CEET iTunes U

Moviestorm Made Easy

This collection is derived from a March 2013, CEET MoodleMeet: *Moviestorm Made Easy*, originally designed by David LeBlanc with Clint Surry and additional content by Elizabeth Wellburn.

You can go to http://ceetbc.ning.com to participate in a community where these ideas are being discussed.

This document is an introduction to using the software "Moviestorm" to enhance learning.

Moviestorm is a fast, fun, easy software application that lets anyone make 3d animated movies on their computer. The CEET Meet in March, 2013, showed how you can make a simple movie from start to finish. It covered set building, character creation, directing, dialog, filming, editing, visual effects, sound and music, titles & credits, and rendering. This document gives some context for why you'd want to do this, examples of completed student projects and highlights of the processes involved. This document also links to detailed explanations provided by the software creators. Everything you need to get motivated and to start creating!

A Case for Filmmaking in the Classroom

Gail Desler has written a compelling post describing six reasons you'd want to use filmmaking as a tool for learning in the K-12 classroom. She cites six important reasons:

- Addressing ethical use of the Internet

- Promoting critical media consumption

- Providing students with multiple ways to access core content

- Empowering and connecting students

- Responding to current research

- Engaging students

You can read Gail Desler's full post here:

http://digitalis.nwp.org/resource/1325

In a similar vein, the International Digital Media and Arts Association (IDMAA) makes a case for simple animations tools (like Moviestorm) instead of other video techniques stating:

"On each film, students were able to take on all roles, including director, camera, sound and editor, and thus got wider and deeper experience from each project. Students were also able to be more ambitious creatively, and film scenes involving large crowds, different locations, stunts, special effects, and complex camerawork simulating crane or helicopter shots. As an additional benefit, students could easily go back to their completed movie and re-shoot or re-edit scenes to incorporate specific suggestions from teachers and peers."

http://idmaa.org/using-simple-animation-tools-in-education-2/

In short, moviemaking can be an excellent learning experience and benefits can be attained more easily using simplified tools like Moviestorm.

How to start with Moviestorm

Moviestorm is an online 3D animation platform using machinima.

What is Machinima? Machinima, simply put, is a unique form of 3D animation. Originally, the word machinima (machine + cinema) referred to any movie that was made from footage shot within a video-game as well as to the art itself of creating said movies. Today, with the development of programs such as Moviestorm, iClone, and ZenCub3D, the meaning of the word machinima has broadened to include movies made from footage shot within real-time three-dimensional environments. Essentially, machinima grants the aspiring moviemaker the ability to shoot an entire animated film from their computer – cheaply, by themselves, and in a fraction of the time it might take a traditional 3D animation studio. It is interesting to note that, while this style of animation may appear to elude the mainstream public, http://machinima.com is currently ranked as the 3rd most watched youtube channel of all time.

Here is a 2-minute video education promo:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=mow_52WO_Qw

There are many many other resources online to help you as you work with Moviestorm, starting with those provided by the company who makes the product.

http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/hub/home

http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/hub/teaching

Making a movie with Moviestorm

There are basically six steps to making a movie with Moviestorm. You won't necessarily move directly from step 1 to 2 to 3 on to 6 but may instead start at 2, go to 1, then to 3, and back to 1 again. Moviestorm allows you you're own workflow and the ability to change anything at any time.

Build a set

This involves creating the set for your movie by adding and painting walls and floors, and adding items called "props" (e.g. doors, windows, chairs, tables) for the actors to interact with. The base Moviestorm installation also comes with several sets already available for use.

Add actors

Choose and customize the actors for your movie. You can adjust things like their race, clothing, facial characteristics and hair amongst other things.

Direct the actors

Place the actors on the stage and direct them to move, talk and interact with the other characters and props.

Control cameras

Define the "look" of your movie by choosing your "shots" using different camera angles and settings and adding extra cameras if necessary.

Assemble the camera footage

After capturing all the footage for the movie you take all the different shots and edit them together to create the final movie.

Render the final output

"Render" your movie. This means to turn it into a standalone movie file that people can view in a media player without having to use Moviestorm itself. In Moviestorm there are various options regarding screen size and image quality.

How much does it cost?

At the time of the CEET Meet (March, 2013) a Moviestorm Education Annual license was on sale for the discounted price of $60. USD. It is usually about $150. USD.

Current pricing should be available here:

http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/hub/purchase_edu

Moviestorm uses a subscription model that is in some ways similar to Netflix, a site where registered users pay one flat fee and can then rent DVDs and watch streaming movies whenever they like. With Moviestorm, the subscription enables a user to instead *make* movies with the program as often as they want. Users new to the program can try it for 14 days for free by registering at the website.

Subscribers also receive an allotment of "Moviestorm Points," which can be used in their official Marketplace to purchase themed content packs and other additions/modifications to the program. A subscriber receives 800 points each month with a monthly subscription, 2000 points with a three month subscription, or 8000 points with an annual subscription. Subscribers also have access to unlimited user-created content packs (many of which are free), and - should they find they need more points than their subscription allotment - can "top off" their points at any time by buying more points from Moviestorm.

Moviestorm also has additional options for licensing content to use in movies. Users can cheaply rent content packs for short periods of time (as little as one day if needed), in order to only pay for content licenses when the content is actively being used.

It is also worth noting that a subscription can be discontinued at any time, and resumed later with no penalty. So if a user is taking the summer off for a vacation, he/she can return at their leisure, resume their subscription, and continue movie-making right where they left off.

Who owns the movies you create?

The Moviestorm EULA can be viewed on their website. **The section of primary relevance here states: 12.1 Worldwide, non-exclusive, perpetual, irrevocable, royalty free, fully paid-up rights to any and all footage created by You using the Software are hereby granted to You. Moviestorm Ltd makes no claim of ownership over this footage, with the exception of those claims set out in this Agreement.**

There are some restrictions: you forfeit your rights to your content if you make a Moviestorm movie that infringes on the rights of someone else, you must include a credit for Moviestorm in the movie per their instructions in section 12.3, and if you release your movie on the Internet you give Moviestorm the right to use your movie for publicity purposes.

For full details, see the EULA at:
http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/moviestorm/legal/moviestorm_user_agreement/

Moviestorm community

Empowering and connecting students is one of the reasons filmmaking is such a useful educational activity. Sharing through online communities is easy and very gratifying.

Moviestorm has a website (**www.moviestorm.co.uk**) where you can upload your completed movies and watch those created by other users. There are also **forums** where you can seek help or discuss ideas for Movies etc. In general Moviestorm users are a very helpful and friendly group of people so you will rarely be stuck for long if you have a question about the program or a problem with your movie.

Moviestorm has a presence in many other social media locations as well, including Facebook and Twitter

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Moviestorm

Twitter @MoviestormEdu and @Moviestorm

at the time of writing this document, social media around Moviestorm was very active

Examples of how Moviestorm is used in education

Governments and educational bodies are encouraging schools to use innovative technologies in the classroom to boost media literacy. Students, meanwhile, are showing increasing fluency with audio-visual media through their constant engagement with online video services such as YouTube and the ubiquitous availability of basic filmmaking tools such as camera phones, the Go-Pro, video editing suites included with both Windows and Mac computers and opensource tools like Popcorn Maker.

A more robust and easy to use program like Moviestorm has unlimited potential in every subject area.

Ed Lie at the University of North Texas used Moviestorm to create a science fiction film as part of a digital storytelling course. He noted that it would have been too expensive and time- consuming to make the film in live action or traditional animation. He also noted that using Moviestorm allowed him to focus his efforts on the storytelling rather than the technical aspects of production.
http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/hub/student/student_case_study_Ed_Lie

Here is a 12 minute example :

Video: Transmission http://vimeo.com/23826738

and a 3 minute example from Singapore:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpqETA0zNWo&feature=youtu.be

This movie storm iPad promo is 3 minutes long, and includes an excellent 1-min segment created by a primary student:

http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/community/index.php?page=videos&section=view&vid_id=109077

Case study by BC educator, Jamie Billingham:

http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/hub/teaching/teaching_case_study_jamie_billingham

Students are showing increasing fluency in using digital media. It is important for educators to embrace these technologies to keep courses current.

Here are two papers about the use of Machinima (Moviestorm type software) in education:

Machinima Learning: prospects for teaching and learning digital literacy skills through virtual filmmmaking

Educational Machinima: Japanese American Liberators at Dachau

Additional Resources

Complete Users' Manual:
http://s3.moviestorm.co.uk/misc/Moviestorm%20User%20Guide%201-5-1-02.pdf

One minute introduction to Moviestorm
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=p_-IcmpROdA

System Requirements for moviestorm
http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/hub/docs/requirements

A longer introduction to Moviestorm and it's workflow (14 minute youtube by Matt Kelland, founder of Moviestorm):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Q666Ybabrc4

Moviestorm Tour:
http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/moviestorm/tour

Moviestorm Blog:
http://www.moviestormblog.com

Using animation in schools:
http://cloud.moviestorm.co.uk/edu/Using%20Animation%20in%20Schools%20-%20A%20practical%20handbook%20for%20teachers.pdf

Moviestorm lesson plans:
http://www.moviestorm.co.uk/hub/teaching/education_lesson_plans

Moviestorm Mods:

http://www.modsnmore.net/moviestorm/

Sketchup (A free 'alternative' to Moviestorm):
http://www.sketchup.com/products/sketchup-make

Conclusion

http://ceetbc.ning.com/groups gives you access to educators who have formed an online group to discuss technology in education, including this topic. You are welcome to join and participate.