

# Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

## Recent Work

**Title**

Indispensable tool

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Synchrotron radiation has become an indispensable research tool for a growing number of scientists in a seemingly ever expanding number of disciplines. We can thank the European Synchrotron Research Facility (ESRF) in Grenoble for taking an innovative step toward achieving the educational goal of explaining the nature and benefits of synchrotron radiation to audiences ranging from the general public (including students) to government officials to scientists who may be unfamiliar with x-ray techniques and synchrotron radiation.

ESRF is the driving force behind a new CD-ROM playable on both PCs and Macs titled *Synchrotron light to explore matter*. Published by Springer-Verlag, the CD contains both English and French versions of a comprehensive overview of the subject. A stunning design including videos with narration, informative animations, and creative graphics by IMEDIASoft (Bucharest and Meylan) complements the straightforward and logical organization, which divides the material into four major categories: the properties of light and matter, the technology to produce synchrotron radiation, the experimental methods for exploiting it, and a wide selection of applications. Typical of complex Web sites, the content follows a tree structure with each major subject branching into ever finer topics, which are then interconnected by cross links. There are also separate sections about the world's synchrotron facilities, industrial uses of synchrotron radiation, and a glossary.

The tree organization provides the reader a great deal of flexibility in choosing a path through the material. Unfortunately, navigating up and down through the tree structure is a bit cumbersome, and it is not possible to toggle between the CD and other applications on your computer. The reader is also well advised to begin with the CD's Help section to learn how to find and activate some of the animation. There are

occasional gaffes in the content, as in the discussion of Einstein and the photoelectric effect. To the extent the CD is intended for the general public, the cost may be an obstacle. Finally, there is a ludicrous licensing agreement that attempts to prohibit the buyer from giving or selling the CD, which is essentially a book, to anyone else without Springer's written permission.

—Arthur L. Robinson