

Comparison of Animation Technologies

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1. Introduction

Animation is one of the multimedia technologies in use in a wide range of IT projects. Animation within multimedia applications is an important part of multimedia presentations and can be presented as 2D or 3D format. There are many ways to create and present animations. Banner ads (like GIF, SWF file) with animation over the web are most common and low priced to build.

2. Description

“Animation is art and science of making still pictures to move that pass on act and idea about something is going somewhere” (Wagstaff, 1999). So animation can be defined as anything that appears to move on the display screen. To make the illusion of movement, images are displayed on screen frame by frame with slight changes.

Animation can also be interactive, that requires the interaction with the user either communicative or physical. In games and e-learning applications we can find examples of interactive animations which respond according to user activity.

There are many areas in which animation is in use and some of them are training and simulation, gaming, movies, advertising, learning, medical, TV program, website development.

Animation plays an important part in enhancing literacy, social skills and classroom learning among students of all ages. It is an effective learning medium that helps to build self confidence in student’s thinking and creative abilities. Animation makes phenomenon visually attractive and easier to understand that leaves a great impact on human brain (Dasgupta, 2001). It is also beneficial in teaching sign language to deaf students as their first language than traditional way of teaching by printed images in book.

3. Comparison

Today there are a large number of animation software products available in market, The following table shows the comparison between two of the most popular software products based on their general features.

Feature/ Criteria	Flash CS4	Swish Max2
<i>Cost</i>	US \$699	US \$150
<i>Time to learn</i>	Few weeks	Few days
<i>Trial Package</i>	30 days	15 days
<i>OS support</i>	Windows/ Macintosh/ Linux/ Solaris	Windows only
<i>Availability of effects</i>	No built-in effects	Many built-in effects
<i>Script support</i>	ActionScript 3.0	SWishScript
<i>Tweening</i>	Motion/shape	Motion only
<i>Drawing capabilities</i>	Limited. Contain tools like pen, transformation, shape etc.	Better. Contain additional tools motion path, autoshapes etc.
<i>Mobile authoring</i>	Better	Limited
<i>Password protection</i>	No	Yes
<i>Image filters</i>	No	Yes

4. Conclusion

The use of an animation tool depends on the type of animation required, either 2D or 3D, depending on that choose the tool within a budget that offers all the components and features needed for development.

5. References

Dasgupta, S. (2001). *Managing internet and intranet technologies in organizations: challenges and opportunities*. USA: Idea Group Inc (IGI)

Wagstaff, S. (1999). *Animation on the web*. CA: Peachpit Press.