Adobe works with University for the Creative Arts to help standardise software across campus and enhance student learning

*University for the Creative Arts (UCA)* in Kent is a specialist Art and Design University spread across five campuses in Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham, Maidstone and Rochester. It offers courses in a wide range of art, design, fashion, media and architecture subjects, all of which involve the use of Adobe’s Creative Suite Master Collection.

In 2011, *UCA* made the decision to consolidate the IT systems of the five campuses into one central infrastructure; firstly to enable consistency across the whole University irrespective of which campus students and teachers are based, and secondly to help simplify the administration associated with license tracking and software upgrades. Prior to this, there was a mixed IT delivery across each of *UCA’s* campuses with computers throughout the University containing various different versions of Adobe software.

This impacted *UCA* in a number of ways. From a central resource point of view, it was very difficult to keep track of software upgrades and the number of licences each campus had. Students felt the effects as they were often working from different versions of the software for the same projects. But crucially, the fact the software wasn’t being kept up-to-date was starting to have an effect on the number of Foundation Level students who converted to full time degrees at *UCA*, with many choosing to continue their studies at Universities with better resources.

*University for the Creative Arts (UCA)*

Spokesperson: Tim Savage, Resource Coordinator for Media and Communication

http://www.ucreative.ac.uk/
In the summer of 2011, UCA therefore worked with Adobe to introduce the Adobe Concurrent Licensing agreement to help deliver consistent and up-to-date software across each of UCA’s five campuses. The licensing agreement will provide computers at each campus with the latest version of Adobe’s Creative Suite Master Collection and will also mean UCA is entitled to software upgrades, as and when they happen.

Enhancing the student experience
Although UCA has always provided its students with access to industry standard Adobe software, prior to the adoption of the Concurrent Licensing Agreement the University computers contained a range of different versions of this software, which were out of date.

As a result, lecturers had to base the curriculum they taught on the older versions of the software, the result being that students weren’t able to use the new features available as part of the regular software upgrades. Subsequently, some of the students then purchased a more recent version of the Adobe software themselves to use on their own laptops. Not only did this reflect badly on the University’s resources, in many instances it also meant students weren’t able to open work they had done at home on the University computers as the software wouldn’t support it.

The Adobe Concurrent Licensing agreement allows students to access the latest version of Adobe software wherever they are which will help to enhance their learning experience and give them all access to the same software. The agreement does not allow students to access the software from their personal computers, however UCA has also worked with Adobe to offer a significant student discount on the Adobe product range via their website so they can purchase this for home use if needed.

Setting UCA apart from other institutions
With the increase in tuition fees, students are investing much more money into their education than ever before. It is therefore paramount that universities offer them very best tools, lecturers and curriculum in order to attract students and distinguish themselves from other similar institutions.

The Adobe Concurrent Licensing agreement allows students to have access to all the latest tools, however UCA also plans to distinguish itself further by introducing Adobe’s Certified Associate qualification (ACA). ACA is a recognised industry qualification for Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Dreamweaver and Adobe Flash and introducing it will allow students to further their digital skills and make themselves more employable.

Additionally, it will also enable students studying other subjects to learn how to use Adobe software who may not get the opportunity to ordinarily as part of their studies, meaning the University can offer all students a unique experience. UCA will initially offer this to third year students and then look to roll this out to other students in order to help it to stand out from other institutions.

Compelling marketing tactics
As a creative university, UCA has always invested a lot of time and resource into marketing to make it stand out from other higher education institutions. As such, for the past three years it has been sponsored by a range of companies including Adobe to host a tent at Glastonbury and give festival goers a taster of the types of courses offered at UCA.

The Coordinator for Media and Communication at the University and a selection of students help to run the activities in the tent, which include games design, animation, life drawing, fashion photography and jewellery workshops, as well TV presenting and music journalism lessons. Visitors are invited to have a go at each of these activities to give them real hands-on experience of the types of projects and activities students get involved in at UCA and prizes are given for the best attempts.

UCA also offers free internet access, a chill-out area, plus nightly screenings of animation, catwalk shows, experimental films and computer games made by UCA students to show potential students the types of work they could produce. As well as helping to run the tent, the students are tasked with producing a video of the festival using Adobe Premiere Pro which can then be added to their portfolio and used as internal marketing material by UCA.

Tim Savage, Resource Coordinator for Media and Communication at UCA comments, “the Adobe Concurrent Licensing agreement means our students have access to all the tools they will need to help them in their careers. We also have plans to introduce Adobe’s Certified Associate qualification to allow students to further their digital skills and make themselves more employable.”
As a creative university, UCA has always tried to stand out from other institutions in its marketing tactics and our activity at Glastonbury helps us to do just that. In 2011 alone, over 9,000 people visited UCA’s tent at Glastonbury and got involved in the different activities which resulted in a number of course enquiries, as well as some great feedback from people who were impressed by the course offering.