Pixeled Quarterly

Up and Coming Events

ACMI are holding a Machinima festival from May through to June. On May the 5/6th there will be screenings of the best Machinima produced in the world. These include highlights from Red Vs Blue - a storyline where soldiers discuss the meaning of life and general day to issues. Red vs Blue is a very funny and original piece of work that takes footage from the popular game Halo.

Workshops are 2 to 3 hours in length and will go through the history of Machinima and how to capture footage from games. Included in the workshop are how to create storylines and students will work in pairs to produce a short Machinima piece. The workshops will be held every Tuesday through May/June. Visit the ACMI website for further details.

Also showing at ACMI is Top Screen with the best of interactive multimedia on display.

The ATOM awards are currently open and applications close at 12pm, Wednesday 7th of June. If you have some outstanding student work, don't hesitate to include it with this years selection. Categories specific to Multimedia include best animation and best interactive design. The ATOM awards are a great way to get your students work recognised by people in the multimedia industry and may give them the extra edge in university courses and obtaining a job.

Pixeled has a blog at the following address: http://www.pixeledteachers. blogspot.com. The blog is a great way for members to post comments reflecting their experience of teaching multimedia as well as containing links to information and items of interest for the teaching of multimedia.

You may have seen it mentioned on the multimedia list but for those who haven't heard there is a great free video podcast available called Photoshop TV. Those of you who love photoshop will ejoy watching three members of NAPP (an American association) run through tips and tutorials based on Adobe CS2. It's at http://www.photoshoptv.com

The Premiers awards are taking place on the 27th of April. I'm sure that some of our members will have students receiving an award. I'd be happy to mention any winners on our blog so keep me posted.

Don't forget our Pixeled annual dinner is on the 9th May. We have two guest speakers, professional animator Maurice Argiro and writer/director Christine Rogers. We will be having a buffet dinner with vegetarian options available and wine. These nights are a great way to network with other teachers of Multimedia and to keep up with your industry contacts as required when teaching a VET course. Bookings must be confirmed by the 1st of May.

Adobe CS2

So what's all the fuss about the new Adobe CS Suite? Can another upgrade really contain all that much more than the previous upgrade you've shelled out all your hard earned cash for?

The answer is yes and no, depending on what product you tend to be using in the Adobe Suite. Technically you don't need any Adobe product to run a multimedia course. You can do most of the same things in Photoshop in other programs like Macromedia Fireworks. However, now that Adobe has bought Macromedia, the days of Fireworks may soon be over. It's hard to see how Adobe can justify two photo manipulation packages.

However, there are some exciting features in the new version of photoshop. One of them is smart objects, a kind of memory system for making changes to images and using those changes even when you swap the original image for a different one. Photoshop remembers all the filters, effects and changes you've made and promptly does the same thing to the new inserted image. Not only that but there is even more integration between Illustrator and Photoshop. Changes made in Illustrator are automatically updated in Photoshop.

There is also a great new 3D feature in Illustrator. If you're like me and love playing around and drawing in illustrator, the 3D object can be used on shapes or type. I've found that my students enjoy using 3D options to make business cards so that their name stands out from the illustration.

Another great feature in Illustrator is the Live Trace option. This is similar to the trace bitmap option in Flash. You can import a bitmap or or scan in a drawing and then use the live trace option to create a cartoon image of the bitmap. You can change the color properties to greyscale, black and white and color. I've used this feature when I've created interactive comics.

Lastly, there is a new feature called Ado-

Philosophical Moments

As she pondered the power of the microchip she wondered whether intelligence really depended all that much on the size of the brain.

be Bridge which gives you access to a range of templates and organises your files into thumbnail selections. This makes it easier to locate images and flick between several versions of a particular design.

Overall I believe this Adobe upgrade is well worth the money. The educational package contains everything that the professional version does at a fraction of the price. Also, InDesign is bundled in with the pack. Whilst you don't need Indesign to teach VET, its a great tool to make newsletters and online magazines and you could also use the templates to get students to make a magazine for the Content/Copy Module.

Facts

- **Do you believe an old dog can't learn new tricks? Then think again. Scientists have found that our brains are flexible enough to process and learn new information no matter what our age. So whenever you sit in front of the computer and curse that you couldn't possibly learn another piece of software then ponder this, your brain is a muscle that needs flexing and is desperate to learn new things. To end with another oft-quoted phrase, 'if you don't use it, you lose it,' - so keep that grey matter active.**

- **Those in the biz are calling it the rise of Internet 2. Yeah, well I'm sure we all remember what happened last time the dot coms went bust. Especially since, if you were like me, your plans for an early retirement, with millionaires tossing money at your start up, were shattered by the reality that your plans were never going to get past the daydream stage. Let's face it, most start ups weren't worth the paper they were written on. But now an entrepreneur in the US named Allen Morgan, thinks those dodgy dot.com ideas weren't so bad after all and is trying to have them resurrected. By learning from past mistakes he believes that the market is now ripe for the next eBay, Amazon and Google. So, if you think you've got a great idea then now might be the time to get it down on paper and give Allen Morgan a call.**

Pixeled Quarterly

Sue pondering the meaning of Multimedia

Professional Development

Industry dinner

May

Guest speakers and buffet dinner.

Interactive Comics

June

Held at Lab 3000 in Collins Street. Susan Bell will take you through a day session on how to create interactive comics - can be used to complement the module Content/Copy in VET 3/4

Creating Manga in Flash

August

Ever had a passion for Japanese cartoons or spent your youth watching anime like Kimba, Astro Boy and Gigantor? In this workshop we will show you how to draw manga characters and animate them in Flash. Great for teaching students animation techniques as well as learning about the development of Japanese cartoons and why they are currently dominating the world. Can be used for the module 2D Animation in VET 3/4

Committee Members Corner

Each quarter Pixeled will highlight a member of the pixeled committee and give you some background as to who is helping to run our organisation. This month an interview with Susan Bell - Multimedia Teacher at Wesley College, St Kilda Road Campus.

Q: **How did you become involved with the teaching of Multimedia?**

A: I did a course in multimedia back in the 1990's but at the time didn't think I'd ever be a teacher. Mostly I thought I'd get a job working as a content/copy writer for a web design company but before I finished the course the industry went belly up and all the dot.coms fizzled. I retrained as a teacher and got the job at Wesley three years ago.

Q: **How did you become involved in Pixeled?**

A: It became pretty obvious the first year I started teaching multimedia that there weren't a lot of resources available and very little direction on how to structure the VET course. I met Rachelle (president of Pixeled) at a PD session and I'd already met Ana at a VCAA day the year before. Then I met Geoff, Claire and Marian and we all clicked and decided to start Pixeled to help other multimedia teachers.

Q: **Where do you see the subject of multimedia heading over the next 5 years?**

A: I can definitely see it becoming combined with the IT VET subject as more students appear to be turning to multimedia and away from the traditional IT learning area of databases and organisational structures of IPM or Information Systems.

Q: **What have you found to be the greatest challenges facing Multimedia Teachers?**

A: The course is still in the early stages within high schools and there is definitely a huge discrepancy between the training hours available to TAFE and to high schools. It is hard to get through the course and prepare students for the exam when we get half the hours that TAFE does to deliver the course.

Q: **What resources have you found useful in the teaching of Multimedia?**

A: Online tutorials, lots of books on design and using all the software applications. The best way to learn is to play around with the software and network with other teachers.

Q: **What role do you play in Pixeled?**

A: I'm the secretary so I'm responsible for taking minutes, organising the bookings, sending information to teachers, responding to queries, maintaining the web site and helping to deliver the professional development sessions. It's a lot of work and I do it in my spare time but I feel I've gained a lot from knowing the other committee members and I've enjoyed the role.

Membership Renewals

The pixeled newsletter is sent to members each term. Anyone interested in contributing to the newsletter including reviews, information and articles can send an email attachment to the following address:

susan.bell@wesleycollege.net

or our postal address:

**Pixeled Multimedia Teachers Association
PO BOX 477
Clifton Hill**

Other Business

Kangan Batman TAFE are a registered RTO that provide training for almost 20 schools and deliver the Certificate II and III in Multimedia. They offer Professional Development for teachers to work with professional programmers, animators and trainers to gain multimedia skills and learn how to apply them as part of a teaching and learning structure. Early evening classes run at Essendon and Broadmeadows for 16 weeks. This is a chance to offer training to teachers with a chance to gain a higher level certificate that recognises the efforts and expertise they are applying in the classroom. If interested please contact:

David McLean on 9279-2561 or check out the website at http://www.kangan.edu.au/mm

Final Note

Pixeled relies on memberships to pay for the costs involved in running the organisation. The committee of Pixeled consists of volunteer teachers who give up their time in order to run the organisation. The committee members have received no payment for any professional development sessions delivered by them over the two years of running Pixeled nor given time allowance in their schools. We therefore appreciate anyone willing to join the committee and offer to run Professional Development sessions, contribute to the newsletters, share lesson plans to place on the Pixeled website and any suggestions about the direction of our association.

We also advise all members that they will need to renew their memberships if they wish to gain benefits in 2006. A membership form is attached with this newsletter.

On a final note the Pixeled Annual General Meeting will be taking place in June - the date to be confirmed closer to the meeting. If you wish to stand as a member of the committee or to vote for representatives then come along. More information will be available on our blog.

Look forward to hearing from members regarding content for the next issue. Till then, happy teaching.