1) Agreement to the overall structure and major content area

2) Agreement of platform for offline projects, the system's technical capabilities for online, and product specification for both types of project

3) Agreement to the detail of each component: text, navigation methods/menus, audio, graphics, video.

4) Agreement that the package operates as stipulated for phase 1.

5) Agreement that the product has fulfilled all specifications and is concluded.

Responsibilities

- **Project manager's responsibilities**:

➢ to work with the client to produce a mutually acceptable proposal that outlines the project content, timing and budget

➢To produce a detailed work schedule consistent with agreed start and finish dates, which will map out phases of production.

➢To monitor and record time spend on the project

➢To keep clients informed on:
a)general progress
b)on any slippage as it occurs and actions to be taken to remedy it
c)On any suggested changes to the specification arising from technical or design factors as soon as these occurs
d)On any other factors that affect the project

- to ensure that each part of the project is produces to the right technical arrangement

- to ensure that the structure and approach to the program are agreed and signed off

- to ensure that the content is agreed and signed off

- To agree the number of turn-around days for the client organization for any revision

- to provide deadline for the client

- To get final sign off for the completion of the project

❑ The client's responsibilities

- to prepare a clear brief for the developers
- To work together on the detail of specifications
- To inform the project manager of any factors that will interrupt on the project
- To keep within the accept revised time, cost, and quality penalties
- To agree that any changes made after deadlines will incur time, cost, and quality penalties
- To agree that any slippage caused by delay of any type by the organization will incur time, cost, and quality penalties
- To help the developer gain access to any people or materials in the organization who will aid the project

- Cost/Budget Management

Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of project cost management.
- Explain basic project cost management principles, concepts, and terms.
- Discuss different types of cost estimates and methods for preparing them.

What is Cost and Project Cost Management?

- **Cost** is a resource sacrificed or foregone to achieve a specific objective, or something given up in exchange.
- Costs are usually measured in monetary units, such as dollars.
- **Project cost management** includes the processes required to ensure that the project is completed within an approved budget.

Project Cost Management Processes

- **Cost estimating**: Developing an approximation or estimate of the costs of the resources needed to complete a project.
- **Cost budgeting**: Allocating the overall cost estimate to individual work items to establish a baseline for measuring performance.
- **Cost control**: Controlling changes to the project budget.

Basic Principles of Cost Management

- Most members of an executive board have a better understanding and are more interested in financial terms than IT terms, so IT project managers must speak their language.
  - **Profits** are revenues minus expenses.
  - **Life cycle costing** considers the total cost of ownership, or development plus support costs, for a project.
  - **Cash flow analysis** determines the estimated annual costs and benefits for a project and the resulting annual cash flow.

Basic Principles of Cost Management

- **Tangible costs** or **benefits** are those costs or benefits that an organization can easily measure in dollars.
- **Intangible costs** or **benefits** are costs or benefits that are difficult to measure in monetary terms.
- **Direct costs** are costs that can be directly related to producing the products and services of the project.
- **Indirect costs** are costs that are not directly related to the products or services of the project, but are indirectly related to performing the project.
- **Sunk cost** is money that has been spent in the past; when deciding what projects to invest in or continue, you should *not* include sunk costs.

Cost Estimating

- Project managers must take cost estimates seriously if they want to complete projects within budget constraints.
- It's important to know the types of cost estimates, how to prepare cost estimates, and typical problems associated with IT cost estimates.

Cost Management Plan

- A **cost management plan** is a document that describes how the organization will manage cost variances on the project.
- A large percentage of total project costs are often labor costs, so project managers must develop and track estimates for labor.

Cost Estimation Tools and Techniques

Basic tools and techniques for cost estimates:

- **Analogous** or **top-down estimates**: Use the actual cost of a previous, similar project as the basis for estimating the cost of the current project.
- **Bottom-up estimates**: Involve estimating individual work items or activities and summing them to get a project total.
- **Parametric modeling**: Uses project characteristics (parameters) in a mathematical model to estimate project costs.
- **Computerized tools**: Tools, such as spreadsheets and project management software, that can make working with different cost estimates and cost estimation tools easier.

Constructive Cost Model (COCOMO)

- Barry Boehm helped develop the COCOMO models for estimating software development costs.
- Parameters include:
  - **Function points**: Technology-independent assessments of the functions involved in developing a system.
  - **Source Lines of Code** (**SLOC**): A human-written line of code that is not a blank line or comment.
- Boehm suggests that only parametric models do not suffer from the limits of human decision-making.

Typical Problems with IT Cost Estimates

- Developing an estimate for a large software project is a complex task that requires a significant amount of effort.
- People who develop estimates often do not have much experience.
- Human beings are biased toward underestimation.
- Management might ask for an estimate, but really desire a bid to win a major contract or get internal funding.

Sample Cost Estimate

- describes how to create a cost estimate for the Surveyor Pro project described in the opening case.
- Before creating an estimate, know what it will be used for, gather as much information about the project as possible, and clarify the ground rules and assumptions for the estimate.
- If possible, estimate costs by major WBS categories.
- Create a cost model to make it easy to change and document the estimate.

Cost Budgeting

- Cost budgeting involves allocating the project cost estimate to individual work items over time.
- The WBS is a required input for the cost budgeting process because it defines the work items.
- Important goal is to produce a **cost baseline**:
  - A time-phased budget that project managers use to measure and monitor cost performance.

Cost Control

- Project cost control includes:
  - Monitoring cost performance.
  - Ensuring that only appropriate project changes are included in a revised cost baseline.
  - Informing project stakeholders of authorized changes to the project that will affect costs.
- Many organizations around the globe have problems with cost control.

Earned Value Management (EVM)

- **EVM** is a project performance measurement technique that integrates scope, time, and cost data.
- Given a **baseline** (original plan plus approved changes), you can determine how well the project is meeting its goals.
- You must enter actual information periodically to use EVM.
- More and more organizations around the world are using EVM to help control project costs.

Earned Value Management Terms

- The **planned value (PV)**, formerly called the budgeted cost of work scheduled (BCWS), also called the budget, is that portion of the approved total cost estimate planned to be spent on an activity during a given period.
- **Actual cost (AC)**, formerly called actual cost of work performed (ACWP), is the total of direct and indirect costs incurred in accomplishing work on an activity during a given period.
- The **earned value (EV)**, formerly called the budgeted cost of work performed (BCWP), is an estimate of the value of the physical work actually completed.
- EV is based on the original planned costs for the project or activity and the rate at which the team is completing work on the project or activity to date.

Project Portfolio Management

- Many organizations collect and control an entire suite of projects or investments as one set of interrelated activities in a portfolio.
- Project portfolio management has five levels:

1. Put all your projects in one database.
2. Prioritize the projects in your database.
3. Divide your projects into two or three budgets based on type of investment.
4. Automate the repository.
5. Apply modern portfolio theory, including risk-return tools that map project risk on a curve.

Using Software to Assist in Cost Management

- Spreadsheets are a common tool for resource planning, cost estimating, cost budgeting, and cost control.
- Many companies use more sophisticated and centralized financial applications software for cost information.
- Project management software has many cost-related features, especially enterprise PM software.