CorelCAD™
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CASE STUDY

Munich University of Applied Sciences chooses CorelCAD™ to focus on usability

With paper becoming a thing of the past, instruction manuals have evolved to be more than just written guidelines on paper. Today, the graphics and text that comprise an instruction manual may be output to various media, such as the web and interactive electronic technical manuals (IETMs). For product developers, the goal is to create ergonomic and intuitive products. To increase product usability, technical writers are often involved at the beginning of the development stage.

OVERVIEW

NAME:
Professor Dr. Gertrud Grünwied, Head of the Technical Documentation and Communications Department

ORGANISATION:
Munich University of Applied Sciences

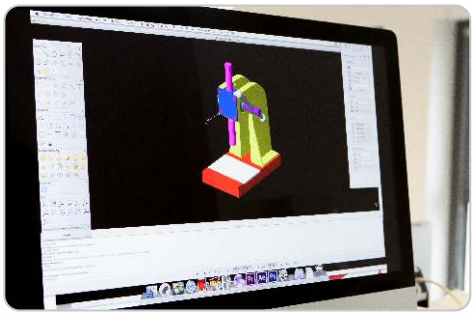
LOCATION:
Munich, Germany

INDUSTRY:
Technical Communication

PRODUCT:
CorelCAD™ as part of the Corel Academic Site Licence (CASL)

At the Munich University of Applied Sciences, future technical writers use CorelCAD™ to learn how to explain complex devices with images and technical drawings. Founded in 2011, the Technical Documentation and Communications course run by Gertrud Grünwied focuses on usability. "Technical writers are integrated into the development process, and they're first to test the products," explains Prof. Grünwied. "They see the product as a whole and represent the views of the users."

Grünwied chose CorelCAD because it can run on both Mac® and Windows® systems. "Since we make a point of developing ergonomic and intuitive software systems, we need a CAD system that also runs on Mac computers," says Grünwied. "The students learn CAD so they can understand design in detail, including being able to read technical plans and their dimension units. During the subsequent editorial implementation, the drawings will be added to and modified, and with many images, text will be added.



CorelCAD allows Mac users to easily open and edit models that were originally created on a PC.

"With a growing trend toward digital operating instructions, bulky paper manuals may soon be a thing of the past. In the '50s, products like a Grundig radio or TV set often had a sticker telling the buyer to 'please read the manual before turning on.' In the future, however, the first thing a user will likely do is turn on the device. Therefore, self-explanatory images and animations must be user-friendly to reduce manuals to a minimum. For printed media, line drawings and photorealistic images are ideal, whereas for electronic media, interactive and animated images are required. These images are usually based on engineering data from CAD systems, and leveraging such assets can help to avoid costly prototypes. "CAD and CAD-supported development and documentation are becoming increasingly important," explains Grünwied.

Users of CorelCAD™ learn quickly

"CorelCAD is easy to learn and the students achieve quick results," says Grünwied, "whether in 2D or 3D." The students learn general CAD principles that also apply to other software applications, which is very helpful because they will have to work with different CAD systems in their professional life. "It's a popular degree program," says Grünwied, "with only 35 students admitted per term." After completing their first degree, most of the students launch into their career and work for large industrial organisations.

According to Thomas Stuchly, CAD lecturer at Munich University of Applied Sciences, CorelCAD offers an important competitive advantage. "It's great that I can use CorelCAD on a Mac to easily open and edit models that I created on the PC," he says.

"CorelCAD is definitely the right choice for the Technical Documentation and Communication course," Stuchly adds. "Myself, I've learned the basic features just by exploring the application. This shows how easy and intuitive it is." Other CAD programs are often more complex and have difficult working environments, according to Stuchly. CorelCAD is more clearly structured, so you don't have to switch tools. "CorelCAD is user-friendly, and therefore you quickly get the desired results."

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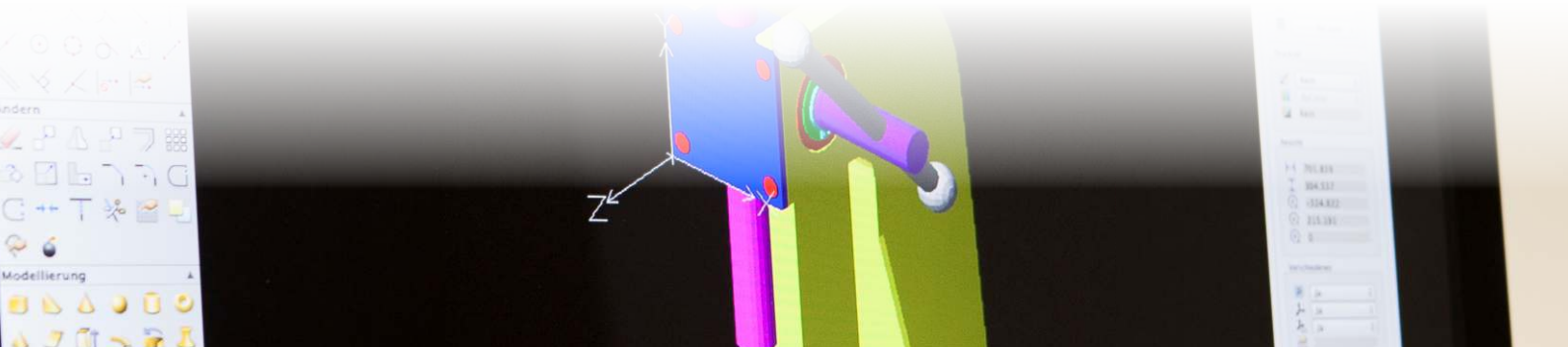

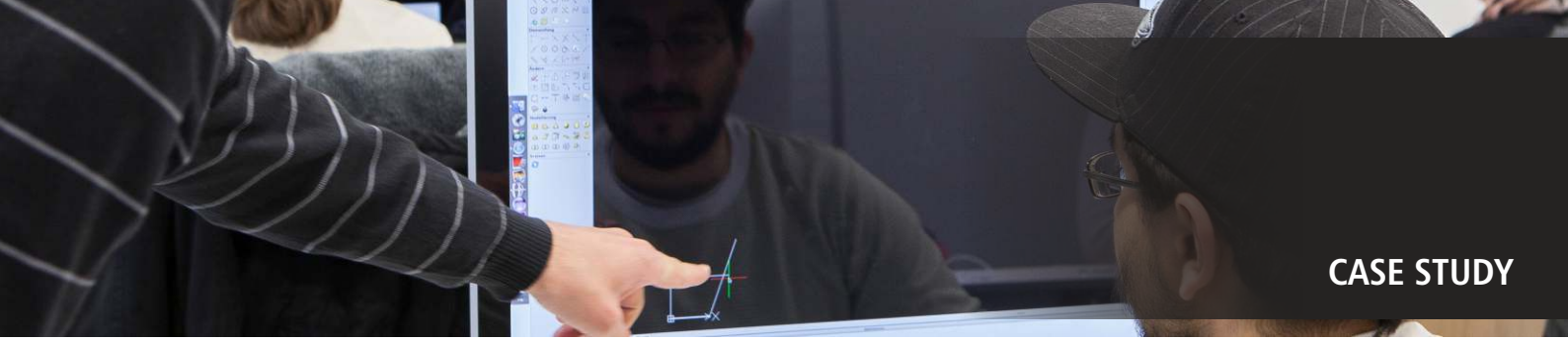

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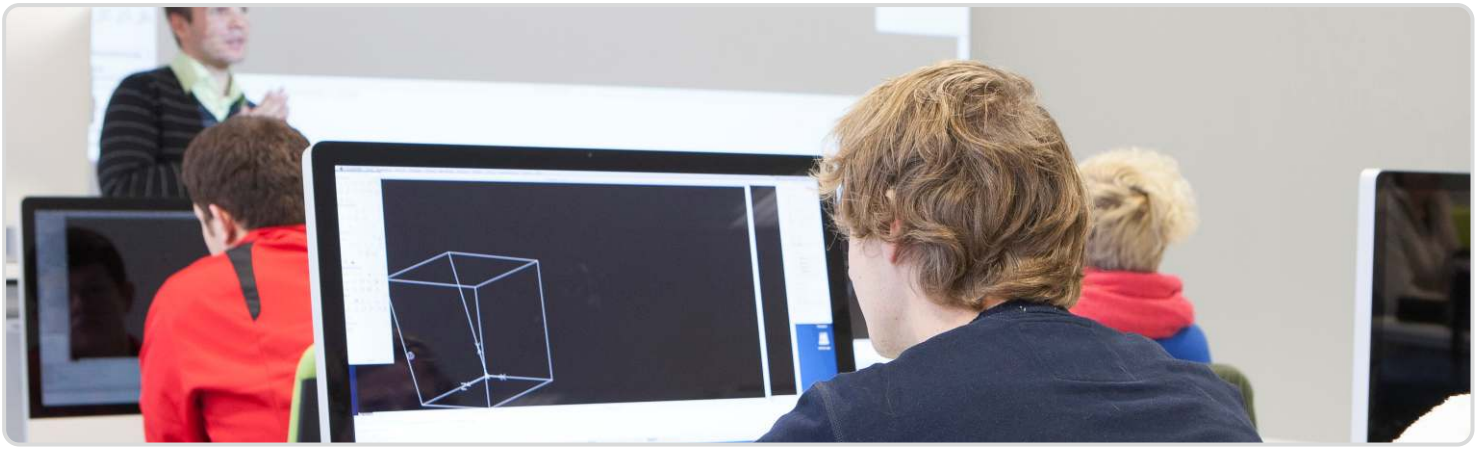

CorelCAD runs on both the Macintosh and Windows platforms. At Munich University of Applied Sciences, courses are taught in a Mac lab with 30 computers.

"CorelCAD stands out due to its support for popular file formats."

Visualisations must be created with consistency between product development and documentation with speed also an important economic consideration. "Technical communicators don't start with a blank page," explains Grünwied, "they use existing engineering data." If this data changes, as is often the case in modern product development models, the documentation has to be adjusted promptly. In Grünwied's assessment, consistency and compatibility between software and systems are imperative. "CorelCAD is an easy choice, particularly because of its support for exchanging popular file formats, such as AutoCAD® DWG," says Grünwied. That compatibility makes CorelCAD attractive to both schools and professional product developers, "but at a much more reasonable price," offers Grünwied.

With CorelCAD, the students learn industry CAD principles.

Developing strong media competence with the Corel Academic Site Licence

"With CorelCAD, we are breaking new ground at our university," says Grünwied, whose previous experience with Corel software was limited to CorelDRAW®. "We supported the purchase of a Corel Academic Site License so that we could also use other Corel products."

The Corel Academic Site Licence (CASL) gives the university access to additional technical graphics and vector-drawing software, such as CorelDRAW Technical Suite® and CorelDRAW® Graphics Suite. Grünwied values Corel software for its ability to work together and with other systems. As an example, she cites support for the SVG file format, a popular file format for web-based vector graphics in technical documentation.

Grünwied considers CASL an important building block for educating students with a strong media competence, which is a key aspect of the trend-setting Technical Documentation and Communication course. In her assessment, interactive multimedia visualisations are strongly on the rise. "The importance of graphics and multimedia programs for students is growing rapidly," she says. "The use of animations is increasing, and product utility videos and online help resources will have greater significance in the future." Clearly satisfied with her decision to purchase both CorelCAD and a CASL, Grünwied forecasts a bright future for the aspiring technical writers on her course. "With Corel software we can bank on students learning to develop tailored systems in their professional lives as technical communicators.

Professor Gertrud Grünwied, Head of the Technical Documentation and Communications Department at the Munich University of Applied Sciences.

"With Corel software used on our course, we can bank on students learning to develop tailored systems in their professional lives as technical communicators."
Professor Gertrud Grünwied

Corel Corporation
1600 Carling Ave.
Ottawa, ON
Canada K1Z 8R7

Corel UK Limited
Sapphire Court
Bell Street
Maidenhead
Berkshire SL6 1BU
United Kingdom

Corel GmbH
Erika-Mann-Str. 53 (Haus 7)
80636 München
Germany