Sesame Workshop

The longest street in the world

Sesame Workshop
New York, New York
www.sesameworkshop.org
www.sesamestreet.org

Iconic children's program takes characters from the small screen to virtually every screen and device with Adobe® Creative Suite® 5.5 Web Premium

For more than 40 years, children worldwide have been asking how to get to *Sesame Street*. Unforgettable characters such as Big Bird, Cookie Monster, Elmo, Oscar the Grouch, and many others have become beloved friends and teachers to millions of children around the world. Generations of children have learned how to count, recite the alphabet, tell time, identify shapes and colors, and many other important skills through games, exercises, and interactions with their furry *Sesame Street* Muppet friends.

What began as a fun educational show on American network television has been transformed into a global cultural institution. Today, millions of children in more than 140 countries experience *Sesame Street*, thanks to the creativity and driving innovation of Sesame Workshop—parent company and producer of *Sesame Street*. Adults worldwide who fondly recall counting with The Count and learning about the letter "A" with Big Bird—while watching *Sesame Street* with their parents—now look forward to introducing their own children to the dynamic, interactive educational content that Sesame Workshop offers through television, the web, mobile and tablet devices, games, and more.

Sesame Workshop's mission is to provide children of various cultural and socio-economic backgrounds with rich, fun, and powerful educational content. "Families have so many more ways to access and engage with content today. We want to be everywhere children are and reach them any way we can," says Noah Broadwater, vice president of information services for Sesame Workshop. "We adopted Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Web Premium and components of the Adobe Flash® Platform, including Adobe AIR®, to deliver fresh content to children around the world on the platforms they use most: smartphones, computers, and tablets. Now, we actually have a bigger impact digitally than we do on TV."

Challenge

- Rapidly developing fun and engaging multi-screen educational content
- Repurposing thousands of hours of video and animation to create new apps, games, and content
- Localizing characters and learning content to meet the needs of a diverse global audience

Solution

- Use Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator to update and extend existing character images
- Create more vibrant and interactive animations with Adobe Flash Professional CS5.5 and Flash Builder 4.5
- Optimize content for browsers, smartphones, and tablet devices from a single interface with Adobe Dreamweaver CS5.5
- Deliver revolutionary multimedia apps across platforms with Adobe Dreamweaver CS5.5, Flash Professional CS5.5, Flash Builder 4.5, and Adobe AIR 2.5

Benefits

- Repurposed thousands of hours of video footage for use in mobile apps like games and on-demand video
- Tested and optimized online content for multiple devices from a single console for accelerated delivery
- Leveraged existing creative assets to produce more than 80 games and versions of *Sesame Street* Languages
- Created powerful multimedia learning apps featuring dynamic animation, touch-screen functionality, and enhanced interactivity

Bigger, better, more life-like *Sesame Street* Muppets

The magic of *Sesame Street*, according to Broadwater, is in the personality and charisma of the show's characters, the *Sesame Street* Muppets. With Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Web Premium software and the Adobe Flash Platform, Sesame Workshop can bring these characters to life beyond traditional television broadcasts.

"We know that kids just love the *Sesame Street* Muppets. In the past, American broadcast television was our primary method for bringing them into children's lives," Broadwater says. "Today, children and parents around the world can play interactive instructional games on mobile devices, visit specially designed websites, and read electronic books featuring *Sesame Street* Muppets that reflect their own cultural heritage and speak their language for a more compelling, dynamic, and fun learning experience."

Taking the *Sesame Street* Muppets from their familiar television cityscape to other environments is a tall task; it's a challenge simplified using Adobe software. Sesame Workshop animators and designers use components including Adobe Illustrator®, Photoshop® Extended, Dreamweaver®, Flash Catalyst®, Flash Professional, and Flash Builder™ in a streamlined workflow. In addition to creating new content, the teams repurpose thousands of hours of *Sesame Street* Muppet footage, splicing it together with added animation and new creative that jumps off the screen for an immersive, fun, and captivating learning experience for children.

Designers and developers want to make sure that the content they create will look consistent across multiple screens and devices. "The Multi-screen Preview feature in Adobe Dreamweaver CS5.5 saves us a lot of time in development because we can see from a single console how a particular game or application will work on mobile phones, or tablets, or web browsers and render changes in real time," says Manabu Nagaoka, a producer at Sesame Workshop.

Designers unfamiliar with writing code can take images and artwork directly from Adobe Illustrator or Photoshop Extended and start creating interactive comps in Flash Catalyst. These comps can then be imported into Flash Professional or Flash Builder for development, and then packaged and pushed out across platforms as games, website content, or mobile apps.

"Using the integrated Flash Platform toolset—Adobe Flash Catalyst CS5.5, FlashProfessional CS5.5, and Flash Builder 4.5—to create rich media content means we don't have to relearn how to program for different devices. And Adobe AIR is so powerful that we can deliver immersive experiences that present consistently across virtually any platform or device," says Broadwater.

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Noah Broadwater
Vice president, information services,
Sesame Workshop

The language of learning

Because of their portability, interactivity, and visually engaging interfaces, parents and children are using smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices in record numbers. Sesame Workshop has always been at the forefront of educational programming—it was the first and only family learning programming on television at the time of its launch—and adapting its educational content for emerging mediums to help children learn in entirely new ways.

"Mobile devices like tablets are natural for kids. They intuitively know how to swipe, touch, and interact with a highly animated visual interface. We wanted to find a cost-effective, efficient way to optimize all the same great content we've produced for years to meet that innate, tactile learning style," Broadwater says. "With Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Web Premium, we have a complete workflow from inception to delivery to create entertaining learning content once and deploy it across multiple screens. Now, we can think about how to improve the interactivity, rather than worrying about how to code the interactivity."

Sesame Workshop designers and developers use tightly integrated Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Web Premium components to streamline the development of innovative mobile educational apps and games. They can instantly pull existing creative assets from the company's massive library into the app design process and manipulate interactivity and animations to optimize them for any screen size or platform.

The enhanced development process has resulted in a number of breakthrough apps, including *Sesame Street* Languages, an exciting language program for children between the ages of four and seven. The app is a lively, activity-based, multimedia game that introduces children to new language concepts using conversational language along with repetition, rhythm and rhyme, music, and humor.

Led by Tingo, an energetic *Sesame Street* Muppet, who recently arrived in the United States, *Sesame Street* Languages introduces conversational English through Tingo's adventures with his friend Niki, a typical teenage American girl. Each program follows a simple storyline that uses humor, physical action, and music to appeal to children, while introducing basic English expressions, vocabulary, and sentence structures. The warm and caring environment makes children's first experiences with languages—native or secondary—fun and motivating.

Elmo likes rock-and-mole tunes!

"Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Web Premium helps us bring the fictional characters kids worldwide have come to know and love into their everyday world, changing their lives and the way they learn. It's quite a powerful experience— for them and for us."

Noah Broadwater
Vice president, information services,
Sesame Workshop

Toolkit

Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Web Premium. Components used include:
• Adobe Illustrator CS5
• Adobe Photoshop CS5
• Adobe Dreamweaver CS5.5
• Adobe Flash Catalyst CS5.5
• Adobe Flash Professional CS5.5
• Adobe Flash Builder 4.5
Adobe AIR 2.5

The year-long game features eight language lessons per week, totaling more than 80 games. Children follow Tingo and Niki as they take a trip on a train, play music with Niki's band, Children at Play, and explore Tingo's culinary skills (or lack thereof) in the kitchen. The *Sesame Street* Muppet-human dynamic and on-screen animations that help children remember basic words and phrases also means that the team of 20 Sesame Workshop developers and designers must create thousands of unique interactions and creative assets annually.

"Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Web Premium helps accelerate game development by enabling us to create new games from the same assets and then use Adobe AIR to publish them out to a range of devices," says Kimberley Stern, technology strategist for Sesame Workshop's *Sesame Street* Languages team.

A virtual stroll down *Sesame Street*

Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Web Premium has helped Sesame Workshop revolutionize the way kids worldwide learn. The company who brought Grover, Kermit the Frog, and Snuffleupagus into the lives of generations of American children now uses Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Web Premium software to bring the likes of Tingo, Boomba, and Kami into the lives of children using a range of devices and technologies.

Sesame Workshop has a new geolocation-based mobile app in development that will let kids explore a virtual *Sesame Street* with their favorite *Sesame Street* characters, localized to their country and language. The app leverages data streamed from the mobile device to recreate the time of day and local weather on screen, making the child's experience feel real and keeping them fully engaged.

"With their *Sesame Street* Muppet friends, children can explore *Sesame Street* while playing interactive games, visiting virtual book stores filled with Sesame Workshop-developed books, or visiting a movie theater to watch on-demand videos," Broadwater says. "Adobe Creative Suite 5.5 Web Premium helps us bring the fictional characters kids worldwide have come to know and love into their everyday world, changing their lives and the way they learn. It's quite a powerful experience—for them and for us."

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Adobe Systems Incorporated
345 Park Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110-2704
USA
www.adobe.com