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ABSTRACTS

FROM EDUCATIONAL MULTIMEDIA TO 'GLOBAL DIGITAL LIBRARY' DEVELOPMENT: CONVERGENCE OF TECHNOLOGY, CONTENT, AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

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Multimedia technology has shown its promises for educational applications at all levels of academic institutions as well as business settings for sometime, long before the Internet and World Wide Web have become commonplace. Then, in recent years, particularly the last half decade, we have witnessed how the Internet has changed our world in every conceivable aspect — everything from how we communicate, learn, conduct research, deal with information, do business, receive health care, and dealing with our governments at all levels. Thus, desktop education has been extended to networked-based learning and education. As to information provision, academic institutions have long been advocating the importance of their libraries and library collections. The old model is "the larger the collection and the closer it is to the users the better." But now in the Internet era, this powerful global information network has provided the kind of infrastructure and environment natural for international collaboration if only the desired information resources are "digital." Thus, the new emphases have shifted from "owning" to "sharing," from "physical libraries" to "virtual libraries," from one central library with huge collections to the federated distributed digital library systems all over the world… With the exciting convergence of technology, content, and global collaboration, we can visualize the coming of a kind of "global digital library" unattainable in non-networked environment. In this paper, the author will share some of her own experiences in all these areas and transformations — from the creation of the award-winning interactive videodisc and multimedia CD-ROM, called The First Emperor of China, in mid- and late-1980s, to her current international digital library project, called Chinese Memory Net, supported by the US National Science Foundation, as well as the latest China-US Million Book Digital Library Project.