The French monolingual and encyclopedic dictionary *Le Petit Larousse* is 101 years old! The second electronic edition of this French institutional giant is completely revamped. This edition sports a brand new animated and intuitive user interface, stellar search and exploration functions that slice through every angle of the dictionary and encyclopedia, high-definition audio and visual media, and its very own web search engine called *Copilote*.

*Le Petit Larousse multimédia 2006* includes the complete hardcopy word listings of *Le Petit Larousse Illustre 2006*: 59,000 common words (including a new words section); 28,000 proper nouns; 60 tables and charts; the famous Pink section with proverbs; and a 32-page grammar. *Le Petit Larousse multimédia 2006* also includes a fabulous multimedia component consisting of 2,100 remarkably crisp and high-definition pictures and photos, 313 interactive maps, 200 sound files, and 100 audio-videos, all of which abundantly and vibrantly transforms the magnificent illustrations of the hardcopy edition.

As the editor points out in the preface to the CD-ROM edition: “*If Le Petit Larousse* has changed across time, it is because the words that are collected and explained in it have changed, as well as the world that it describes and captures.” Not the least of these innovations, one might add, is the dictionary’s medium of delivery, which in this edition serves to augment and simplify access further, and to magnify, enliven, and enlighten the fabulous content and its century-old, part-dictionary/part-encyclopedia format. *Le Petit Larousse* is a great encyclopedic dictionary of French, and the new 2006 multimedia and electronic version is a beautiful tool that is more than worthy of this reputation.

**Installation Requirements**
You may obtain a copy of *Le Petit Larousse multimédia 2006* via Amazon.com, or you can also buy a downloadable copy directly from www.larousse.fr, with an option to receive a back-up CD copy in the mail for an extra small fee of €10 (about...
$13). In both cases, you will need a PC with a Pentium™ III, 500 mHz processor, 128 MB RAM, 118 MB of space on your hard drive, Windows® 98/2000/NT 4.0/XP, a 4X CD-ROM drive, a 1MB graphic card, and a sound card compatible with Soundblaster™. The InstallWizard handles installation and offers two standard installation options: minimum or complete. The minimum installation option requires less than 30 MB on your hard drive and the use of the CD in your computer drive. The complete installation option requires 650 MB of space on your hard drive and frees the CD drive on your computer for use with other programs. Caution: The CD for Le Petit Larousse multimédia 2006 (as well as the backup CD copy you may order with the downloadable version) is copy-protected. This means that every six months you will be prompted to reinsert it briefly, so do not lose it!

**Intuitive Use**

The interface of the Le Petit Larousse multimédia 2006 opening Index screen sports an animated scroll bar on the lower portion of the screen. (See Figure 1.) This scroll bar displays, in a continuous motion, the images of the articles or entries preceding and following the article or entry that is currently being consulted. The animation stops when you mouse over an image, and it resets when the entry or article changes since it is designed to supply surrounding visual information. However, beyond supplying you with an immediate link to the surrounding visual context of the listing, this animated scroll bar functions as a wonderful intuitive introduction to the tool. The images traveling along the lower portion of the screen are strikingly high-definition and inviting. Thus, even without a particular targeted search in mind, you may immediately click yourself into the dictionary to discover some of its contents in a perusal, flip-page mode.

The succinct 11-page user guide that is inserted in the CD-ROM case, and the help function of the application, will both supply you with all the information you need to use Le Petit Larousse multimédia 2006, but it will probably be even more fun to let the application charm you into clicking on the images of the animated scroll bar.

Once you have emerged from the intuitive mode of discovery and are ready to target your navigation, you will find Le Petit Larousse multimédia 2006 up to the challenge.

**Features**

**Basic Search and Multimedia Hits:** The splash Index screen (Figure 1) may be set to either one or both of the two main sections of Le Petit Larousse: the Noms communs (common nouns) dictionary section and/or the Noms propres (proper nouns) encyclopedia section. Then, you may select a term in the Index column on the right of the screen or type your search word in the field above it. Results are displayed in the window to the right above the animated scroll bar. For a search on the term “téléphone” (telephone), for example, the illuminating set of results (Figure 1) include a dictionary entry, an encyclopedic article, four related video files appearing as large thumbnails (cellular telephony, mobile telephony, satellite telephony, and “How the telephone works”), as well as a satellite map of mobile telephony, appearing in the upper right corner. A frozen printscreen of these results, however, falls short of conveying the wonderful didactic power of the animated audio-visual explanations and the comprehensive multimedia definitions. (You must see sound waves traveling or transformed into electrical impulses to understand!) And for translators without electrical engineering backgrounds, these short video definitions are invaluable. When results include sound files and charts, these appear as iconic symbols below the article or entry, while conjugations appear as a large “C,” and articles as an “A,” in the upper right corner, each enabling you to toggle in and out of the related information effortlessly.

**Interactive Hyperlinks:** Furthermore, the full contents of the results are hyperlinked interactively. This means that a small dialog box pops up to parse and field your hyperlink request when there are several options. For example, the hyperlinked dialog box for the term “forme” (form) will prompt you with hyperlinked choices according to grammatical category: verb, adjective, or noun. Similarly, hyperlink dialog boxes prompt you with the several choices invoked in polysemy, compounds, or homonymy. This will no doubt be the most sophisticated design of hyperlinks you have used to date, and you will wonder how hyperlinks ever worked before.

**Simple and Advanced Search Modes:** Beyond the basic Index search, there are two additional search modes (simple and advanced) and an exploration mode. The simple search mode enables you to search for a term, including dates, anywhere in Le Petit Larousse, and to have results returned in the order of their importance, according to the sublists that were searched (the Dictionary, Media Files, or Annexes). Thus, for example, you may want to target the media files exclusively (videos, pictures, or drawings) for terms such as “anatomie” (anatomy), “coeur” (heart), or insecte (insect). The advanced search mode enables you to filter searches in
the encyclopedia section and to search for prefixes and suffixes in the dictionary section. For example, you could do an advanced search on “French film makers of the 21st century” using the various filters or options in the time, place, domain, and category fields, which could be further combined with a search on words beginning “le,” thus returning such results as “Lelouch, Claude” (a French film maker).

Exploration Mode: The exploration tool (see Figure 2), accessible everywhere you see an “eye” icon, offers a way of examining the segmented contents of the dictionary indexed according to media types (photos, maps, charts, drawings, animations, flags), as well as the Pink Section (containing proverbs and idioms), the grammar, and a novel section called “New Words.” For each of these sections, an alphabetical index pad appears on the left, while a clickable list of the contents, as thumbnails or links, appears on the right. This exploration mode is particularly useful for bird’s eye access and dissection of the contents. The New Words section is particularly useful. In it you will find such terms as “blog,” “Bluetooth,” “déremboursement,” “façadisme,” “grignotine,” and the verb “formatter.”

Copilote Web Search Engine: Finally, Le Petit Larousse multimédia 2006 also includes its very own web search engine, a research assistant tool called Copilote. The @ sign and link to the Copilote appears at the top right corner of the Index interface. (See Figure 1.) The Copilote directly front ends web searches to make sure that only one meaning of a polysemic term is searched. Results are returned using a default search engine you have selected (Yahoo!, Google, or Evalead). Design and use of the Larousse Copilote addresses all of the issues associated with the lightning speed of change on the web (obsolete URLs and domain names, new gateways and sites, etc.), while extending the boundaries of searches and the scope of information available. It is both clever and immensely useful.

Word Game Tool: For all the Des chiffres et des lettres (French Wheel of Fortune!) buffs, as well as Scrabble, Boggle! and crossword puzzle fans, there is also a Jeu de lettres (Word Game) tool that will help you to impress even the most skeptical of your acquaintances. Just type in the sequence of letters and hit Search. You are guaranteed to win every time.

Overall Evaluation
Consistent with a 101-year tradition of excellent lexicography, marvelous illustration, and famed didactics, Le Petit Larousse multimédia 2006 brings all this and much more. Sounds of musical instruments, compositions, and animals; national anthems linked to flags; photos, images, and drawings of the highest resolution; and motion picture animation with crystal clear audio commentary—these new and vibrant dimensions serve both to transform and extend the traditional definitions of this dictionary and encyclopedia. The redesign of Le Petit Larousse multimédia 2006, with a brand new intuitive and animated interface, new search and explore functions, interactive hyperlinks, the Copilote web search engine, high-definition audio and video, and a word play tool will both facilitate and illuminate your searches. When you need to understand quickly how technical and scientific innovations work, see an identifying picture of a sparrow or a praying mantis, or hear the differences between a trombone and a trumpet, Le Petit Larousse multimédia 2006 is truly irreplaceable. Get it and enjoy!

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