

Alternative software solutions for cash-strapped educational institutions

Many of today's school administrators and decision makers have to make the most of chronically underfunded programs. Faced with declining financial support from every level of government, they are forced to search for alternative ways to stretch their limited budgets and keep their programs running. Often overlooked is the fact that significant cost savings can be found by scrutinizing their software budgets.

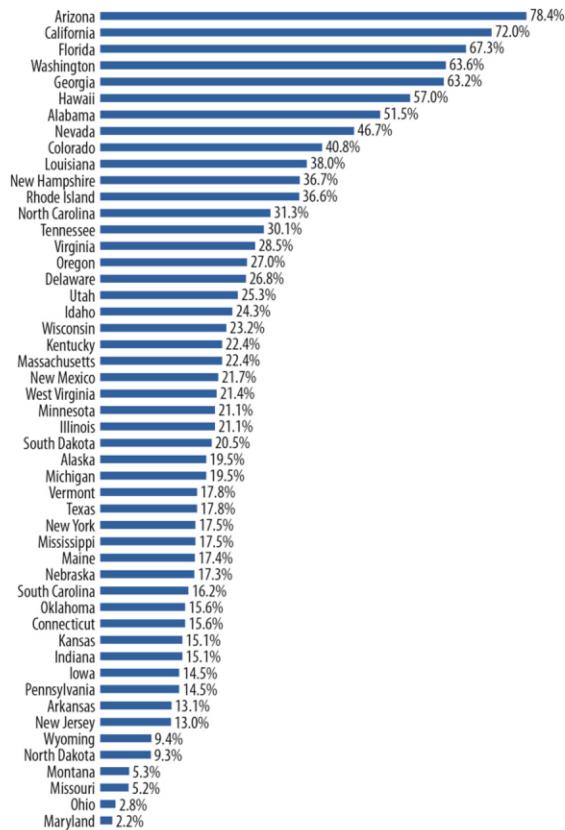
This paper summarizes the financial burden plaguing education budgets across the U.S., and presents two case studies from schools that have chosen alternatives to the industry-leading software brand.



Source: CBPP calculations using data from Illinois State University's annual Grapevine Report. Illinois data is provided by the Fiscal Policy Center at Voices for Illinois Children. Because enrollment data is only available through the 2012 school year, the enrollment data for 2013 used in these calculations is estimated based on enrollment trends from past years.:

Figure 1 – This chart from CBPP shows that states have reduced per-student funding deeply in recent years.

Percent change in average tuition at public, four-year colleges, inflation adjusted, FY08 - FY13



Source: College Board

Figure 2 – This chart from CBPP shows that states have increased tuition massively in recent years.

Deep funding cuts and rising tuition in U.S. education

Amid years of funding shortfalls, educational institutions of all levels are operating in crisis mode. Whether it's K-12 or higher education, schools have little choice but to cut spending or increase tuition to stem the tide of plummeting government investment. Most often, they have to do both, which means laying off teachers and support staff, cutting entire programs or courses, and even closing facilities.

Consider the recent findings of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), who have published a report on state funding for higher education in the U.S. over the past five years. Nationwide, state funding for higher education has declined year-over-year by an average of 28%. While that average varies greatly state to state (as high as 50.4%, as low as 3.2%), only two states have increased funding and 36 have cut as deeply as 20%.

In the same report, the CBPP provides details on far-reaching and significant increases in state tuition costs over the same time period. By average from 2008-2013, annual tuition fees have jumped by 27%, or \$1,850. State to state, the average price hike varies from as high as 78.4% to a low of 2.2%.

Compounding all that turmoil in higher education is the fact that K-12 enrollment across the U.S. has increased by 535,000 students from 2008-2013. And K-12 budgets are under similar stress. Consider the following program funding cuts in the U.S. federal FY13 budget:

- 740 M from Title I
- 644 M from IDEA
- 406 M from Head Start
- 126 M from Teacher Quality State Grants
- 59 M from 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- 58.8 M from Impact Aid
- 9 M from Rural Education

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan offered harsh words about the impact of the cuts when he testified before the Senate Appropriations Committee in February. "Education is the last place to be reducing our investment as the nation continues to climb out of the recent recession and to prepare all of its citizens to meet the challenges created by global competitiveness in the 21st century."

Are software vendors out of step with the challenges facing educational institutions?

With so much scrambling to keep programs running, teachers and staff working, and students enrolled, educational institutions are rightfully seeking affordable alternatives to expensive, big-brand software. Adobe recently announced its plan to shift customers to a cloud-based, annual subscription model to license Creative Suite 6. The new Creative Cloud model means that future updates to the suite will only be available to subscribers, at a regular price of \$29 per month for education customers.

The following case studies offer a glimpse into the decision-making process of two schools that have chosen Corel software to teach fundamental skills to their students.

Case study overview

Name: Allen Brooks

School: San Elijo Middle School

Location: San Marcos, California

Title: Technology instructor and advisor

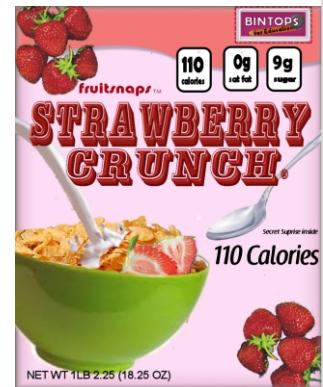
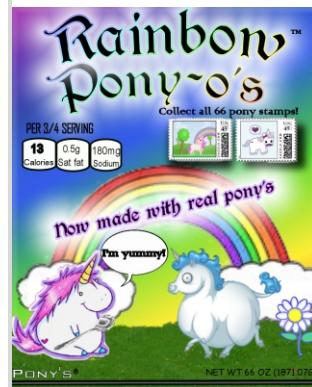
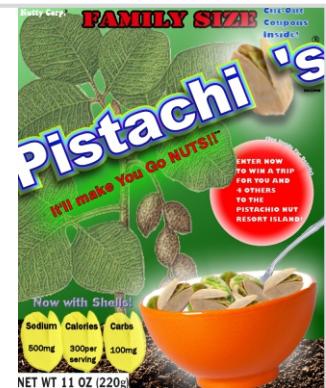
Products: Corel® PaintShop® Pro, Corel® VideoStudio® Pro



The best bang for the buck

Allen Brooks is the technology instructor at San Elijo Middle School in San Marcos, California. He teaches digital design and graphics, as well as TV media and broadcast production. In addition to his teaching duties, Brooks also serves as the school's technology advisor. And so he has the unofficial responsibility to ensure that the school's limited software budget is spent to the maximum advantage of its students.

For his digital design and graphics program, he chose



A collection of packaging designs created with PaintShop Pro by middle school students in the first year of Allen Brook's digital design and graphics program.

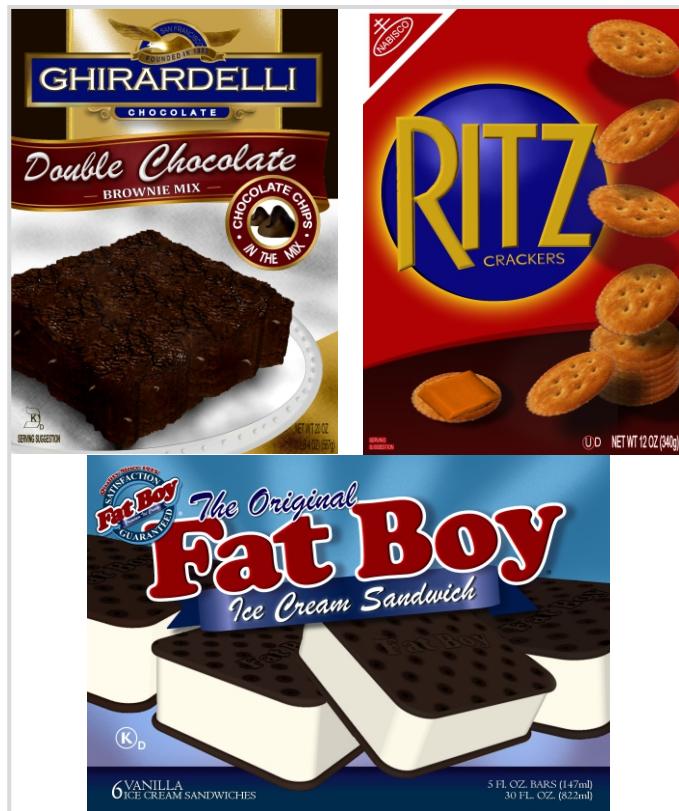
Corel PaintShop Pro instead of Adobe® Photoshop®. And for his TV media and broadcast production program, he chose Corel VideoStudio Pro instead of Adobe® Premiere®. "It was a simple decision, and not just because of price," says Brooks. "And of course, I considered Adobe's products. They're the heavyweight, but feature for feature, Corel offers the best bang for the buck."

Of course, when you make a choice that goes against an industry standard, you expect to encounter resistance. "I have students who are aware of Adobe," explains Brooks, "They may have parents who are designers or they have access to that software at home. They're usually the ones who express a preference to use Photoshop or Premiere."

"When that happens, I just give them some time," says Brooks. "It never takes very long for them to comment on how easy it is to use Corel's products."

Teaching the fundamentals

"I don't teach software," Brooks exclaims. "My number one goal is for my students to learn fundamental skills



A collection of packaging designs created with PaintShop Pro by middle school students in the second year of Allen Brooks' digital design and graphics program.

that they can apply on any computer anywhere. When they walk out of my classes, they're designers or video producers."

Students in the technology programs at San Elijo Middle School learn by doing. "For one of the projects, they recreate examples of real-life packaging," explains Brooks. "And by far, the design program featuring PaintShop Pro is a true favorite."

"It's easy to use, and it's easy to teach, and it's so accessible for my students. Before long, they're getting their parents to buy them Corel software so they can create at home. And that's the greatest reward for me, as a teacher," he continues, "To have a kid excitedly show me something they've created over the weekend, on their own time, instead of posting on Facebook."

"Ultimately, choosing Corel was a no-brainer for my programs," offers Brooks, in closing. "When you consider the difference between spending \$18,000 or \$1,500, I've been able to keep my programs funded and running for several years now — and for less than it would have cost to buy the industry standard for a single year."

Case study overview

Name: Glenn Goldman



School: New Jersey Institute of Technology

Location: Newark, New Jersey

Title: Director, School of Art + Design

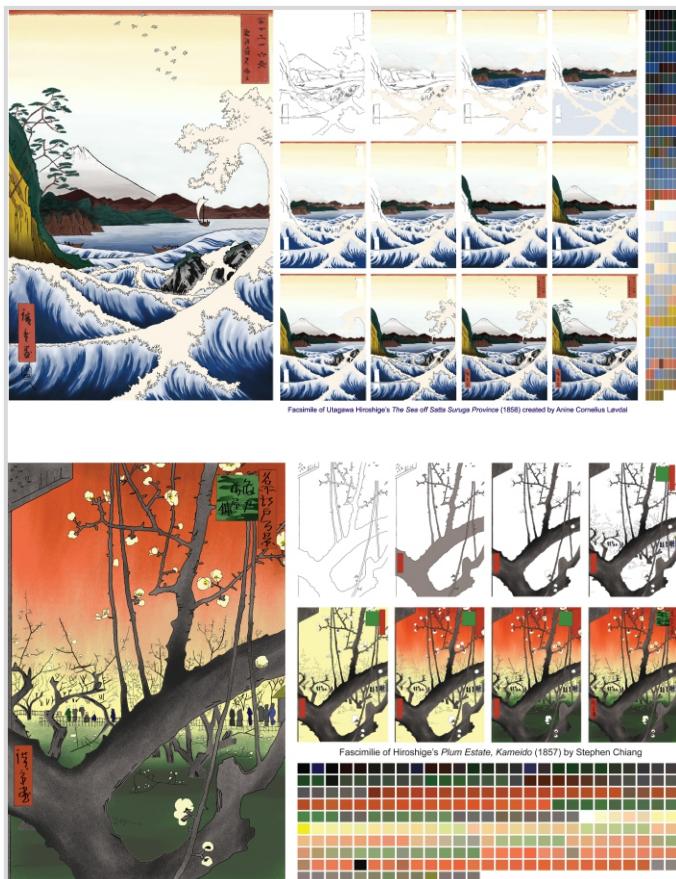
Products: CorelDRAW® Graphics Suite, Corel® Painter®, Corel® PaintShop® Pro

A chronically underfunded state school

Meanwhile, at the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Glenn Goldman serves as Director of the *School of Art + Design*. And he, too, is trying to stretch a limited budget to provide his secondary school students and faculty with software that helps them learn and teach the fundamentals of digital art and architecture, as well as interior and industrial design.

"We simply don't have the resources to consider entering into long-term commitments for software licenses," says Goldman. "Besides, Corel's products are affordable, and in my opinion, they're often easier to use than the competition."

Students at the New Jersey Institute of Technology use a range of Corel software in their studies, including Corel Painter, CorelDRAW Graphics Suite, and Corel PaintShop Pro. "Well, Painter stands alone," explains Goldman. "I've been using it since 1985, and 'Wow!' is the general response of students when they first try it."



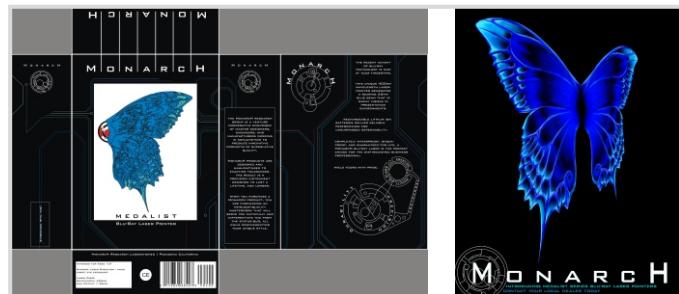
Students in the first semester of the Color and Composition course at the New Jersey Institute of Technology's School of Art + Design use Corel Painter to produce painting re-creation and analysis studies. They save their Painter work in iterations and then use CorelDRAW to put together the entire composite.

Easier to use and learn

"Personally, I find CorelDRAW faster and physically easier to use than Adobe® Illustrator®, " says Goldman. "Our freshman students spend their first month compositing in CorelDRAW, and any doubts they may have to its efficacy are quickly eliminated."

Goldman is used to dealing with resistance from folks who trumpet 'industry standards' and bristles at the notion that anything less is limiting. "If possible, I will let students choose which software they want to use. And without fail, an absolute clear majority eventually choose Corel's software simply because of how easy it is to use."

"We've saved a lot of money over the years by using Corel's software, and the education license program is such an asset for students — who have their own chronic budget limitations," he says in closing. "It's terrific that Corel offers such an astounding reduction in price so that students can get a take home copy."



At the end of the first semester of the Graphic Design course at the New Jersey Institute of Technology's School of Art + Design, students use Corel Painter and CorelDRAW to create original packaging designs.

For more information

[Corel's Education Licensing Program](#)

References

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McKenna, Laura. The Atlantic. (2013). *The Worst Victims of the Education Sequester: Special-Needs Students and Poor Kids*.
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