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Should I lie on the couch, or do we just talk? Okay, fine, well it's mainly to do with my feelings about the Internet. Here's the nub of it: increasingly, my feelings about PC developments come dripping with angst.

I'm always fretting that I'm not getting the most out of my PC, apprehensive that I won't be able to do all the sexy things I'm supposed to be able to do – especially all the surfing, cyberspace, Web stuff. I'm not trying to do your job here, but I reckon my combination of excessive imagination and restless impatience could be to blame. But it's not just me; lots of PC users I talk to feel the same. I'm not sure whether to be cynical and pessimistic to protect myself against hyped expectations, or exhilarated and optimistic about all the new things I can (almost) do. In practice, I usually feel both – at the same time.

No, personal temperament obviously comes into it, but I mainly blame the suppliers. In fact, make that the industry as a whole: the hardware and software developers, the advertisers, the PC magazines – they're all responsible in varying degrees. One root cause is that the technology is light years ahead of most suppliers' ability to deliver it effectively, and of most people's ability to use it properly. The Internet is a clear example. You get announcements of new PC and telecommunications hardware every month, closely followed by releases of software to utilise it. Not far behind come waves of new services that claim to bring it all together in various mouth-watering ways, and at temptingly affordable prices. You name it, there's something Good the Internet can do for you.

And the wonderful thing is that it's all true. Or rather, it could be, if the skills of the technological pacesetters were matched by the skills of those responsible for delivering all this goodness to you and me, in a form we can understand and easily use. I want an Internet package that can be installed with no more technical involvement by me than I used to install my last TV. Until I can get reliable, fast, economical, selective access to e-mail, managed conference services, newsgroups and the wonderful Web, then cynicism rules, OK? But, please, tell it to me again, it really will get better soon, won't it?
Terry Pinnell

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Multimedia – The Complete Guide

Dorling Kindersley. 192 pages. £19.99. ISBN: 0-7513-0243-0

If you think that 'multimedia' means having Kylie Minogue's latest release on both CD and cassette, then Dorling Kindersley's *Multimedia – The Complete Guide* may be just the thing for you.

Lavishly illustrated with over a thousand colour photographs and diagrams, *The Complete Guide* is in the typical DK style. Everything is presented in a clear and eminently accessible manner, making it ideal for dipping into during idle moments.

The first chapter covers the range of multimedia software that is available today, such as games and educational titles, and special mention is made of particularly notable examples. It then goes on to explain the history of the computer, from Babbage's Difference Engine right up to the Sega Saturn and Sony Playstation. Other chapters include making CD-Roms, virtual reality, sound recording, animation, and the Internet.

The Complete Guide is also bang up to date – much of the software that is referred to is barely a year old, and mention is even made of titles that have yet to be released. The use of technical jargon is kept to a minimum throughout and, although nothing is covered in any great depth, the breadth of topics included is wide enough to provide something of interest for everyone.

Internet Graphics Gallery

Paul DeGroot and Dick Oliver; 593 pages; QUE; £37.49; ISBN: 0-7897-0137-5
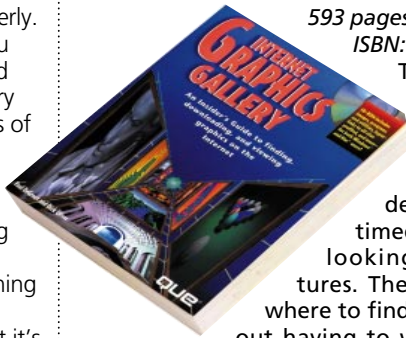
The Internet is a rich source of art and graphics, which is great news for anyone interested in desktop publishing, multimedia authoring, or just looking at interesting pictures. The problem is knowing where to find the useful stuff without having to wade through all the dross that's out there. This is where the *Internet Graphics Gallery* comes in.

Most of the book is given over to a directory of Web sites which contain good-quality photos, line art, rendered and other images. Sites are arranged by category – animals, animation, architecture, art galleries, and so on through the alphabet. Screen grabs (in black and white) accompany each in-depth description, although 16 of the best examples are given the full-colour treatment in a 'Cybergallery' section in the middle of the book.

Other sections cover colour palettes, file formats, and techniques for manipulating images, together with hints and tips for anyone creating their own Web pages.

Don't worry if you're not yet connected – inside the back cover there's a CD-Rom containing images and videos downloaded from the Web, as well as hyperlinks to all the sites reviewed, and a selection of Internet and graphics utilities.