Case study

Otis College of Art and Design

Preparing students for real-world design using HP Z Workstations

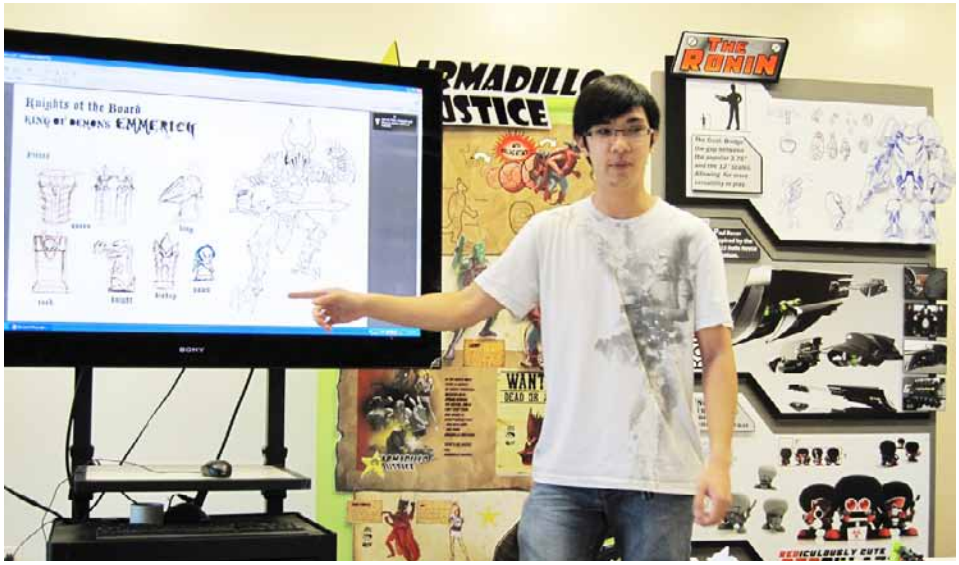
Industry
Higher education

Objective
Provide technology support for art and design education

Approach
Otis College of Art & Design pairs industry-leading software with appropriate hardware platforms such as HP Z Workstations

IT matters
- Standardization on HP Z Workstations simplifies IT support
- HP Care Packs extend HP-quality support for life of the workstation

Business matters
- Superior workstation build quality simplifies maintenance and support, supports long life
- Configuration flexibility supports the most popular design software



OTIS
Otis College of Art and Design

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– Felipe Gutierrez, director of Academic Computing Services, Otis College of Art and Design

Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles helps art and design students prepare for careers in fields ranging from architecture to fashion design. The non-profit institution was formed when the 1918 estate of Los Angeles Times founder and publisher Harrison Gray Otis was designated for the advancement of the arts. Distinguished alumni include award-winning and industry-leading artists who are enriching the world through creativity in entertainment, animation, product development and more. The college relies on the latest HP Z Workstations to provide its students with the technology tools to prepare for real-world experience.

Preparation for real-world art and design

Founded in 1918, Otis prepares diverse students of art and design to enrich our world through their creativity, their skill, and their vision. The college offers an interdisciplinary education for nearly 1,100 full-time students, awarding BFA degrees in advertising, architecture/landscape/interiors, digital media, fashion design, graphic design, illustration, product design, painting, photography, sculpture/new genres, and toy design; and MFA degrees in fine arts, graphic design, public practice, and writing.

Technology is a critical element in every student's education. "In each major, we ask what platform gives students the flexibility to work on a single system, to render and output their work, with tools they will later encounter in the industry," explains Felipe Gutierrez, director of Academic Computing Services at Otis. "Increasingly, that leads us to HP Z Workstations."

Technology has transformed education in many fields, but perhaps nowhere more strikingly than in art and design. "To meet the needs of today's students, we created a separate Academic Computing department focused on providing the specific technology required by each discipline," explains Gutierrez.

Why? Because students intent on pursuing art and design careers today need familiarity and experience with digital design tools used in the industry. Drafting tables have been replaced by CAD programs. Flatbed film tables have been replaced by random-access digital editing programs like Adobe Premiere. Sketchpads have been replaced by Autodesk Maya, 3ds Max, and similar modeling/animation software.

Architect/designer Dave Schultze says his classes on 3D visualization incorporate leading 3D design software running on HP Z Workstations in order to "give my students a very real world experience so they can be more competitive. I am trying to get them to a level of competency so they can exceed expectations on their first job."

Trend toward PC-compatible workstations

Gutierrez says the school's approach is to support each major with the appropriate technology for the program. "The majority of our faculty work as professionals who know exactly what technology they use on a daily basis in their field, and they help guide us in providing the latest technology trends for students."

The school offers several computer labs to support student coursework and projects on campus. Historically many of the labs have been dual platform, providing both PC- and Mac-based platforms. Today many of those labs have standardized on HP Z Workstations, supporting the most popular software applications in 3D imaging, animation, toy design, product design, architecture and digital video production.

"The biggest shift we've seen recently is in the world of digital video," Gutierrez says. "There is significant movement in the industry toward Adobe Premiere, which is becoming a norm for video production and editing."

Digital creation and editing programs are among the most demanding applications in the world, so they demand some of the most powerful hardware platforms. That is why Otis has chosen HP Z Workstations.

HP Z Workstations offer quality, speed, flexibility

"When we ask ourselves what technology gives students the flexibility to work on a single platform for their entire projects, with the ability to render and output, we conclude HP Z Workstations are the best fit," he continues.

> "We knew HP could provide both the level of computing we needed, along with service and support. That led us to move to HP Workstations in classrooms and labs."
>
> – Felipe Gutierrez, director of Academic Computing Services, Otis College of Art and Design

The school first identified an instructional need for workstation-class hardware in the late 1990s. It experimented with some other models, but found them inefficient and costly. Then it turned to HP.

"We were familiar with HP desktop PCs and had a good relationship and experience with HP service and support," recalls Gutierrez.

HP recommends Windows.

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The school has standardized on the HP Z Workstations, first the Z800 Workstation and more recently the Z820 Workstation. "Where we're able to standardize on a single model, we do. It adds to our efficiency in support," he says. The school recently purchased 40 HP Z820 Workstations to equip two classrooms, and developed a standard software image for them.

"We chose the Z820 for the build quality and the processing power—with as many cores as possible in most cases—the choice of processing cards, video cards to fit 3D imaging, animation and video editing needs," Gutierrez says. The HP Z820 Workstation can be configured with up to 512 GB of memory and dual Intel® Xeon® Processors with up to 24 processing cores.

The quality of HP Workstations makes them easy to work on and support, while offering a long useful life. Configuration flexibility ensures HP Workstations can be configured to run all popular design software. "There's never been a question that I'll be able to configure an HP Workstation to fit our needs," Gutierrez says.

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The company routinely refreshes about 25% of its student computers and workstations each year. Older workstations are repurposed to serve administrative users or less demanding academic purposes. To extend the life of HP Workstations beyond the standard warranty period, the school purchases HP Care Packs for same day, on-site 9-to-5 support.

Providing the right digital tools

It's important for Otis College of Art and Design to provide students with the right digital tools, including workstations that are more powerful than most college students would bring to campus, because students depend on the school for high-end technology.

"The economic base of many of our students is lower than at most private schools. So students come here with the expectation that they will be able to get the technology they need here on campus," Gutierrez explains. "We made a commitment to meeting that need."

Academic Computing Services at Otis currently supports some 460 student computers and workstations on campus. Some are in labs dedicated to supporting particular majors and academic programs. Some are in smart classrooms equipped with digital projection, multimedia support and more.

"Students have 24-hour access to all the computer power they need. They have access to all the software all the time," Gutierrez explains. "So while many students want to have their own workstation-quality computer, it's not actually a requirement here. We provide them with the most important technology tools they need."

Mobile computing, BYOD may transform student computing

While Otis is committed to providing the digital tools students need on campus, how it fulfills that commitment in the future remains an open-ended question. The proliferation of mobile devices, demand for mobile computing access, and the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) trend, all are powerful forces.

"If students have their own notebook or tablet, how can they use those devices in their education?" Gutierrez asks rhetorically. "We want to pursue a device-agnostic stance; we want to be able to support any kind of mobile, wireless device going forward."

Mobile computing is not expected to change the need for high-end, workstation-class computing anytime soon. "I think there will

Customer at a glance

Application
College art & design education

Hardware
- HP Z800 Workstation
- HP Z820 Workstation
- HP ZBook Mobile Workstations

Software
- Windows® 7 Professional
- Autodesk Product Design Suite
- Autodesk Entertainment Creation Suite
- Adobe Creative Suite
- Rhinoceros Rhino 3D
- Dassault Systèmes SolidWorks
- The Foundry Nuke X
- The Pixel Farm PFTrack
- Marmoset Toolbag

HP services
- HP Care Pack support

HP recommends Windows.

always be a need for labs of some sort," he says. In some cases, he expects students may work on their projects on PCs in the initial stages of design, then upload their files to HP Workstations in Otis' labs for rendering and output. "So we might see a marriage of BYOD, mobile devices and our on-campus student computing capabilities."

> "When recruitment teams come to campus, they comment that Otis students have less of a learning curve when they start new jobs because they've already been using the industry-recognized technology here on campus."
>
> – Christine Leahey, director of Foundation Relations, Otis College of Art and Design

The rise of mobile workstations might eventually change things even more. "Every year our architecture department chair asks for a recommendation for a notebook PC that will support the program's CAD software, and I always recommend HP Mobile Workstations, currently the HP ZBooks," Gutierrez says. "The days when you had to use a desktop device to get workstation performance are over."

Another important trend is the globalization of undergraduate arts education. Increasingly, students at Otis interact using Skype, WebEx, or other online platforms with designers and other art programs around the world. Recently, a group of students worked with a business in Spain to help design a store interior. "It broadens how students are prepared for the workforce," Gutierrez says. "Virtual interaction is a growing trend for workplace communication, and it's one more area where our students are being exposed to the latest practices."

Technology boosts career readiness

Otis invests in powerful, leading-edge technology like HP Z Workstations for many reasons, all of which add up to better preparing students to begin their careers.

"When recruitment teams come to campus, they comment that Otis students have less of a learning curve when they start new jobs because they've already been using the industry recognized technology here on campus," explains Christine Leahey, director of Foundation Relations for the school.

According to a recent survey of Otis graduates, 84% work in a field closely related to their major, and 64% obtained their first job within three months of graduation.

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Gutierrez says Otis collaborates with HP to provide the technology that students need to succeed. "We recognize that technology is just a tool in the hands of a designer. But it's an important tool that plays an important part in the education we deliver to students every day."

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