

Bringing stories **to life**

Students refine the art of animation and storytelling using the award-winning Adobe® Video Collection



The artistry in animation amazes children and adults alike. From the first Warner Bros. cartoons to today's complex animations, the characters, images, and sounds that comprise stories are often remembered long after cartoons end. Creating these memorable stories requires teams of skilled creative professionals, as well as access to the industry's leading graphic design and video editing tools. For faculty and students in Sheridan College's Animation programs, Adobe applications—Adobe Premiere® Pro, Adobe After Effects®, Adobe Encore® DVD, Adobe Audition®, and Adobe Photoshop® CS2—are the tools of choice.

“The Adobe Video Collection is used for most everything we do. With the Adobe tools, we’re giving students skills that are in high demand.”

*Howard Simkins,
professor and coordinator of
Computer Technology,
School of Animation, Arts & Design,
Sheridan College*

“The Adobe Video Collection is used for most everything we do,” says Howard Simkins, professor and coordinator of computer technology in the School of Animation, Arts & Design at Sheridan College in Ontario, Canada. “With the Adobe tools, we’re giving students skills that are in high demand.” Another reason the Adobe solutions are so popular is that many students already have experience with Adobe Photoshop CS before starting the program. “Students can jump right into projects and use their Photoshop CS skills to quickly learn other Adobe applications,” Simkins says.

Insight into animation

Sheridan College offers two animation programs: Bachelor of Animation and Computer Animation. In many ways, the Bachelor of Animation program is the foundation for any career in animation; it teaches students how to begin working in a 2-D environment and eventually progress to 3-D. “We want students to hone their drawing and design skills and see how each frame of a story comes together,” says Dave Moffatt, professor of animation at Sheridan College. “Because they offer similar interfaces, key commands, and other tools, the Adobe solutions enable students to move easily from still images to video.”

As part of the Bachelor of Animation coursework, students create a series of sketches and thumbnails that form the basis of their animations. They then scan their drawings and bring them into Adobe Photoshop CS2 for retouching. Animatics are created by importing the images into Adobe Premiere Pro, enabling students to get a rough cut flow of the story and visuals. With Adobe Premiere Pro students can identify exactly how many drawings are needed to convey a story. With each second of an animation requiring 12 drawings, students often produce hundreds of drawings per project.

“Adobe Premiere Pro is superb for creating initial animatics because students can quickly piece images together to see where unwanted jumps or glitches will appear in videos,” explains Moffatt. “Using the Adobe Video Collection, students have an intuitive, drag-and-drop environment in which they can rework images and quickly combine them into a time sequence using the Adobe Premiere Pro timeline.”

Integrated, easy-to-use tools

Once missing images are identified, students create additional drawings by hand, scan them, and bring the images into Adobe Photoshop CS2 along with

Hyjoji Lee made extensive use of filters in Adobe After Effects Professional to create shadows on characters. The rich colors in her work were added using Adobe Photoshop CS and sound tracks were created using Adobe Audition. Lee edited together the 90-second animation, titled *Where's My Shoe?*, using Adobe Premiere Pro.



their previous drawings. This time, however, instead of simply retouching images, students use layering support in Photoshop CS2 to add color layers, lines, and other elements to enhance their work. One of the great things about the Adobe workflow is that, when students bring the layered Photoshop CS file into After Effects, it comes in as a layered comp ready for animation. This is an advantage students at Sheridan have not found in other software programs.

With After Effects, students add a range of special effects, including drop shadows, two-tone effects, lighting alterations, and atmospheric effects such as rain and thunder. In addition, the open API in Adobe After Effects further expands student options for creative experimentation. “The transformation of student work as images going from hand-drawn on paper to retouched in Photoshop CS2 to After Effects is remarkable,” says Moffatt. “The smooth integration across all Adobe Digital Video tools clearly enhances student learning.”

Rich images, engaging sounds

Students render out finished After Effects compositions as QuickTime or Microsoft AVI files and place them into Adobe Premiere Pro, where frames are stretched to fit widescreen digital video (DV). The audio captured in Adobe Audition—doors closing, cars starting, echoes, thunder, reverberations, and other sounds—is exported to Adobe Premiere Pro.

With Adobe Audition students take advantage of numerous free loops that can be used for soundtracks. They can also remove any problems, such as clicks, pops, and hisses, to make audio sound polished before adding to a video. “Adobe Audition makes it fun to create professional-quality audio,” says Moffatt. “The software offers many digital signal processing (DSP) effects so students can mimic everything from thunder to the sounds of voices coming out of the bottom of barrels.”

After synchronizing audio with the appropriate video frames, students render their work as MPEG2 files that are imported into Adobe Encore DVD to create a final project DVD. The integration between Encore DVD and Photoshop CS2 simplifies student work. For example, buttons created in Photoshop CS2 or in Encore DVD remain editable in both programs. In contrast, buttons and additional images brought into other DVD authoring packages are frozen and cannot be edited, requiring students to go back to Adobe Photoshop and recreate elements if changes are desired.

“A great thing about Adobe software is that it supports students as their animation and filmmaking skills expand. The tools are intuitive enough for beginning students and also deliver enough power for more complex 2D and 3D animations.”

Dave Moffatt, professor of animation, School of Animation, Arts & Design, Sheridan College



While a student at Sheridan, Ji Eun Lee used Adobe Digital Video Collection to create the animated short titled *Her Teddy Bear*. Lee's hand-drawn images were scanned, and Adobe Photoshop CS was used to add background color. Adobe After Effects enabled Lee to add motion to the piece, while music and other sounds were added when she edited the piece together in Adobe Premiere Pro.

From beginning to advanced animation

With this solid foundation, many students progress to more advanced Computer Animation coursework, further refining the design and story production skills they developed in the Bachelor of Animation program. “A great thing about Adobe software is that it supports students as their animation and filmmaking skills expand,” says Moffatt. “The tools are intuitive enough for beginning students and also deliver enough power for more complex 2D and 3D animations.”

A mainstay for advanced Computer Animation students working with 3D environments is Adobe After Effects Professional. With hundreds of animation presets, a wide range of special effects, and enhanced text animation features, After Effects gives Sheridan College students the freedom to try out new ideas and quickly rework projects to achieve the exact look they want. For instance, students can simulate explosions, stretch or skew image layers, and take advantage of expanded compositing options by importing camera data from Alias Maya and Discreet 3ds max.

A true partner in education

With hundreds of seats of Adobe Video Collection in computer labs across campus, students in the college's Animation, Arts and Design program have ready access to the tools they need to develop compelling animations. According to Simkins, Adobe's commitment to working with educators and students has been integral to enabling the college to offer students access to industry-standard tools.

“Adobe is a true partner in education,” says Simkins. “The company understands the importance of providing faculty and students with world-class support and tools. Through our relationship with Adobe, we can offer students continued access to leading design and video tools and inspire them to tell increasingly engaging stories.”

For more information on Sheridan College and the School of Animation, Arts & Design, please visit

www.adobe.com/motion/sheridan.html.

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www.adobe.com/motion/customerstories.html.

Company

Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

Oakville, Ontario, Canada
www.sheridaninstitute.ca

Challenge

Enable students to spend more time on creative processes and less time struggling to learn technology

Solution

Standardized on Adobe Video Collection to provide students with integrated, industry-standard tools for creating rich animations and compelling stories

Benefits

- Improved student work by supporting more thorough exploration of ideas
- Enhanced student expertise on multiple applications due to smooth integration across applications
- Developed critical student skills for success in animation and video industries

Tool Kit

- Adobe Video Collection Professional. Products used include:
 - Adobe After Effects Professional
 - Adobe Audition
 - Adobe Encore DVD
 - Adobe Photoshop CS2
 - Adobe Premiere Pro
- PCs with Intel® Pentium® 4 3.3 GHz processors, 1GB of RAM, and 60GB hard drives, running Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional

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