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Some of the characteristics of multimedia data are:

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1. Continuous

Multimedia data means video and audio data as continuous and time dependent.
Multimedia data refers to the continuous data stream.
Here, continuous refers to the user's view of data. Multimedia data are represented as sequences of discrete values that replace each other over time.

For Example:
To get a movie scene in a theater or TV, per a second an image array gets replaced 25 times.
Or we can say 1 second me 25 images gets displayed to show motion.

Another example is, sound.

A Sound amplitude value is replaced 8000 times per second to develop telephone-quality speech.

2. Time based

Multimedia streams are said to be time-based because, the content of the video and audio streams are defined in timed data elements.
The systems that support multimedia applications need to keep care about the timing the timing when they handle multimedia data.

3. Bulky

Multimedia data streams are often bulky. Because systems that support multimedia applications needed to move data with greater throughput than normal systems.

For example:
A standard video stream requires more than 120Mbps, which exceeds the capacity of a 100Mbps Ethernet network.

4. Compression

A video stream exceeds the Ethernet network capacity, so multimedia data compression is necessary.
Compression can reduce bandwidth requirements by factors between 10 to 100, but it can't affect the timing requirements of the multimedia data.

Multimedia data compression gives the following formats:

- GIF,JPEG,PNG for images
- MPEG, 3GP for videos.

5. Special hardware and software

Multimedia data may be carried out by special hardware's and software's because of increasing processing power of system.

These special hardware and software's helps to use in desktop conferencing.