

The Multimedia Source

If you have a sinking feeling that you really *should* start learning about multimedia, this is an excellent book for you. The insightful premise of Jeff Burger's *Desktop Multimedia Bible* is that people are coming to multimedia from a variety of fields. He explains multimedia's underlying technologies in very clear terms. The book also provides good descriptions



of the available tools and, most important – useful tips on how to achieve professional effects using them. Techies may be offended by the first two chapters, which explain the fundamentals of electronic media and computers, but the rest of us have gained a useful reference guide to consult whenever the weenies get too haughty.

– Daniel Todd ●

The *Desktop Multimedia Bible*, by Jeff Burger, \$32.95, Addison-Wesley: +1 (415) 599 3616.

► insight and pleasure to those of us on the cusp of the world of letters that was and the one that will be. Most of these worthy titles are now out of print, so check your library. – Paul Levinson

Marshall McLuhan: The Medium and the Messenger, by Philip Marchand, \$19.95, Ticknor & Fields: +1 (212) 420 5800. (Out of print.)

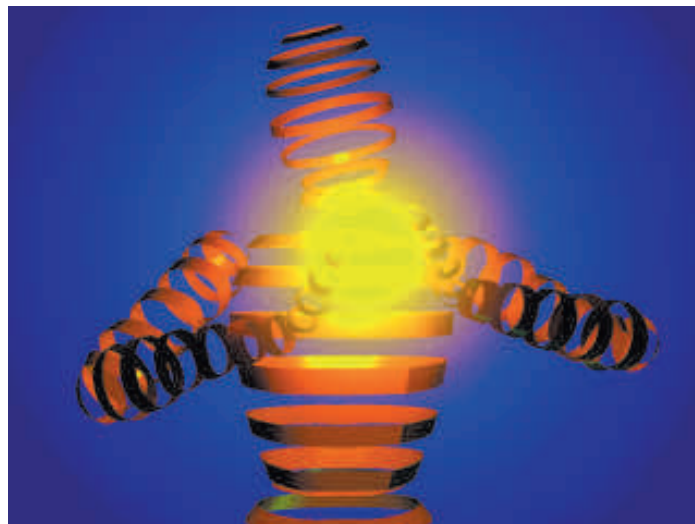
Marshall McLuhan: The Man and His Message, edited by George Sanderson and Frank Macdonald, \$17.95, Fulcrum: +1 (303) 277 1623.

Laws of Media: The New Science, by Marshall and Eric McLuhan, \$18.95, University of Toronto Press: +1 (416) 667 7791. (Out of print.)

Letters of Marshall McLuhan, edited by Matie Molinaro, Corinne McLuhan, and William Toye, Oxford University Press: +1 (212) 679 7300. (Out of print.)

The Global Village: Transformations in World Life and Media in the 21st Century, by Marshall McLuhan and Bruce R. Powers, \$22.95, Oxford University Press: (800) 451 7556, +1 (212) 679 7300.

The Choice for 3-D Animation



A still from an Electric Image-rendered animation by Jim Ludtke.

Once the exclusive domain of a few specialized firms, computer animation is now commonplace. Several Macintosh packages generate interesting 3-D images, but for 3-D animation, no software engenders more rave reviews than the Electric Image Animation System.

Electric Image's programmers have optimized their code for the Mac – it renders several times faster than other Mac 3-D programs and is extremely stable. Many animators consider it the only Mac package upon which you can truly base a computer-based animation business. Some go so far as to say that, depending on the image, Electric Image on a Quadra 950 cooks faster than RenderMan on a Silicon Graphics Indigo workstation.

Electric Image includes powerful implementations of texture mapping, transparency effects, environment mapping, shadow casting, unlimited light sources, and many other features. It is an expensive program designed for professionals that clearly competes with workstation solutions. When I hear complaints that it's too expensive, I grin and hope that all my competitors feel that way. – Chris Allain ●

Electric Image Animation System: \$7,495, Electric Image: +1 (818) 577 1627.

Digital Guide Done Right

The *Digital Restaurant Guide* (DRG) from Digital Lantern is an elaborately layered HyperCard stack that has nearly 3,000 restaurant reviews of San Francisco eateries. The maps are geo-coded – when you type in two street names, the stack goes right to the map of their intersection. Restaurants are de-noted on the map as little dots. Touch a dot with the mouse and the restaurant name appears. Another nice feature is a description of when the restaurant opens and closes – in literal, plain English: “Open for another two hours and ten minutes,” it might say, or, “Closed thirty-two minutes ago,” – a very human touch. Another nice element is that you can unlock cards in the stack and add your own reviews to restaurants you visit. The “Bill Handler” is a custom calculator that will automatically add tax and gratuity to your



bill. Other features include a “best picks” selection and food glossary; dress-code, parking, and handicapped access info; and my personal favorite – “Restaurants within two blocks of Moscone Center.”

Problem is, as much as I love HyperCard, it actually runs on HyperCard! Which means, due to the enormous size of the stacks, it can be really slow. Recommended: a PowerBook with a 68030 chip (or better) and at least 8 Mbytes of RAM. The company looks forward to a day when restaurant review-location updates can be sent out via radio mail – so that a mobile group of reviewers could upload new reviews and users could download them with ease. Overall, a well thought-out and executed product with strong features and navigational tools. *Bon appetit!*

– Will Kreth ●

San Francisco DRG: \$59, Digital Lantern: +1 (415) 337 6410.