University turns to Adobe Digital Publishing Suite to tell stories, teach concepts, and convey information with rich, interactive content.

Faculty, students, and administrators at Case Western Reserve University pride themselves on continually challenging the limits of what is possible. Known for groundbreaking research in technology, medicine, and other areas, Case Western Reserve attracts students and education leaders from around the world and consistently ranks as one of the top colleges in the United States. Founded in 1826, the university today has more than 2,500 faculty working with approximately 10,000 graduate and undergraduate students.

Case Western Reserve’s passion for teaching, learning, and research has encouraged the university to seek new ways to enable faculty and staff to better connect across the campus and with their peers worldwide. In particular, the university is responding to dramatic shifts in how students, faculty, alumni, and other stakeholders want to access information, explore it, and share it across increasingly powerful tablets.

The ongoing adoption of tablets at Case Western Reserve is also evident at other universities, in the business world, and in people’s daily lives. Research firm Forrester predicts that by 2016 tablet computer sales will reach 790 million units globally. Meanwhile, the Pew Internet and American Life Project shows that 34% of Americans over age 18 now own a tablet, and that figure jumps to 49% among college graduates.
Case Western Reserve set out to adopt strategies to improve the creation and delivery of content optimized for mobile devices. To support that goal, the university’s technology team implemented Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, Enterprise Edition, to create digital apps to deliver compelling, interactive, multimedia content that informs and immerses readers in a variety of subjects.

"Tablet use is growing quickly at the university," says Kirsten Nagel, director of digital technology solutions and services at Case Western Reserve. "We’re working campus-wide to enable faculty and staff to reach audiences with more dynamic materials tailored to their academic or business needs. Adobe Digital Publishing Suite streamlines the creation and delivery of engaging, digital experiences with impact."

Complex ideas simplified

The first app created by Case Western Reserve is Respiratory Recovery, a digital publication about the pioneering research of neurologist Dr. Jerry Silver. The iPad app, built using Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, engages users in a step-by-step investigation into regenerating respiratory nerve pathways following a spinal cord injury. Users can view animated graphics, a timeline of spinal cord injury treatments, videos featuring patients living with paralysis, and Dr. Silver describing his research.

"I'm excited that the university is using the latest technologies to make work more accessible to the spinal-cord-injured community," says Dr. Silver. "I know that the community greatly appreciates this app because they have discussed it in various online collectives."

Respiratory Recovery served as a pilot project for the university because it demonstrated how Adobe Digital Publishing Suite can effectively use interactive, multimedia content to communicate complex ideas. For example, to explain the effects of a high cervical injury to the spine, the app includes an interactive three-dimensional spinal cord diagram that can be rotated with a swipe of a finger. The diagram also includes written descriptions of the paralytic consequences of an injury to each of the four cervical (neck) sections of the spine, as well as an audio clip of Dr. Silver providing additional information. The app was awarded an "excellence" rating by the Society of Technical Communications.

One solution, many uses

While Respiratory Recovery is generating conversations throughout Case Western Reserve about using technology to more effectively communicate university research and results, the university’s alumni and development communities are also adopting Adobe Digital Publishing Suite. SMART is an alumni magazine specifically targeting younger graduates. The print version of SMART features lifestyle information and news by alumni for alumni. But the SMART digital app is much more than an electronic version of the printed magazine. The interactive app includes slideshows, videos, timelines, and audio clips—features that distinguish it from its print counterpart.
A number of other university development offices are also using non-public apps built with Adobe Digital Publishing Suite to encourage philanthropic gifts from major donors. For instance, Case Western Reserve is working to raise funds to renovate a historic temple near campus into a new performing arts center and is using a private app in meetings. Utilizing the app, university executives can walk potential donors and interested parties through the facility designs and demonstrate the application of donor names on buildings as they would appear upon the completion of construction. "With Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, Enterprise Edition, we’ve built apps that make in-person meetings with potential donors more engaging and more personal," says Nagel.

Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, Enterprise Edition, is also being used at the university’s prestigious Fowler Center for Sustainable Value at the Weatherhead School of Management, to generate support for its new Business as an Agent for World Benefit award. The business sustainability award celebrates organizations that exemplify doing business as a force for good. To help launch the initiative, Case Western Reserve developed an app that features details about the award to assist in gaining support for the initiative.

Reimagining technology's role in education
With the help of Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, Case Western Reserve is currently reimagining the role of communicating with its stakeholders and constituents. It’s already proven that digital apps can effectively communicate research results through the use of immersive experiences. Case Western Reserve is also discovering the value of branded and personalized content in fundraising. In fact, the university is planning to use the Custom Store feature within Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, Enterprise Edition, which uses full-screen HTML pages to offer new content in a university-branded environment.

"As mobile technologies become even more popular, we are working closely with our university schools and college, business units, and other organizations to empower them with more engaging ways to communicate with their audiences," says Nagel. "With Adobe Digital Publishing Suite, we can easily help our clients combine their existing content with new content to create immersive, digital apps. We’re also looking forward to further refining our digital strategy to offer every user even more personalized experiences."