

Made in Me

Enchanting worlds



Made in Me

London, United Kingdom
www.madeinme.com

Less Rain

www.lessrain.co.uk

Expert visual effects dads employ Adobe® Flash® Platform to originate an enchanted place based on child development principals—where adults and children thrive together

The Land of Me is an enchanting achievement that stretches the age-old tradition found in classical fables beyond technical belief and pays homage to the glory days of beautifully hand-illustrated picture books that inspire the imagination and delight the eye.

The Land of Me is the first product from Made in Me, an educational multimedia publishing company co-founded by James Huggins and Mike Outlaw—two U.K.-based visual effects professionals who started their own firm because they struggled to find rich, high-quality, interactive content to play with their young children.

Three teams of experts collaborate at Made in Me. First are the creative founders, Outlaw and Huggins, who are resolute that content must preserve the visual style and quality of popular children's books—animated to bring enchanting, mysterious, and magical worlds to life. Second is the childhood development team headed by Professor John Siraj-Blatchford, a leading U.K. expert on the impact of technology on early childhood education and director of research and development at Made in Me. From the start, it was clearly understood that everything Made in Me does would be based on core child development principles.

Adobe solutions—including components of the Adobe Flash Platform, Adobe Photoshop, and Adobe After Effects—were chosen to create *The Land of Me* because they were the only way to fully realize Made in Me's technological, creative, and commercial vision for the educational product.



Challenge

- Engage preschoolers with elegant, digital educational content to enjoy learning with adults

Solution

- Create a media-rich, digital learning experience
- Use the Adobe Flash Platform to develop and deliver an entertaining digital experience that makes it easier for parents to engage young children in learning

Benefits

- Doubled sales month to month since startup
- Piloted assessment in preschools throughout Scotland
- Converted 10% of trials to sales
- Created dynamic solution that incorporates rich media and powerful application features

Last, but not least, are the interaction masters at Less Rain, a digital creative agency noted for its experience creating award-winning projects using the Adobe Flash Platform. "When James and Mike first approached us with the first draft brief, we said it would take Flash to its break point. It didn't break," says Vassilios Alexiou, founder and creative director at Less Rain. Outlaw and Huggins were also adamant that the style they wanted could only be achieved using bitmap, not vector assets, no matter how many gigabytes of imagery and how many layers of sophisticated audio had to be shifted around. Together, the three teams delivered a collection of games and activities for adventurers aged two to six to play with adults. The groundbreaking *The Land of Me* inspires children to explore their creativity and imagination.

Elegant, successful home and school distribution

Business is steadily increasing at Made in Me, mostly because of the recognition *The Land of Me* has received from educators and technology leaders. It has garnered a variety of awards since its product launch—including a 2010 Adobe Max Award nomination in the entertainment category, a gold medal from a popular U.K. magazine *Practical Parenting*, and the most innovative supplier award from U.K. magazine *Nursery Management Today*. *The Land of Me* also won top honors in the highly competitive media and entertainment category from the British Interactive Media Association.

Having decided early on that the project should be in the form of downloadable content, rather than a browser-based solution, Huggins noted that it was clear from the start that it had to be Adobe AIR®. Adobe AIR enables the team to market the product in downloadable parts, providing a core revenue stream for the company.

Visitors to www.madeinme.com can try out the first *The Land of Me* chapter for free. In just one click, approximately 12% of visitors have seamlessly downloaded the free content on Adobe AIR. Out of those users, approximately 10% then clicked from within the chapter they were viewing to buy additional chapters. While using *The Land of Me*, the latest product and software updates occur reliably in real time.

It might sound simple, notes Outlaw, but the team overcame several challenges to make the business model work with the same elegance as the rest of the presentation. As a result, and with no formal advertising initially, business is growing 100% month over month for trials, as well as for purchases.

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James Huggins
Co-founder and managing director,
Made in Me

Having *The Land of Me* available on the Adobe AIR Marketplace provides exposure to millions of potential users who give valuable feedback on the product and who create buzz through social online networks. Whether downloaded as an Adobe AIR application or played via DVD, *The Land of Me* can be fully experienced without relying on an Internet connection, which is of particular use to families or preschools and nurseries with limited or no ongoing Internet connections.

The educational value of *The Land of Me* has attracted the attention of key influencers and decision makers in the United Kingdom, where the solution is being piloted in 30 schools and nurseries funded by the Scottish educational system. There, the product is undergoing assessment in relation to child development milestones—a key issue to the Made in Me creators, who want their product to be continuously validated in terms of educational effectiveness.

Technological achievement enables serious play

"We had no doubt that the Adobe Flash Platform was the only way we could realize our vision from every technological, creative, as well as commercial touch point. We never had to sacrifice quality for performance," says Huggins. Based on a decade of animation experience, *The Land of Me* team remains fully committed to the Flash Platform. "Adobe solutions were instrumental at every point in the process from content creation to distribution. A publisher can't ask for more than that."

With Adobe After Effects® support for Adobe Flash, the creative team can easily deliver *The Land of Me* content to Flash Professional or import SWF files to After Effects as vectors. The entire design and development process required a tremendous amount of collaboration between teams to balance assets for optimal performance, the right look, and great audio.

From start of production to launch it took slightly over a year to produce all six chapters in *The Land of Me*, which is "amazingly fast considering the technical complexity of the project, the fact that it is manually animated, and all the other unknowns for a project of this scope," notes Outlaw. A pipeline was set up to deliver work between remote teams. Each chapter was contained in an Adobe SWC file that included the precompiled Flash symbols and code to streamline the developer's work on the Adobe AIR application. In total, the Made in Me and Less Rain teams were comprised of two illustrators, four animators, four developers, one designer, and two production managers.

Adobe Flash Professional was used to create all the animation and the class libraries containing graphics, animations, sounds, fonts, and other assets. The Flex® SDK was used to compile Flash content and Adobe AIR applications.

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Toolkit

Adobe Flash Platform. Components used include:

- Flash Builder™
- Adobe AIR
- Adobe Flash Professional
- Adobe Flash Remoting
- Adobe Flash Player

Adobe Creative Suite. Components used include:

- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe After Effects

Adobe Reader

Adobe Photoshop® was used to create all the artwork seen in the application and for color grading. Adobe After Effects was used to create specific visual effects within each chapter, including dust clouds, steam, and water ripples; it was also used for compositing. Adobe Reader® enables users to view and print various analog cut-out-and-make activities included with each chapter. Finally, Flash Remoting with the Zend Framework handles the communication between server and application.

With its first product making headlines, the Made in Me team is looking at ways to repurpose their work in Adobe AIR to extend *The Land of Me* to other platforms, devices, and screens, including GoogleTV and the Samsung Galaxy Platform. "We are excited about further monetizing our work," says Outlaw. "There is definite interest in downloading rich content that gives users access to information and services where and when they want it. With all the advances in the Adobe Flash Platform, we are looking forward to integrating educational expertise with interactive media in exciting ways."

For more information

www.adobe.com/products/flashplatform



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