

Science Museum of Minnesota Fostering lifelong learning



Science Museum of Minnesota
St. Paul, Minnesota
www.smm.org

Computer Education Center
<http://comped.smm.org>

Regional science museum supports local businesses and community with computer education courses and interactive exhibits created using Adobe® Creative Suite® 5 Design Premium

The Science Museum of Minnesota, founded in 1907, provides science education to its audience of more than one million people each year. Museum exhibits blend tradition and innovation to engage visitors and let them “experience their changing world through science”. The museum relies on a number of technologies, including Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium, to reach and engage the community with informational and educational content and programs.

Exhibit galleries focus on paleontology, physical science and technology, the human body, peoples and cultures, and other collections. The museum uses Adobe Creative Suite Design Premium software to contribute to some of the interactive, activity-centered experiences that are combined with traditional object displays. Additionally, for more than 25 years, the Science Museum of Minnesota's Computer Education Center has offered classes, group training, and room rentals to companies and individuals. Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium components are an important part of the center's course offerings.

Serving the community

The Computer Education Center started as a way to introduce adults to new desktop technology and grew into an entity within the museum. Today, 12 instructors offer full-day and half-day classes in databases, graphics and computer art, introductory computing, Microsoft Office, programming, and web design. The center first started teaching publishing classes using Adobe software and evolved into web design as Adobe's product offerings expanded. The adult business community comprises the majority of students, which number approximately 10,000 per year.

The Science Museum of Minnesota's Computer Education Center purchased Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium software to teach courses on a broad range of products for publishing and web design.



Challenge

- Provide useful training to the local business community
- Keep training content current and relevant
- Engage museum visitors with innovative exhibits

Solution

- Update Computer Education Center classrooms with Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium software
- Integrate information on new features in Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium software into existing curriculum
- Produce exhibit artwork and graphics using Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator software
- Design print graphics and collateral with Adobe InDesign software
- Create interactive, rich-media experiences with Adobe Flash® Professional software

Benefits

- Address increasing demand for training to help unemployed workers build their computer skills
- Serve the local business community with training on the latest Adobe Creative Suite software applications for print and web design and development
- Support physical museum exhibits with interactive, multimedia content

Recently, the center has focused on training for people transitioning to new careers. One-third of students are from workforce centers serving displaced workers. These workforce centers have seen increasing demand for training that will help unemployed workers build their computer skills. The Computer Education Center also receives substantial business from local companies, including the state of Minnesota, 3M, Boston Scientific, Andersen Corporation, Target, Wells Fargo, and large health organizations.

"The training we provide in Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium applications is very valuable to people in career transition," says Stacy Turos, director of instruction at the Computer Education Center. "Staying current on new technologies will help these individuals remain attractive to employers."

Staying up to date

The Science Museum of Minnesota's Computer Education Center recently purchased Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium software to update its training rooms. Business professionals can choose courses that range from a single half day on a specific subject to several days for a deeper dive into a technology.

Classes give students knowledge that they can apply to their business life and realize immediate productivity. The center is seeing an increase in communications professionals who want training on a broad range of products for publishing and web design. "Many local businesses are moving content production in house or downsizing staff," explains Turos. "The remaining employees need to broaden their skill sets, and courses in software like Adobe InDesign® CS5 or Adobe Dreamweaver® CS5 help them accomplish this goal."

Training at the center targets products heavily used by companies in the area so workers can upgrade and expand skills. Classes focus on general skills and include discussion of new features as appropriate. For example, an InDesign class teaching students about grids and guides will cover the Smart Guides introduced in InDesign CS5, or an Adobe Photoshop® class focusing on the Clone Stamp tool will talk about the new Content-Aware Fill feature in Photoshop CS5.

Effective instruction

Teachers at the center have a deep knowledge of using the products. For example, the Adobe Illustrator® instructor is a professional illustrator. The center also designs all of its own marketing materials, which requires instructors to be up to date on the latest versions.

The Science Museum of Minnesota's use of Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium software is evident in its training program for the adult business community and its innovative exhibit design.

To create the Hall of Fame exhibit in the Science Museum of Minnesota the Development and Design Department used Creative Suite Design Premium to design the kiosks featuring video interviews playable through a touch screen interface.



“Working with Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium helps us deliver current and relevant training to the adult business community.”

Stacy Turos
Director of instruction,
Computer Education Center,
Science Museum of
Minnesota

Instructors introduce concepts to students with examples and then give students a similar scenario to work through on their own. This hands-on style helps students better absorb concepts that they can immediately apply back in the workplace. The center is now offering training for teens similar to what is offered for adults.

“Working with Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium helps us deliver current and relevant training to the adult business community,” says Turos. “Providing similar training for teens gives them skills that can help them get jobs that involve using professional applications.”

Innovative exhibits

The Computer Education Center isn't the only group within the Science Museum of Minnesota that benefits from the use of Adobe products. Adobe Creative Suite applications are also used by the Development and Design Department, which contributes exhibit content for the Science Museum of Minnesota and other museums around the country. Museum exhibits involve many components, including design, prototyping, production, maintenance, and touring. A staff of 12 within the Department is responsible for graphic design, web design and development, video editing, and print production.

The Development and Design Department acts as a production company within the museum. After talking to the internal or external client, time is spent conceptualizing and researching before developing a presentation or interactive strategy. The museum creates working, interactive exhibit models to test the feasibility and effectiveness of the presentation before an exhibit is finalized. As part of this process, graphic designers create artwork in Illustrator and Photoshop, and print pieces are produced using InDesign. Developers use Adobe Flash Professional to translate designs and wireframes into multimedia content that helps bring exhibits to life.

“Any exhibit that is produced includes a print graphic to give context to the exhibit content,” says Craig Thiesen, media design manager for the Development and Design Department. “Adobe Creative Suite Design Premium gives us one set of integrated tools that make it easy to switch between applications and share content created in Photoshop or Illustrator with developers working in Flash Professional.”

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Craig Thiesen

Media design manager, Development and Design Department,
Science Museum of Minnesota

Toolkit

Adobe Creative Suite 5 Design Premium. Components used include:

- Adobe InDesign CS5
- Adobe Illustrator CS5
- Adobe Photoshop CS5
- Adobe Dreamweaver CS5
- Adobe Flash Professional CS5
- Adobe Acrobat® Pro

Engaging museum visitors

For a recent Hall of Fame exhibit featuring video interviews with scientists and corporate entrepreneurs in Minnesota, the Development and Design Department used Creative Suite Design Premium to create content for kiosks featuring video interviews playable through a touch screen interface. Graphic designers created the artwork for the kiosks and the graphical look and feel using Illustrator and Photoshop; developers used Flash Professional to create both the rich media viewing and interactive, touch screen experiences.

In addition to physical exhibits, the museum offers more timely information on current events through its Science Buzz experience. Adobe Flash Professional is used for animations and Illustrator and Photoshop are used in the graphic design process. Buzz kiosks are located throughout the museum and the museum also produces Buzz sites for other museums.

Through both its Development and Design Department and Computer Education Center, the Science Museum of Minnesota educates, entertains, and engages visitors. Local residents look to the museum not only for innovative exhibits that promote observation and experimentation but also training programs that support continuing education and professional development. Adobe creative solutions provide internal and external people with the resources and knowledge they need to accomplish their goals.

For more information

www.adobe.com/products/creativesuite



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