

Overview

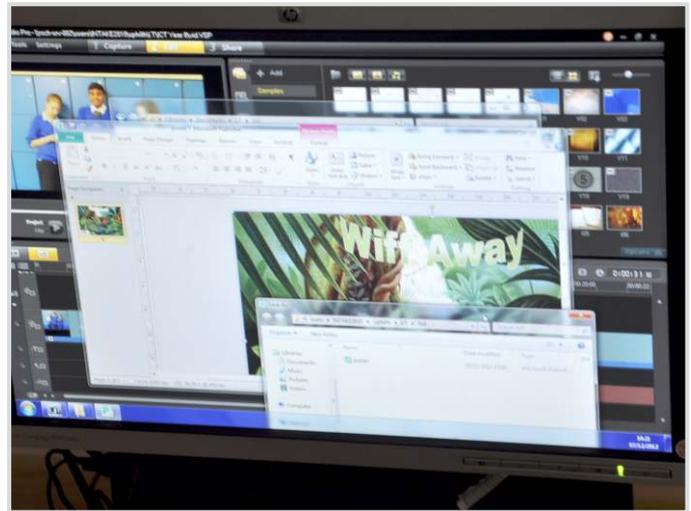
Name: Steve Hollands, Head of Business and ICT

Company: Reigate School

Location: Reigate, UK

Industry: Education

Product: Corel® VideoStudio® Pro



Students filmed, produced and edited the ads themselves – this one is for WiffAway deodorant.

Boosting creativity with cool IT

It can be a frustrating problem for IT teachers. They reserve some budget and buy some shiny new video cameras, but pupils find the resulting footage hard to work with. This was exactly what Steve Hollands found. As the head of IT at Reigate School in Surrey (UK), Hollands wanted to leverage the students' interest in video and editing – after all, it can be hard to get them excited about an Excel spreadsheet or even a database. "We offer our students as wide a variety of tools as we can," says Steve Hollands. "We want to encourage their creativity as far as possible while still reflecting back to the curriculum they need to follow." That was the reason he searched online for some easy-to-use software that would help the students – and the staff – work with video output.

software and started using it in earnest. "We were looking for something simple and quick to learn that had higher-end features. This gives the students the freedom to opt for the software they want to use and differentiate their work," comments Hollands. Corel VideoStudio Pro was given to the first group and they were able to create something immediately, then enhance it and use the other features to go further. This involved almost no input from Steve Hollands once they got going. "We had looked at a number of other software options but this fitted our needs the best," he adds.

Firing young imaginations

Hollands encouraged small groups of students to start with relatively straightforward projects, such as adding credits to



Students using Corel VideoStudio Pro X5 to review and fine-tune their production.

"Students loved it"

Hollands downloaded the trial version of Corel® VideoStudio® Pro. But instead of testing out all the functions right away, he handed it over to some students and asked them to report back with their impressions. "They loved it," he says. "They found it really intuitive to use without constantly referring to help manuals. So I played with the software too and could see what they meant." The school purchased 60 licences of the



an existing film. Some pupils came up with very imaginative credits, adding music they played on their own instruments, while others used videos they had made themselves or created short films using mashups of Japanese cartoons. Many of them had fun using chroma key and green-screen techniques to merge videos, change backgrounds and even put themselves into films they liked – a quick way to become an instant superhero! Amid all the fun, Steve Hollands always checks

and verifies the level of competence the students have achieved. "The IT curriculum stipulates that they should be able to handle multiple different data formats," he says. "The video work has really fired their imagination, so we ask them to create presentations about their videos using other formats – such as spreadsheets and PowerPoint® – and describe to an audience how they planned and executed their work." The presentations also have a ripple effect, helping the students share their knowledge, tips and tricks with others and improving the overall level of work.

Creating a commercial from A to Z

Steve Hollands then designed a project for year 9 students aged 13-14. They were tasked with making a video commercial for a consumer product – either a toothpaste or a deodorant – and thinking about every step involved, including designing the product packaging. Steve Hollands divided them up into 40 groups of 4-6 students each and designated a team leader responsible for relaying communications between team members and Hollands himself.

The group decided which product they wanted to work on, then designed the aerosol can or toothpaste tube with 3D or other graphics software. They created supporting marketing tools like posters and coupons, produced a mock-up of the product, developed the storyboard, chose the music and actors, and made and edited the video. "It didn't stop there, though," notes Hollands. "Part of the plan was to ensure they obtained feedback from me and other sources, then incorporate that into the video. The whole project was a real eye-opener, because some students who were weaker in other subjects showed amazing creativity and leadership in this project." The pupils had free rein to develop the packaging and commercial how they wanted. Some used their own music, while others created original music using open source music software on the internet.

Once everything was complete, they developed a PowerPoint® presentation about their experience, describing to other students and teachers how they overcame problems and learned new skills. Some of the films are even on show on the flatscreen in the school's reception area.



A classroom in Reigate School's well-equipped ICT block, opened in September 2006.

"We're always looking for ways to improve the students' IT experience"

The fact that Corel VideoStudio Pro is so easy to use has led to its broader adoption at Reigate School. The maths department has developed a series of videos to help with exam revision and uploaded them to the school's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for use by students whenever required. Many of them download videos onto their phones and revise when it's convenient – on the bus, for example. Sports teachers have also developed videos to help students improve their technique. "We're always looking for ways to improve our students' IT experience and the video projects with Corel VideoStudio Pro have helped us enormously," says Hollands. "They enjoy helping other students too, which takes a lot of pressure off us teachers!"



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