

# A new education focus for Adobe

Dr Tim Kitchen, Senior Education Advocate

**A**s I write this article I'm reflecting on the fact that I won't be enjoying my usual two-week break at this time of year, nor in the foreseeable future, because after 23 years I will no longer be working as a school teacher.

I have just started a new job as the Senior Education Advocate for Adobe within the Asia Pacific region. Based in Melbourne, my role will be to work with Adobe's education customers, supporting the international Adobe Education Leaders (AEL) program and other education based programs as well as working as a thought leader and guest speaker at education conferences and seminars.

## Creativity and the technological evolution

Enhancing creativity in education has been a major passion throughout my career. In his book *Out of Minds* (which I call the teacher's bible), Sir Ken Robinson says: "Helping people to connect with their personal creative capacities is the surest way to release the best they have to offer." (Robinson, 2012). This statement beautifully describes the philosophy that I have tried to follow.

I began my teaching career as a music educator in 1991 at Kingswood College in Box Hill, Melbourne, when ICT integration in education was not commonplace. My faculty head and mentor, the late Dr Steve Dillon, encouraged me to learn and use the available technologies to encourage student engagement and enhance learning experiences. Though I was a first year out teacher, he encouraged me to present my work to other educators as an important part of my professional development, and I have done so ever since.

Many of my colleagues in the early 1990s seemed threatened by the technologies that were starting to emerge and infiltrate the classroom but I was encouraged to embrace the changes and find creative ways to use computers to help students construct their learning. Working as a music educator, I easily made the connection between the technology evolution and creativity.

## Early into IT

I saved up enough money in my first year of teaching to buy my first laptop computer, an Apple Macintosh PowerBook 100. I was one of the few teachers on staff to have a mobile computer so the school administration appointed me as a secondary IT teacher, to teach programming languages to Year 10 students using IBM 386 computers with DOS commands and no mouse. It was a massive learning curve.



I moved to Carey Baptist Grammar School as a primary teacher in 1995. This was by way of a 'coming home' for me... I had completed most of my schooling at Carey; my father went to the school; and my grandfather was a foundation scholar in 1923.

It was during this stage of my career that a student teacher introduced me to HTML, the coding language behind web pages. I became fascinated with this new way of communicating and started to encourage my students to work with HTML to build projects. My passion for engaging students and teachers in the use of ICT developed further as I completed my Masters degree and helped Carey build its first website and intranet. This led me to commence my doctoral studies at The University of Melbourne, with a focus on ICT use in school education and it also led me to my next big career change.

## Strathcona

Half way through 2000, I went through a steep professional learning curve from being a primary teacher at Carey to become a VCE IT teacher and the Webmaster at Strathcona Baptist Girls Grammar School. I worked at Strathcona for 13 years, most recently as the Director of Learning Technologies.

One of my proudest achievements was the establishment of STV (Strathcona Television) where media and IT students would help the school community publish video content via a custom built, sound proof, fully operational TV studio equipped with a green screen infinity wall, HD cameras and teleprompter.

Another major achievement was the gradual development of what is now an effective personal digital mobile device program for the senior students. It took about three years to complete but today every Year 11 and 12 Strathcona student is able to effectively use any personal device they wish in and out of class, fully connected to the school network.

## The wider education world

As a strong believer in learning through networking, I have been involved with several teacher professional organisations throughout my career. I have been Vice-President of VITTA (the Victorian Information Technology Teacher's Association ([www.vitta.org.au](http://www.vitta.org.au))) for the past few years and I'm looking forward to supporting this and other similar organisations into the future.

My other major passion is interfaith dialogue and I co-direct the Building Bridges program ([www.buildingbridges.org.au](http://www.buildingbridges.org.au)). This program currently involves about 30 schools in Melbourne, from a mix of religious backgrounds, and encourages the sharing and discussion of common values and an understanding of differences. Over 1500 Year 10 and 11 students have graduated and many have come back as facilitators.

## Making better people

Working in education is not just a job; it is a privilege. Helping people to become better people, to find knowledge, develop skills and find meaning in this amazingly complicated and rapidly changing world is an honour that should never be taken for granted.

Sir Ken Robinson describes the role of educators as:

- 1 to encourage and develop their students' individual talents;
- 2 to deepen their cultural understanding of the world; and
- 3 help them gain the skills so that they can be economically productive in the future.

He stresses that each of these purposes is equally important and we should try and avoid favouring any one of these fundamental roles.

In my new role, I am looking forward to supporting educators through resources like the Adobe Education Exchange (<http://edex.adobe.com/>) and the Adobe Education Leader's (AEL) program, with the objective of enhancing creativity in the learning and teaching process.

## References

- Robertson, K. (2011) *Out of Our Minds*, Capstone Publishing, UK
- Robertson, K. (2012) *How is Technology Transforming Education?*, Adobe TV, Short URL <http://goo.gl/Gv9hg> (available 8th July, 2013).

## Contact

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### The Adobe education connection

Adobe is well known as the company that makes industry standard software for the creative industries. What is not as well known is Adobe's commitment to primary, secondary and tertiary education and its dedication to providing support and resources for educators.

The **Adobe Education Exchange** (<http://edex.adobe.com/>) is an example of Adobe's focus on creativity in education. It is a central online location... a meeting place for educators where they can share, discuss, learn from, inspire, and collaborate.

The Exchange currently has about 90,000 members, over 4600 resources, and offers a constant stream of online discussions led by AELs (Adobe Education Leaders). AELs are K-12 and higher education teachers who are passionate about using Adobe's products. AELs share their expertise through workshops and conferences and help develop standards-based curriculums that are used worldwide.

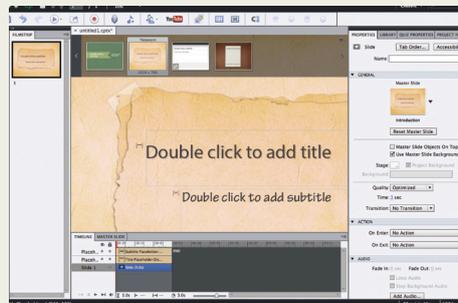


### The flipped classroom

The idea that important skills and concepts can be presented on video for students to access whenever they are ready and able is widely accepted as educationally ideal. But the issue is that most teachers struggle with keeping up with basic IT skills like online publication and email, let alone trying to master video production. The other issue is time. Even if a teacher finds the time to develop the art of video production, it is unlikely they will have the time to actually apply their new skills.

Earlier this year, Adobe launched a Mac version of Presenter called Adobe Presenter Video Express (short URL <http://goo.gl/fyWB8>). With only a few clicks, this application can produce a recorded teaching session as a quality YouTube clip or Mp4 in about the same time it took to run the session. This has been a feature of Adobe Presenter (short URL <http://goo.gl/dUC6M>) for Windows users, and now Mac users have access too. It's free to download via the App Store and free to publish if you keep the video shorter than one minute. Going over 60 seconds generates a fee of \$2 per publication.

Educators have been using a wide range of products to capture their computer screens and publish screencasts. The difference with both of the Presenter products is their ease of use. At last, the average teacher, with minimal IT skills and experience, can record curriculum concepts and make them available for their students to use for direct teaching and revision.



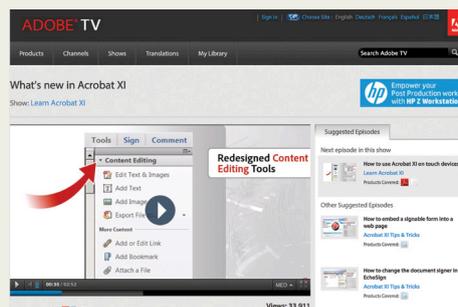
### Adobe Captivate eLearning

In part of a series of video interviews produced by Adobe, Sir Ken Robinson states: "Our students have a facility with digital technology and it is right and proper therefore that we should build them into the heart of education." Modern education is about providing student-centred opportunities for learning.

The role of the 21st century educator is not to self-deliver content but to facilitate the understanding of key concepts and skills and cater for a range of learning styles using a range of communication and eLearning tools.

Adobe Captivate is a tool for educators who want to take eLearning to the next level. With Captivate, educators can create interactive learning modules for students to access on their desktops, laptops or mobile devices. PowerPoint slides can be imported into Captivate and converted into interactive learning sessions that can be completed anytime and anywhere.

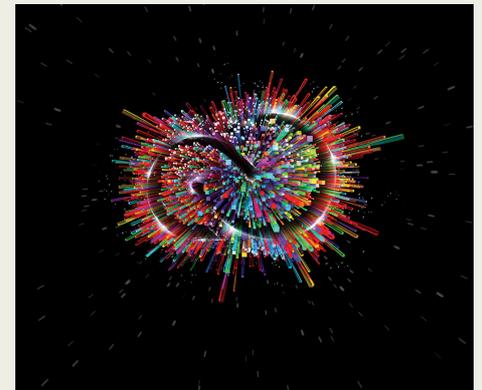
Rich media content such as HD video, animated simulations, text to speech functionality, simple audio manipulation and revision quizzes can all be incorporated into a Captivate project and exported to HTML5 for easy accessibility. Student's progress can be tracked to identify individual needs that can be addressed in class time – which no longer needs to be spent on a teacher-centered approach because the key concepts are available to the students anywhere and anytime.



### Adobe TV

A good way to get to know how to use Adobe software is to look up the free tutorials on Adobe

TV (<http://tv.adobe.com>). Video tutorials made by experienced trainers on virtually every one of Adobe's products are available.

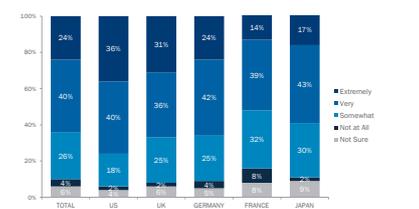


### The Creative Cloud

Adobe's Creative Cloud (short URL <http://goo.gl/rp6pf>) is the most recent instalment of the Adobe Creative Suite series. The new subscription process to the Creative Cloud provides users with the most recent versions of products such as Photoshop, Acrobat, Premier Pro, InDesign, Dreamweaver, Flash and Illustrator and it also includes new web design and animation products such as Adobe Muse and Edge Animate.

Due to cost restraints, many multimedia and IT students have been unable to access their essential multimedia tools at home and have been forced to spend hours of their own time at school perfecting their skills. Now they have the option of a very affordable monthly subscription to everything they need to prepare for internal assessments and, most importantly, the practical section of the end of Year 12 examination.

Nearly two-thirds feel that being creative is valuable to society (US: Highest 76%)



### Research

Adobe is actively involved in researching the importance of creativity in education. Recently published studies are:

- State of Create (short URL <http://goo.gl/1X2kw>). June 2012.
- Creativity and Education: Why it Matters (short URL <http://goo.gl/lbl0Q>). November 2012.
- Barriers to Creativity in Education: Educators and Parents Grade the System (short URL <http://goo.gl/k01yz>). June 2013.

### References

Trowbridge, T. (2013) Adobe Featured Blogs, Study Reveals Education System is Stifling Creativity (short URL <http://goo.gl/k01yz>) (available 11th July, 2013).