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# Animation and Animation Software Tools

### Rakesh Kumar

Unitec Institute of Technology

rakeshsandhu@yahoo.com

## 1    Introduction

"A picture is worth a thousand words" is legendary saying which simply means that a message can be delivered through an image rather using lots of text and this image may be more influential and take less time to convey a message.

Animation is a multimedia technology that can be defined as the series of unmoving images that appears like a moving picture when they are viewed in fast sequence. A number of software tools are available to increase the visual impact of multimedia applications.

## 2    History

Examples of animation can be found many years before this current information age. Recently Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization (CHTHO) produced a documentary on the world's oldest animation. It discovered on a bowl, from a grave at the 5200-year-old Burnt City that bears five images depicting a goat jumping up to eat the leaves of a tree (Times, 2008).

## 3    Description

The word animation comes from the Latin words 'anima' meaning life or breath or soul and 'animare' meaning to fill with breath (Kawin, 1992). The main goal of creating an animation is to create a center of attention. Animated content can have text, sound, video, graphics and combination of some or all of them to increase the interactivity of the application. There are number of multimedia tools available for creating animations. Some commonly used multimedia tools are Adobe Flash, Dreamweaver, Fireworks, SWiSH Max, Illustrator, After Effects and Photoshop.

## 4    Key Uses

Animation technology is playing an important role in the field of education. Animated movies and applications are being designed to deliver knowledge in a more precise and interactive way.

Another main use of animation is to deliver state-of-the-art entertainment environment. Animation has been part of the film industry for many years. From simple cartoons to complex 2D and 3D animated movies, we can see the use of animation technology.

Web development is another key area in which animation is an integrated and necessary part. Web content is made more interactive to catch the user's attention. A number of multimedia tools are used in web development to enhance the usability of the website.

## 5    Comparison

The following table compares the key features of two commonly used multimedia tools for creating animations.

| Features | Adobe Flash CS4 | SWiSH Max |
|---|---|---|
| *Operating System support* | Windows/ Macintosh/ Linux/ Solaris | Windows only |
| *Cost* | $700 | $150 |
| *Multimedia effects and components* | No built in multimedia effects | 350 plus multimedia |
| *Integrated Development Environment* | Powerful but complex and similar to other Adobe products | Powerful but less complex. |
| *Mobile authoring* | Supported | Not Supported |
| *Object Based Animation* | Yes | No |
| *3D translation and rotation* | Better | Very limited |
| *Tweening* | Motion as well as shape | Motion only |
| *Usebility* | Little difficult to use | Easy to use |

## 6    Conclusion

Multimedia is becoming more and more popular in the IT development industry and animation plays a major role in creating interactive user interfaces. The selection of the multimedia tool depends upon the type of multimedia project, type of animations, the budget and also the skill set, thinking and imagination power of the developers.

## 7    References

Kawin, B. F. (1992). *How movies work*. California: University of California Press.

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