Animation Tools: A Comparative Study

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1   Introduction

Multimedia technology combines text, pictures, animation, narration, video and music. According to Gayeski, multimedia is "a class of computer driven interactive communication systems which, create store, transmit, and retrieve textual, graphic, and auditory networks of information". (Gayeski, 1992). In recent years, there appears to have been a considerable increase in computer based animation. It is predominant in the latest movies, games and cartoon characters. This has lead to the development of different multimedia tools. This paper is a comparative study of two multimedia tools and its suitability in different application areas.

2   Description

Animation refers to the rapid generation of sequence of screens. Such that one screen may be an alterations of the previous one. "Animation is used to communicate temporal changes both abstract and physical." (Olsen 1997)

Animations and games stimulate the senses of young generation. However, the application of animation and multimedia are the fields that influence all areas of development. Nowadays its application covers wider area. Interactive museums, interactive teachers, animated story books, play station games, in-flight entertainment and more. The multimedia application can broadly classify as home and entertainment, education and services. (Kindersley 1996)

Computer games can be used as an instructional medium in education. Application of computer games in the field of education is clearly discussed in an article published by R Jayakanthan. In this paper he pointed out that "computer games has infinite potential and hence it would give an efficient educational experience." (Jayakanthan 2002)

In a research paper published in Journal of Veterinary Medical Education describes how an animation video helps medical students to analyse abnormal breathing pattern of respiratory problems. For veterinary students, getting enough number practical experience is difficult. In this context, animation is very useful for them to getting hands on experience.(Hawkins, Hansen et al. 2003). Apart from this animation techniques are incorporated in other fields such as cloth modelling, designing avatars, and facial animation in medicine.

3   Comparison of animation tools

Flash is used to develop high quality multimedia files. It is considered as an animation software. The vector technology, streaming capabilities, and compression methods make this software an effective tool for designers. These important aspects help to create complicated multimedia output, and it makes this tool convenient for designers. The new features included in this suite automatically reposition the frames and hence reduce the repetitive tasks. In this case start point and end point frames should be pre defined. The software itself calculates the relative position of all frames.(Adobe 2009)

MAYA is a software package developed by Autodesk. This software is compatible with Windows, Mac and Linux operating system. Maya software is developed using C++ language. It is high calibre animation software and its diverse capabilities make it so popular among designers. The latest version of the software is Maya 2009. This software is equipped with integrated 3 D modelling facilities. (Autodesk 2009)

Flash and Maya are two fully featured animation software products from two different vendors. Both are very suitable for web applications and games. However, the special features of Maya make this an effective tool for cloth modelling and 3 D animation. Maya is compatible with Linux, Windows and Mac. Flash is compatible with Windows and Mac. (Adobe 2009)

4 Conclusion

This paper describes two multimedia products used in animation and also its strong potential in visualization of images. In conclusion, animation and multimedia technologies can revolutionise all aspects of life.

5 References

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