Students put creativity in motion with ease and flair using Adobe Creative Cloud, including Adobe Edge Animate software.

Inspiration, imagination, and boundless creativity—that’s what Adobe aspires to empower through its software, as well as through competitions such as the SoDA–The Global Society for Digital Marketing Innovators HTML5-Off Challenge—Student Division, jointly sponsored by Adobe and SoDA. An extremely selective association of the world’s most preeminent companies with digital DNA, SoDA’s membership includes more than 60 leading digital companies with offices in 22 countries, across five continents.

The SoDA HTML5-Off Challenge brought out the most inspired and imaginative animated productions from students worldwide. With prizes that included free Adobe Creative Cloud memberships and an iPad, competition was lively. Central to the challenge was encouraging students to push the limits of creativity by submitting their most innovative HTML animation work created using Adobe Edge Animate, available free for a limited time through Creative Cloud. Edge Animate is code-friendly but well-suited for designers with little if any programming experience, making it accessible to students at all levels who want to put their projects in motion to create a consistent experience across screens and devices, without the complexities inherent in other animation tools.

"The HTML5-Off Challenge spurs creative students toward innovation and helps develop the next generation of digital marketing talent," says Miran Koo, manager, Strategic Media & Agency Partners at Adobe. "We were exceptionally pleased and impressed with the rich, animated experiences that participants from around the world devised using Edge Animate."
The winning entry for the HTML5-Off Challenge came from Digital Invaders, the digital creative school founded by SoDA member company GrupoW. Omar Marin, along with fellow students José Feliciano, Abraham Cornejo, Alan Rodriguez, and Cecilia Zertuche, submitted The Chronicles of an Invasion, winning three one-year Adobe Creative Cloud memberships and an iPad. Once students at Digital Invaders heard about Adobe Edge Animate, they were eager to experiment and learn how it works. The idea of creating HTML animations for both the web and mobile channels piqued their interest. They decided to create a web page for orienting new students that would not only be useful for the school, but would also showcase students’ creative flair.

The lively website presents prospective students with information on everything from where to eat and the atmosphere in living quarters to who teaches at Digital Invaders and the school’s history. The team discovered that they could add jQuery libraries and additional code in Edge Animate to create a parallax effect that controls the animation as people scroll through the site. “Integration of jQuery libraries was simple in Edge Animate and let us push the site further than we thought was possible,” explains Marin. “Edge Animate is also very visual, so we could easily see what’s happening in the program as we worked.”

Adobe and SoDA member judges chose Digital Invaders as the overall winner because the project demonstrated innovative HTML work, showcased the capabilities of Edge Animate, and inspired creativity. “Digital Invaders showed why working in a well-oiled team produces great results,” says competition judge Mark McQuillan, partner and technical director of Jam3. “What I liked most about this application of Adobe Edge Animate is that it is being used in a much larger, ambitious context.”

Playful interactivity in HTML

The second-place winner—awarded a one-year Adobe Creative Cloud membership—was Birds, submitted by Tim Hartwick and Chad Hostetter from Indiana’s Ball State University. The two work on campus with the Digital Corps, the university’s group of professionally certified student media software experts. The Digital Corps is a program that encourages students to become leaders in emerging technologies.

Hartwick and Hostetter wanted to use Adobe Edge Animate to create an interactive, game-like animation for the HTML5-Off Challenge. The two devised an idea for animating birds interacting with a comical machine. They designed the birds and machine using Adobe Illustrator CS6, and created patterns in Adobe Photoshop CS6. Hartwick and Hostetter optimized elements for the designs by using round-trip editing among all three Adobe software tools.
In the animated game-like experience, users guide a grumpy bird that falls from a power line into a visually interesting machine, where users can then choose what happens to the bird as it is guided through targets. Eventually the bird is shot out of a cannon to end up back on the power line where users can start the animation all over again. *Birds* showcases how the two aspiring creative professionals learned a new software tool, Edge Animate, and how useful the software is for creating interactive web animations.

"With prior experience using Adobe Flash Professional and Adobe After Effects, we found Edge Animate familiar and intuitive," says Hartwick. "Even as first-time users of Edge Animate, the software was really easy to understand, so we were able to get started right away."

**Faster than JavaScript, and more flexible**

Another standout project and finalist in the competition was *Facebook Infographics* by Kaushik Savla, a student attending KES Shroff College in Mumbai. Savla learned about the HTML5-Off Challenge from a trusted friend’s recommendation. He wanted to learn more about Edge Animate, so he registered for the challenge and downloaded the software for the first time.

*Facebook Infographics* applies Edge Animate animations to a user’s Facebook social graph information to provide a vivid animated experience that tells the story of Facebook and the big data behind it, incorporating the user’s own Facebook statistics and friends. The project was both technical and impressive.

Savla had never used an application that included a timeline, so his first use of Edge Animate was a completely new experience. As he continued to experiment with the software, he found the timeline to be extremely effective for visualizing and creating animations, much easier and faster than writing JavaScript code.

Savla also quickly grasped the use of symbols in Edge Animate to speed up his animation workflow and previews of animation effects. When his animation work was completed, Savla used the Facebook JavaScript API to capture various social graph data into his Edge Animate composition and stage, and used JavaScript within Edge Animate to present the content in his layout design. The Edge Animate jQuery library was also used to populate specific fields with data from Facebook.

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Poised for future success

All the entrants were winners in their own right, having learned invaluable skills that will help further their careers, and all participating in the challenge reported enjoying the use of Adobe Edge Animate. The tool is familiar and easy to grasp, especially given approachable, easy-to-learn symbols and a familiar timeline-based metaphor to animate graphics.

Edge Animate automates animation transitions and uses property-based key frames, making it easy for students to see the outcome of their work during the creation process. Bounce effects to make animations more dynamic, for instance, were simple for students to grasp. Other workflow aids include labeling options for objects and properties to control objects all on one screen, making the animation workflow faster and easier.

Participants in the SoDA HTML5-Off Challenge appreciate that the skills they learned using Edge Animate will be useful as they embark on their careers. In today’s digitally-driven world, people expect motion, entertainment, and engagement—yet many designers don’t have the HTML animation skills necessary to put their ideas in motion. Says Koo, “Through venues like the HTML5-Off Challenge, we’re seeing how Edge Animate offers an intuitive way for creative innovators to add a new dimension to their work, and to easily make their ideas more immersive, interactive, and fun.”

For more information
http://html.adobe.com/edge/animate/
www.adobe.com/CreativeCloud