It's showtime!

Scott Colvey takes you through the creation of your own multimedia presentation.

These days, it seems that everyone has access to a multimedia PC. With one, you can view colourful presentations and interact with multimedia offerings aplenty — but how about making a show of your own? Well, with the right software it's a breeze and in this workshop we're looking at the powerful multimedia-authoring tool Medi8tor 3 — a fully-working version of which is to be found on this month's cover-mounted CD-ROM.

We'll show you the ropes by working through a simple project extolling the virtues of *PCW* magazine. We've assumed that you will choose Medi8tor's 'Max' install option.

While working through this example, be sure to save regularly, then if you make a mistake or your computer decides to throw a wobbly, you can always go back to your last save point.
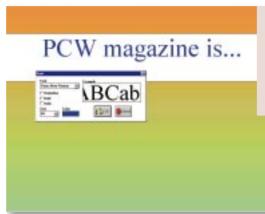
☞ Getting started
Medi8tor kicks off with a rather daunting grey screen: this is your working space — an electronic easel if you will. Onto this you can place objects, from simple coloured rectangles to overlaid video clips, using the tools in the floating box on the left-hand side. From top to bottom, left to right, the tool buttons are: Selection; Button; Rectangle; Toned rectangle; Picture; Video; Video overlay; and Text object.

For this project we are going to create a basic multimedia experience, using the clipart and audio and video samples supplied with Medi8tor. Obviously, you can use whatever else you might have at your disposal.

☞ The first steps
First, let's create an attractive background on which to stage our multimedia show.

Switch to Medi8tor's full-screen mode by selecting the appropriate option from the View menu — finished projects work in full screen, so this is the best way to work when building one. If you want to access the menus, you can still reach

◄ **FIG 1 YOU CAN ADD NUMEROUS TEXT OBJECTS, COPYING AND PASTING IF REQUIRED**

them by using their keyboard shortcuts — Alt+F will bring up the File menu, for instance.

Select the Toned rectangle tool, then click in the top left-hand corner of your workspace and drag a rectangle to fill the whole page. You can change the colour and gradation by right-clicking anywhere within the rectangle, setting the Top color and Bottom color options as desired.

☞ Adding objects
Medi8tor treats everything on the workspace as an 'object'. Objects can be added and removed at will, as well as being manipulated in any number of ways. For example, to add a text object to your show, click the Text tool. The cursor will change to a crosshair — use this to click and drag a text box.

Now type in some text. Right-click within the borders of the text box to get a context menu which lets you change the font style, size, alignment and so on [Fig 1].

☞ Grid rules
If you want to keep things neat and tidy along the way, you'll probably benefit from using Medi8tor's Grid option. Once enabled, this helps you to line up objects by making them 'snap' to the grid's rule lines — use the Alt+N keyboard shortcut to bring up the Grid dialogue box, setting the X and Y pixel points to your requirements; we'll stick with the default of 8 x 8. Check the Use and Show boxes and then click OK.
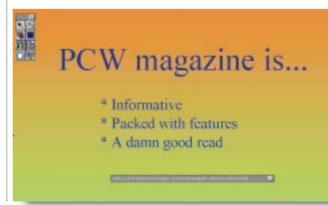
☞ Buttons
Add a few more text objects, perhaps in the form of bullet points, as in the screen shown in Fig 2. We're going to make each text object show itself on the click of a button, so we need to add some buttons.

Select the Button tool and click-and-drag to draw a small button near the bottom of the screen. Use the Ctrl+C keyboard shortcut to copy this first button and then paste the appropriate number of replicas (one per bullet point) using Ctrl+V. Position the buttons by clicking and dragging them to the desired location on-screen.

When you create new objects, Medi8tor automatically names them incrementally (Button01, Button02 and so on) copying and pasting the results in several objects with the same name. Left unaltered this will cause problems later, so we must now give each button a unique name.

Right-click on each one in turn, select Name from the context menu and label it with a fitting moniker. Any object can be named in this way.

◄ **FIG 2 MEDI8TOR'S TEXT-EDITING FEATURE WORKS LIKE ANY WORD PROCESSOR; JUST RIGHT-CLICK FOR OPTIONS**

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Word Processing
Windows 3.1
Visual Programmi
Unix Networks

☞ Page events

Our page now looks the part but it doesn't do anything useful — as yet. Medi8tor enables you to set trigger events and actions in order to make things happen. In other words, in the event of someone clicking Button01, the action could be to play a sound and display the first bullet-pointed text object.

First, though, we must tell Medi8tor to kick off the first page of our show with the text objects hidden. Press F9 to call up the Page Events dialogue box. In the scroll-box to the left are Events. Actions are in the one at the top. The event we want is Start (so that our actions are triggered as soon as we launch the show) and the action is Hide.

Drag and drop the Start icon into the blank area of the dialogue box; follow this with the Hide icon from the Actions scroll-box. As soon as you drop the Hide icon, a second dialogue box will appear requesting the name of the object you wish to hide — select this from the drop-down list under Object. Add further Hide icons for each text object that needs to be concealed. Also, add Hide icons for all but one of the buttons, leaving Button01 [Fig 3]. If you want to see the results so far, press F5 to test the show. Press Escape to return to the editing window.

☞ Object events and actions

Now we'll bring the buttons to life. Right-click on Button01 and choose Events from the pop-up menu. Drag the Mouse click icon from the Events scroll-box into the empty pane, followed by a Show icon.

Select the text object you want to display (Text02 in our example). Now drag-and-drop a Hide icon and tell Medi8tor to hide Button01.

Finally, add a Show icon and tell it to show Button02. Repeat this procedure for all remaining buttons and text objects, hiding the previously-clicked button and showing the next. Feel free to experiment with the Effect types: you might want your bullet-points to scroll on, or your buttons to disappear in tiles; whatever you choose. Press F5 to check your progress and Escape to return.

☞ Button labels

It's all working well, but let's change those unfriendly labels on the buttons. Right-click each button in turn, selecting Edit then Object from the context menu. Give them informative labels. You can also change the styles and colours from here.

☞ Adding pages

Medi8tor enables you to easily create multi-page shows. Press F8 to bring up the Page dialogue box. Click the New page button and type in an appropriate name ('Page2', say), then hit Close. Your show now has a second, blank page. On

this page we are going to add a video clip of Bill Gates voicing his opinion on *PCW* magazine — this clip is part of Medi8tor's sample media library.

Add a colourful background as before and continue the theme of the previous page by adding the '*PCW* magazine is...' text object. By pressing the Page Up key, you could copy this (Ctrl+C) from the first page, press Page Down and then paste it (Ctrl+V) onto the new page.

☞ Video clips

Select the Video tool and then draw a box in the middle of the page. An Animation & Video dialogue box will appear. Click the little grey button to the left of File and use the browse window to locate the BILL.AVI clip in the folder Medi8tor\example. Check the Auto start and Scale boxes in the dialogue box and then click OK [Fig 4].

☞ Wrapping it up

Page Up to the previous page. Right-click on the last button to be displayed and then choose Events from the context menu. Drag the Timeline icon from the Actions scroll-box; a Timeline dialogue box will appear. Into this, drag-and-drop a Turn page icon from the Actions box, selecting Page 2 from the Turn page drop-down list. Type 10 seconds into the Timeline timer box — we have just instructed Medi8tor to wait for ten seconds before flipping the page after the click of the last button.

That's our completed show. By now you should have got to grips with Medi8tor's intuitive drag-and-drop operation. Most of the Event and Action icons are self-explanatory so just experiment with them and in no time at all you'll be creating all-singing, all-dancing multimedia shows.

Once you have finished, you can use the InstallMaker option (from the File menu) to package them up into executable files which you can give to friends and colleagues. And, they will not even need to have Medi8tor installed to view them.

PCW CONTACTS

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