A new language has been developing — have you seen or heard it?

Out of the massive convergence of computing, networking, telecommunications, entertainment, and media delivery mechanisms, a powerful, new language has been developing that continues to expand its sphere of influence. New methods of communicating have been created that will soon – if they haven’t already – affect many of us in higher education. Below are a few quotes – from a report published by The New Media Consortium in April of 2005 that’s entitled, A Global Imperative: A Report of the 21st Century Literacy Summit – that nicely summarize these developments:

**A profound shift is taking place in the way people communicate and express themselves.** Fueled by media that increasingly are crafted for a global audience, pervasive access to goods and services from even more distant locales, access to networks and communication services that span the planet, and generational ties between youth that transcend borders, a new concept of language – and what it means to be literate – is evolving.

Unlike the traditional notions of language and literacy, which are primarily unimodal and textual, **this new form of communication and self-expression occurs multimodally, incorporating visual and aural elements with textual elements, and an immediacy which itself is a dimension of the new language.** Technology, which has done much to make the creation and dissemination of written communication a familiar everyday occurrence for most people, plays an especially important role in these new forms as well. Tools that allow sophisticated manipulation and creation of images, video, and sound are more and more commonplace, and they are especially well known among those most fluent in these new language forms.

The leaders that gathered in San Jose recognized that **something unusual was taking place — a new language, rich in ways that extend traditional forms of communication with visual imagery and sound, was being born.** A province once only occupied by artists and filmmakers was now populated by an entire generation of digital natives – and this phenomenon was emerging in amazingly similar ways in countries across the globe.

**21st century literacy is the set of abilities and skills where aural, visual and digital literacy overlap.** These include the ability to understand the power of images and sounds, to recognize and use that power, to manipulate and transform digital media, to distribute them pervasively, and to easily adapt them to new forms.

This new developing language is not just affecting those who make a living working with graphics, audio, and video – but it’s also affecting educators, professors, instructors, students and staff alike. What we are talking about here – “multimedia” – will surely impact all of us.

Though people might define the word multimedia differently today – and surely the definitions for this word and the relevant technologies have changed through the years – multimedia is being defined here as the integration of digital audio, digital video, text, graphics and animations in various combinations thereof. Interactivity and user control can be integrated into such materials and the content can then be delivered via digital vehicles such as: the Internet/World Wide Web, CD’s and DVD’s, locally via a PC or a Mac, or via a local area network.

It’s extremely powerful, and versatile – the world has never experienced any communication vehicle or method as powerful as what is capable today. So come into the Digital Studio today and we’ll help you learn how to speak this new language and to harness this new power.