

Encyclopedic Resources

After completing this chapter, you will be able to:

- Take advantage of the encyclopedic resources on CD, DVD, and the Internet
- Appreciate the power of online searching as a research tool
- Understand how the Smithsonian, the Library of Congress, the Louvre, and museums and libraries all over the world have gone online
- Realize when and why the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* went online

- A wealth of encyclopedic resources are available on multimedia CD and DVD and online via networks on the Information Superhighway. CD and DVD provide the convenience of owning the resource and being able to use it on any multimedia PC. Networks provide access to much more information, which is usually more up-to-date than the CD or DVD. By linking articles on disc to related Web sites, CD and DVD encyclopedias provide you with a way to get updated information online, thereby combining the best of both worlds.

Encyclopedias on CD and DVD

Anyone who has used a printed encyclopedia will appreciate the convenience of multimedia CD and DVD. Not only does it seem to take forever to find the information you want in a printed encyclopedia, but you also have to check all of the annual updates, which are printed in separate volumes. CD and DVD not only solve this problem by providing rapid full-text searching, but they also cost less. Thanks to the computer price wars, the entire multimedia PC costs less than the printed *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

In 1985, Grolier became the first company to publish its printed encyclopedia in a multimedia CD version. Now the *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* is available in a deluxe double-CD version containing 37,000 articles, 15,000 images, 1,200 maps, 177 videos, a 250,000-word dictionary, 150 Panorama photos, and more than 16 hours of sound. Another 22,000 articles are online on the Web. Research Starters provide students with multimedia lists that guide the beginner. The Online Knowledge Explorer provides access to 26,000 Grolier-selected Web sites and more than 500 free article updates every month. The DVD version, pictured in Figure 8-1, has 50% more video than the CD-ROM version. For more information, follow the *Multilit* Web site link to Grolier Online.

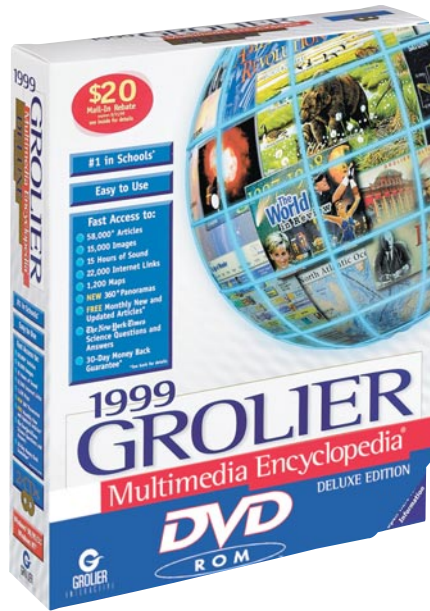


Figure 8-1 The DVD version of the *Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia* has 50% more video than the double CD-ROM version.

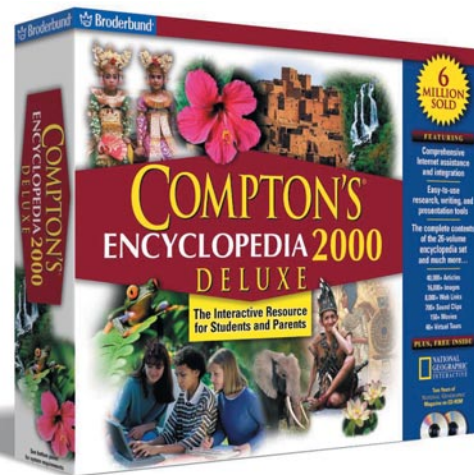


Figure 8-2 Compton's interactive encyclopedia contains the full text and graphics of the 26-volume *Compton's Encyclopedia* plus multimedia enhanced sound and movies.

Compton's also publishes a multimedia version of its printed encyclopedia. Shown in Figure 8-2, *Compton's Encyclopedia Deluxe* contains the full text and graphics of the 26 printed volumes; thousands of pictures, drawings, and photos; easy-to-use research paths to retrieve information; an interactive world atlas with links to 121,000 related pictures and articles; enhanced sound and full-motion video for Windows; and the complete *Merriam-Webster OnLine Dictionary and Thesaurus*.

Compton's researched what tools would make the encyclopedia most useful and provides a rich set of options for browsing and searching. Search and Discover lets you search the encyclopedia for any topic. The timeline tool lets you access information on important people and events in U.S. and world history. An Outline view displays a general outline of history, and a Detail view offers detailed accounts of specific events. The Report Starter facilitates note-taking, outline-generating, and scholarly writing with proper bibliographic style. The Presentation Maker lets you bookmark articles, and multimedia resources then assemble them into a slide show with narration. Ask a Librarian lets you pose research questions at Compton's Web site, where you are promised a response within two working days. A planetarium lets you enter your longitude, latitude, date, and time to find out what celestial bodies will be visible then and there. For the latest information, follow the *Multitit* Web site link to Compton's.

Encarta is a multimedia encyclopedia by Microsoft. Pictured in Figure 8-3, *Encarta* includes more than 42,000 articles in 93 categories, a gallery with more than 7,000 photographic images, 170 videos and animations, 2,500 sound clips, and more than 19,000 Web links. Users access this information in several ways. The contents page lets you view all available resources at a glance, then jump to sidebars containing famous

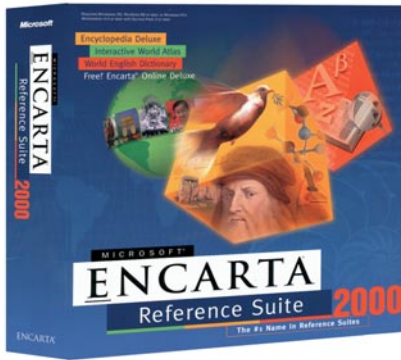


Figure 8-3 Microsoft *Encarta* has Natural Language Search, which brings up content related to questions you type in ordinary English.

Encarta Box shot reprinted with permission from Microsoft Corporation.

speeches, historical documents, and literary excerpts. There is an alphabetical index, a category browser that lets you narrow down topics by category and subcategory, a dynamic timeline that puts events in chronological order and lets you compare historical events around the world, and an atlas that lets you select places by zooming in on a map. You can use the Pinpointer search engine to search for specific words or phrases within any article, or you can use Natural Language Search, which lets you type questions in ordinary English that *Encarta* parses and links to relevant content. *Encarta* also lets you set bookmarks, take notes, and copy both textual and multimedia material into personalized files.

The DVD version of *Encarta* contains more than twice as many videos and four times as many 360-degree views than the CD-ROM version. For more information, follow the *Multilit* Web site link to *Encarta*.

It was not until 1995 that the *World Book Encyclopedia* and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* began to retail on CD-ROM. These flagship encyclopedias delayed moving into an electronic form until market pressures required them to do so. Pictured in Figure 8-4, the *World Book* CD comes in three versions: standard, deluxe, and premier. The deluxe version adds more video and comes with wizards for creating quizzes, Web pages, reports, charts, and time lines. The premier version is speech enabled and includes *Rand McNally New Millennium World Atlas Deluxe*, *Merriam Webster's Reference Library*, and three *Information Please Almanacs*. The reference library contains a homework tool kit and research wizards. For more information, follow the *Multilit* Web Site link to *World Book*.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* comes on both CD and DVD. Both versions contain all 44 million words of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* plus *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* and *Nations of the World*, and a comprehensive alphabetical index. There are more than 73,000 articles, 8,000 photographs, 1,200 maps, 33,000 Web links, and 1.4 million cross-referenced links. Topic Tours illustrate a variety of topics drawn from the database, such as moon exploration, African wildlife, and cathedrals of the world. The Analyst lets you compare data between nations and create

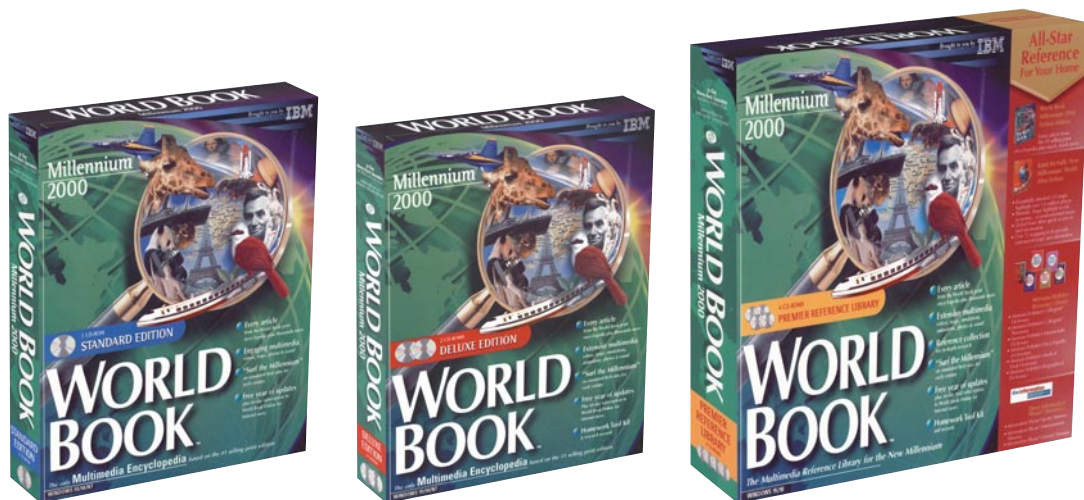


Figure 8-4 Published by World Book and IBM, the *World Book Encyclopedia* comes in three versions: standard, deluxe, and premier.

World Book graphics courtesy of World Book, Inc. World Book is a trademark of World Book, Inc. www.worldbook.com.

instant graphs and tables for use in research reports. The *Britannica* search engine lets you type questions in ordinary English, and it rank-orders the responses according to relevance. The *Britannica* can also be searched online, as described in the next section of this chapter. Comparing the electronic version to the printed encyclopedia, a librarian once told the author that schools like to have the printed encyclopedia because each student can research topics in a different volume, while only one student can use the CD at a time. The author replied: “That’s fine as long as you are willing to restrict Johnny’s knowledge to topics beginning with the letter C.” For more information about the *Britannica* CD and the *Britannica* DVD, follow the *Multitit* Web site link to *Britannica*.

Online Encyclopedias

Someday the Information Superhighway may eliminate the need for CD and DVD by making available all of the necessary databases and programs in the form of a worldwide network, which will function as a public utility that will be as widespread as telephones and televisions are now. So popular is the Internet that any encyclopedia planning to stay in business is establishing an online service.

Consider the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, for example. The obvious advantage of the online version is that you have access to all the latest information at once, as opposed to conducting separate searches through the printed volumes of the *Micropaedia*, the *Macropaedia*, and the annual *Book of the Year*.

Internet Resources

All over the world, museums have seized the opportunity to establish a presence on the World Wide Web and provide online access to their collections. This is especially advantageous for persons unable to travel to museums in person. Hundreds of museums are online, so many that you may not know where to start exploring them. Listed below are profiles of some of the more popular museum resources you will find online. The tutorial in Chapter 33 will provide you with search strategies for finding specific information on the Web. For a list of more than a thousand online museum references, use your Web browser to go to the Yahoo search engine at www.yahoo.com and type in the key word *museum*.

Library of Congress

The Library of Congress operates a Web site that lets you browse historical collections in the National Digital Library, visit Library Reading Rooms, search THOMAS (legislative information), access services of the Law Library of Congress (including the Global Legal Information Network), or locate government information. You can also search the Library of Congress online catalog. Online exhibits include Soviet government documents such as the directive from Lenin ordering the death of anti-Communist farmers; fifteenth-century manuscripts from the Vatican library; sections of the Dead Sea Scrolls along with maps and other images related to the scrolls; and an image bank that chronicles Christopher Columbus’s 1492 trip to the Americas. Online access to the Library of Congress is free at www.loc.gov. Be sure to visit the online gallery of exhibitions and *American Memory: America’s Story in Words, Sounds & Pictures*.

Smithsonian Institution

The Smithsonian Institution sponsors many Internet services that provide access to materials from its various museums and research arms. For example, the National Air and Space Museum, the National Museum of American Art, and the National Museum of Natural History are all online. You can search the Smithsonian databases, join discussion groups, and explore information on the Smithsonian's many museums, galleries, research centers, and offices. You can access all of these resources by following the *Multilit* Web site link to the Smithsonian. Especially relevant for readers of this book is the Virtual Smithsonian, a broadband service that uses multimedia to bring traveling exhibits such as *America's Smithsonian* to the Web.

Musée du Louvre

The world famous Musée du Louvre, the largest museum in western Europe, is online. By following the *Multilit* Web site link to the Louvre, you will find an electronic version of the *Louvre* magazine, a schedule of cultural activities, a guide to the collections, the history of the buildings, and thousands of images including the famous *Mona Lisa*. The Louvre uses QuickTime VR to provide 360-degree panoramic tours of more than 50 rooms in the museum.

exercises

1. Find out whether you can get access to CD or DVD encyclopedias at home, work, or school. What are the titles of the CD or DVD encyclopedias available to you? Where are they located?
2. Select a topic, such as the role Amelia Earhart played in aviation history. Then time how long it takes you to find information about her and construct an appropriate bibliography from a printed encyclopedia. Now try one of the CD or DVD encyclopedias mentioned in this chapter. How much time did the CD or DVD search save?
3. New technology has benefited researchers considerably. For example, the photocopy machine was invented while the author was a student. No longer did students have to write out by hand the materials we wanted to excerpt from books and magazines in the library; for 10 cents per page, we could make photocopies, thereby saving many hours of time handwriting. Today multimedia CD, DVD, and the Information Superhighway provide much more powerful tools. How do you see multimedia computers helping you conduct research?
4. There is a beautiful bitmap of the *Mona Lisa* online at the Louvre's Web site. Point your Web browser at www.louvre.fr and see if you can navigate to the *Mona Lisa*: Choose Les collections, then Peintures, then click on the *Mona Lisa* icon to see her full screen.
5. Visit the online encyclopedias listed in Figure 8-5. What services do they offer? What services are free, and which ones make you pay? Do they all offer full text online? How do the online services complement the CD or DVD version of the encyclopedias? Could any of these online services replace the disc, making the CD or DVD unnecessary?



Figure 8-5 Logos of online encyclopedias to click at the *Multitit* Web site.

Encarta logo reprinted with permission from Microsoft Corporation. Compton's Encyclopedia courtesy of The Learning Company. World Book graphics courtesy of World Book, Inc. World Book is a trademark of World Book, Inc. www.worldbook.com.