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education

Case Study

Rose Bruford College
of Theatre & Performance

SimpleCloud partnered with Rose Bruford College in the UK to provide true virtual classrooms for its students and professors

THE PROJECT

In late autumn 2020, **Rose Bruford College**, one of the UK's premiere Theatre and Performance institutions, launched the **Centre for Digital Production**, one of the first of its kind, which offers two innovative degree courses at the cutting edge of technology and industry practice: **Virtual Theatre and Digital Experiences and Digital Content Design for Theatre and Live Events**. With dedicated computer laboratories, a fully equipped studio space on campus with unique facilities where students can learn to operate media servers, cameras, projectors, control desks, motion capture and virtual reality equipment as well as green screen technologies, the college is now actively recruiting students with interests in gaming, video, photography and design who might not have considered a career or training at a traditional drama school.

THE CHALLENGES
What initial challenges did you face?

We need to build a computer infrastructure from the ground up which was capable of teaching anything from 10 to 100 students in the future. We found the additional pressure on our IT services and the need for data storage to be situated somewhere a challenge as we had limited space as well as the actual cost of the equipment and how we were going to scale it as the courses recruited each year. We were also very concerned about accessibility, understanding that not all the students had the same reasonable means. This meant the moment one single student didn´t have a powerful enough machine at home they would have a less democratic experience of education. So, we wanted this solution to make sure that everyone had fair access to the same equipment. All those things were answered by the discovery of **SimpleCloud** in one go.

THE SOLUTION - SimpleCloud

The first year of the new courses have been facilitated with a new partnership with **SimpleCloud Education**, a cloud-based system which enables students to work on state-of-the-art software programmes accessible from any piece of technology, from a phone to a basic PC laptop. This has enabled teaching to continue in the virtual realm, despite the restrictions imposed on students who are no longer able to be on campus due to the UK lockdown in force. The current students across the two courses have also all been lent individual Virtual Reality Headsets, which has enabled remote meetings and teaching.
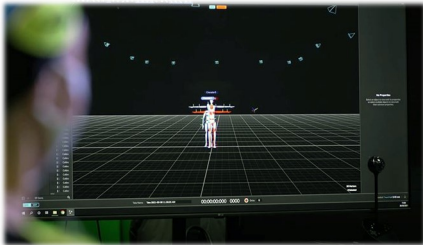
THE RESULTS
What applications do you use in Simple?

We use it in three ways, first straight forward teaching in a classroom with microcomputers or thin clients. Even with dual screens it works perfectly and, both students and the instructor are sharing a room whilst all using SimpleCloud and with the big screen for demonstrating any lesson. Students follow along whilst learning 3D software and 2D animation or remotely using Teams as one of our tutors is actually living and teaching from Barcelona. The second use is for self-study, we give them access to virtual learning tools such as Linkedin learning, so they had access wherever they are and whenever they want to. Third is to be used on our projects and assessments they deliver regularly. We put them in teams, and they have to collaborate to create a product to be used on a production on stage or a digital experience which they all do together using SimpleCloud.

We use them on 2 different types of courses, one is Virtual theatre and digital experiences using more game engines and 3d modelling tools and the other is video content for live events which is more focused on 2D and 3D animation. They all use Autodesk Maya and Adobe After Effects, Illustrator, Photoshop and then Unreal and Unity or more specific industry software such Notch and Disguise.

James Simpson, Head of Development, Rose Bruford College, is a creative technologist and owner of Copper Candle, an XR studio creating and developing virtual theatre experiences as well as pre-visualization solutions.

How was the experience for you and students with SimpleCloud.io?

As the initial testing was about the time of the first lock down, we set it up and used it ourselves right away but also provided access to some of the students who had limited resources at home. Students were able to complete their studies and graduate on time thanks to the quick initial setup that allowed us to use it responsively.

Around the second lock down we discussed with other departments in the University how it was going to impact our teaching to see what plans were needed. For us was it was just a matter of continuing what we were doing, carry on, no need to move any resources or change our schedules, students will continue sitting at home while attending their classroom.

SimpleCloud was an absolute life saver so to summarize the experience, some students take it really well, other prefer to continue using their computers to keep things local, but we found out that as an institution everything was much easier to manage. As a tutor or head of my center, I´m able to do micromanagement of our IT resources without having to disturb the IT department which makes it really flexible.

I´m in the classroom dealing with the students, they need something and I can just go to SimpleCloud as an administrator, make some changes and have access to new software or upgrade their computer. I don´t have to worry about putting requests to the IT department. It´s really joyful to see how it´s been used with students learning software on their own. It was a big selling point for the open day when we say SimpleCloud is the system we use, it helps sell the course as we were able to say if you need to go home to Scotland or Japan you can take your computer and continue our classes.

Contact us for a demo info@simplecloud.io
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