Lake Washington Institute of Technology
Gaining the right multimedia credentials

Lake Washington Institute of Technology
Redmond, Washington
www.lwtc.ctc.edu

Leading technical college equips students for success, helping meet demand for skilled multimedia workers with Adobe® Creative Suite® software

A college degree isn't always enough anymore to open the right doors for graduates. As global competition places new pressures on businesses, many companies are raising the bar on the requirements for new hires. Rather than offering on-the-job training in multimedia technologies and practices, companies are requiring validated skill sets so that new employees are ready to hit the ground running when they walk in the door. In addition, companies are now requiring that existing employees receive additional training in key multimedia skill areas to meet new business and departmental objectives.

"Lake Washington Institute of Technology (LWIT) is fundamentally a workforce college. We continually assess and revise our curriculum to ensure we're offering the optimal skill set for today's students," says Nancy Dick, dean of Applied Design Programs at LWIT. As a leader in workforce training, LWIT offers affordable professional and technical training that helps prepare students for the changing face of today's careers and opportunities. The school offers 39 programs featuring 107 degrees and certificates in areas including information technology; business and service; health and fitness; manufacturing and transportation technologies; and arts, language, and science. LWIT maintains strong ties with businesses locally, nationally, and internationally to foster responsive educational programs and services that will help students achieve success in their careers.

Challenge
- Map multimedia teaching to real-world employer demands
- Integrate more dynamic, rich-media training into coursework
- Prepare students to thrive in the 21st-century workforce

Solution
- Integrated industry-standard Adobe Creative Suite Design Premium and Production Premium into curriculum
- Established credentials and Adobe Certified Associate programs to help ensure that multimedia students have relevant skill sets

Benefits
- Equipped multimedia students with the right credentials for today's job market
- Contributed to 300% growth in multimedia AAS degrees and certificates of completion
- Enabled student job placements with global brand-name companies

Toolkit
Adobe Creative Suite Design Premium and Production Premium.
Components used include:
- Adobe Photoshop® Extended
- Adobe Illustrator®
- Adobe InDesign
- Adobe Flash® Professional
- Adobe Dreamweaver®
- Adobe After Effects®
- Adobe Acrobat® Pro

To meet the demand for multimedia professionals with solid video, audio, web, interactive, animation, and print skills, LWIT offers relevant Bachelor and Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees, as well as certificates of proficiency and completion. Adobe Creative Suite Design Premium and Production Premium software are critical for training.

"Adobe Creative Suite software is integral to teaching our students the skills that today's companies demand," says Dick. "We remind them that today their competition is global, and that close to 100,000 students globally took Adobe certification exams in 2010. We want them to understand that having not just multimedia credentials, but the right credentials, are essential to stay competitive."

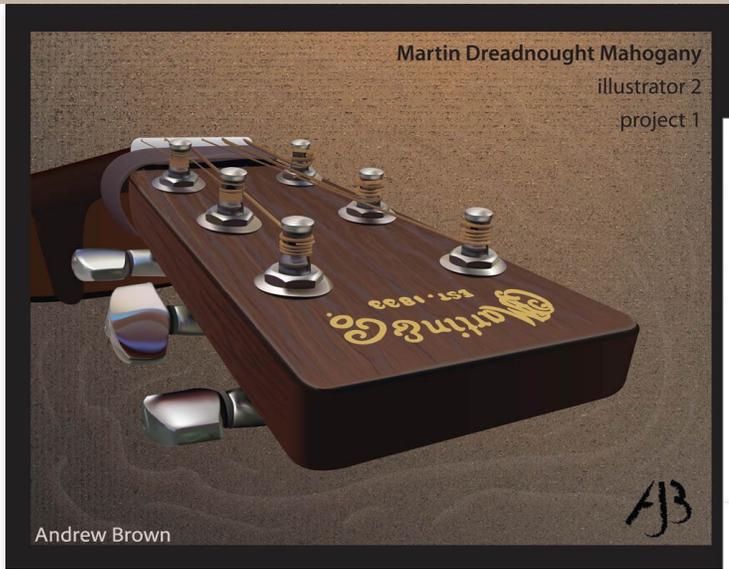### The growing importance of multimedia credentials

As the need for specific multimedia skill sets has increased in recent years, LWIT has carefully tailored its applied design programs to meet the requirements driven by businesses. While some design and production fields are becoming more credential-based on particular business requirements, others are demanding broader skill sets.

"As entry-level production positions have increasingly been outsourced, moved upstream to the designer, or made obsolete by technology, we've had to rethink the skills needed by our graduates," notes Dick. "We are also seeing advances in digital publishing thanks to products like Adobe InDesign®, which are narrowing the gap between traditional print design and online and multimedia design. The bottom line is that students need to understand these trends and gain the skills and credentials that will offer them the greatest opportunities in their chosen fields."

With a workforce-focused mission, LWIT has a history of advancing students with strong technical skills in a variety of high-demand multimedia areas, many requiring expertise with industry-standard Adobe Creative Suite software. "We teach Adobe Creative Suite skills because we are committed to maintaining best practices in teaching and learning in alignment with what employers are looking for in today's students," says Dick, an Adobe Education Leader and former Adobe Certified Instructor at the college.

In addition to the Multimedia Design and Production (MMDP) program, the college offers a Bachelor of Technology in Applied Design degree—the only bachelor's degree offered at a technical college in the state of Washington. The school offers AAS degrees in Video and Web Production and Digital Gaming and Media, as well as certificates of proficiency and completion in a variety of web, video, audio, and print specialties. LWIT also offers Adobe Certified Associate (ACA) certifications for currently enrolled MMDP students and MMDP faculty. Important to offering students the depth of multimedia training needed, LWIT also leverages the exams as a method for assessing learning outcomes for its program review process and to meet expectations for external measures of effectiveness by its accrediting body, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU).

Martin Dreadnought Mahogany
illustrator 2
project 1

Andrew Brown

NingNing Kang

LWIT students are becoming increasingly aware of the growing importance of multimedia credentials. Dick notes that today's students are staying longer than even a few years ago so that they can complete more certifications and more advanced degrees, given the shifting marketplace trends. In the past three years, the college has seen significant growth in multimedia students seeking AAS degrees, as well as growth in short (15-19 credit) certificates of completion awarded.

Preparing multimedia students for the workforce

The MMDP program at LWIT prepares students to plan, analyze, and create visual solutions to produce websites, printed materials, and interactive online experiences using industry-standard software including Adobe Creative Suite. Delivering coursework in class and online, instructors in the largest technical program on campus teach students the most relevant design and production skills for today's marketplace. They also teach students important professional practices such as copyright, file management, portfolio development, and workplace ethics.

Within the industry and Adobe ACA certifications, training in Adobe Photoshop Extended is the most popular program offered, followed by Adobe Flash Professional and Dreamweaver. Given the industry dependence on Adobe Photoshop, every student in the MMDP program learns how to use the digital imaging solution. The department offers other market-driven Adobe training across its degrees and certifications, including Adobe Illustrator, InDesign, After Effects, and Acrobat Pro. Among programs offered, those that focus on web design, production, and development are attracting more students than the other multimedia disciplines.

Opening doors to career opportunities

Whether it's graphic design, web and interactive design, video production, or audio editing, LWIT provides students with the technical training that will help open doors to career opportunities and keep them in demand moving forward. Focusing on real-world business needs that include industry-standard skills such as Adobe Creative Suite capabilities, the college is equipping students with the skills and practices needed in the workforce today. In fact, students culminate their learning experience with a showcase of their portfolio to industry professionals who offer valuable feedback to help prepare them for job hunting and educate them about career opportunities.

"Our students leave LWIT knowing not just how to use Adobe software, but how to leverage it for developing rich creative concepts, producing engaging digital and print materials, and reaching the diverse internal and external audiences that employers serve."

Nancy Dick
Dean, Applied Design Programs
Lake Washington Institute of Technology

The MMDP program and industry certifications are proving successful in delivering the skilled workers that startup firms and larger brand-name companies alike need to fulfill important multimedia roles within their companies. LWIT has placed graphic design, web design, video production, and gaming/3D students with companies including Google, Microsoft, Puget Sound Energy, Swedish Hospital, Paramount Pictures, T-Mobile, Travelocity.com, Caffeinated Games (*Farmlands*), and many others.

Whether students are just beginning their exciting multimedia careers, or professionals are seeking a career change or upgrading their skills at the request of their employers, LWIT will continue to offer important skilled training in Adobe Creative Suite software through its MMDP program and industry certifications.

"Adobe Creative Suite skills are a key ingredient in the overall multimedia design and production ecosystem," says Dick. "Our students leave LWIT knowing not just how to use Adobe software, but how to leverage it for developing rich creative concepts, producing engaging digital and print materials, and reaching the diverse internal and external audiences that employers serve."

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