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Exploratory actions in multimedia publishing

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As part of its actions for further activities in the area of multimedia publishing, the European Commission is inviting proposals on the subject of electronic publishing, information dissemination and information retrieval.

Proposals will concern feasibility projects in the area of multimedia publishing/information engineering concerned with improving the useability of information through better methods for the design, creation, dissemination and access to integrated multimedia information services. Projects will be supported that test the feasibility of pilot applications built around user requirements, and address the research objectives in the three main stages in the information chain:

- Electronic publishing: To improve the methods for authors and publishers to capture and manage information so that it can be delivered to users in a form that matches their requirements; to demonstrate the application of advanced techniques for the creation of information products that are independent of a specific technology base, that can be smoothly integrated into existing user environments and that add value in comparison with existing products.
- Information dissemination: To develop and validate new approaches from the information providers to aid the user in finding and accessing information without prior knowledge of the origin, location or format of the information; to develop advanced database systems supporting different media that are easily connectable to open information environments; to develop methods to improve the transactional basis for obtaining information, so that the information owner and user have an economic relationship where pricing and obligations are clear and intellectual property rights are protected.
- Information retrieval: To develop advanced techniques to improve the user's ability

to retrieve and display information, to interact with the open information environment, to import information into the local environment; to develop systems that enable the user to make better use of the information available; to develop and validate consistent measures of useability and suitability of interfaces and access methods.

Feasibility projects established with this call will address the following tasks:

- Specify and justify the goals and intended results;
- Identify the user communities involved;
- Identify the research tasks;
- Identify the infrastructure and information service requirements and how they would be met;
- Specify the organization needs;
- Identify the extent to which existing products and facilities can be used and the results from other research programmes that can be used.

Selected projects will be supported on a shared-cost basis by the European Commission, subject to a maximum contribution of ECU 100,000 per project, and should not exceed six months duration.

Intended proposers must apply in writing for the information package and details of the application procedure:

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