

Second Story

New ways to tell stories

Interactive media visionaries at Second Story tell stories with flair and efficiency using Adobe® Photoshop® CS software



Second Story Interactive Studio was founded based on a passionate belief: that interactive media is unique in its ability to let viewers tell their own stories. “The path visitors take through our work is their history, their story,” says Brad Johnson, Second Story creative director. “This is what we refer to as the ‘second story.’”

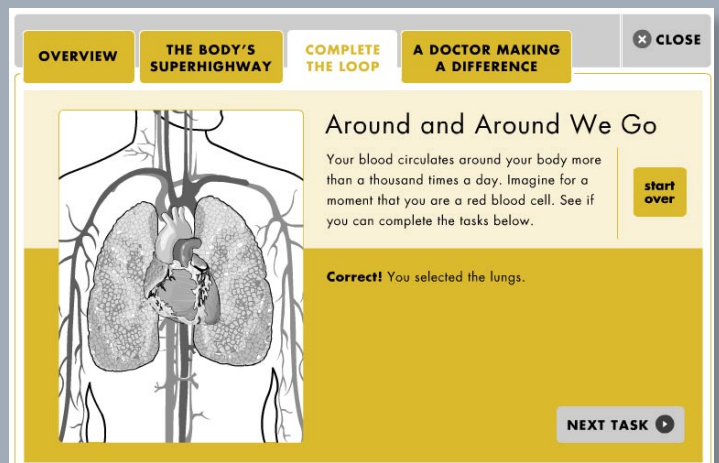
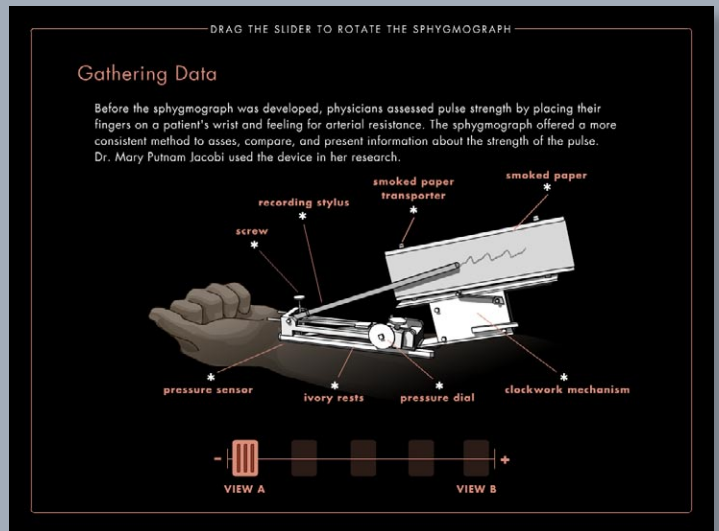
Second Story creates informative and entertaining interactive experiences including media-rich storytelling presentations, online collections, interpretive installations, and database-driven applications. Since its founding in 1994, the Second Story team has developed more than 60 award-winning interactive projects for clients such as the J. Paul Getty Museum, National Geographic, the Museum of Modern Art, Discovery, PBS, and the Smithsonian Institution.

Building an emotional connection

To create an experience in which viewers can build an emotional and intellectual connection to content through intuitive interaction, Second Story has adopted a unique approach and workflow. “We begin each project by immersing ourselves in the content and identifying the most effective and compelling way to stage the story,” says Julie Beeler, studio director for Second Story. “Then we select the technology and media that can best feature the content, heighten usability, and enrich the user experience. Only later in the process is the overall visual treatment established.”

As important to Second Story as the Web and other interactive media are for storytelling, Adobe Photoshop software has enabled the studio to pursue its unique approach with enhanced artistic freedom and efficiency. Adobe Photoshop CS and ImageReady® CS software, the integrated Web component of Photoshop CS, have opened a wider range of opportunities to streamline the studio’s workflow and enhance creativity.

“Adobe Photoshop CS both accelerates production and promotes creativity,” says Johnson. “From customizable keyboard shortcuts to the ability to batch-process images, Photoshop CS has had a noticeable positive impact on our workflow. Plus, we can put text on or inside a path, apply new filters like Fibers and Average, or use the new Filter Gallery command to preview filters and combine multiple filters in a single operation to enhance the look and quality of client projects.”



“As always, Photoshop CS takes center stage when we’re looking for more artistic ways to tell our clients’ stories.”

Julie Beeler, studio director,
Second Story Interactive Studio

Changing the face of Web production

Adobe Photoshop CS was especially important in creating a massive Web site and 20 audio/visual and interactive kiosks for the National Library of Medicine’s “Changing the Face of Medicine: Celebrating America’s Women Physicians” exhibition in two months’ time. Features of Photoshop CS saved the studio hours each day on the project.

A major task in creating the Web site was developing biographical pages for 339 women physicians. Most of the content was drawn from a database, but the design called for each biography to display the physician’s name in styled graphical text. Instead of individually creating and exporting each header, the Second Story team used variables in Adobe ImageReady CS to import the list of names from the database and batch-create the images, saving hours of image-production tedium.

Organizing and automating the process

For the Second Story designers, one of the most important features in Photoshop CS is nested layer sets. The designers previously organized Photoshop files in separate folders, with one folder for each component of an interface. Nested layer sets help the designers more efficiently track interface elements by further optimizing the file structure. For example, within a file the team can create a “Header” folder that contains separate folders for the navigation, the logo, the subnav, and other elements. This new feature makes it easier to share files within the studio, and far easier to duplicate layers and experiment with creative alternatives.

An additional time-saver in Photoshop CS is the ability to create multiple slice sets in a single document. Using these slices sets, the Second Story designers can create different versions of navigation in the same file, complete with rollover states. Previously, the studio had to create and manage multiple documents.

Company

Second Story Interactive Studio
Portland, Oregon
www.secondstory.com

Challenge

Increase Web production efficiency while providing new artistic options.

Solution

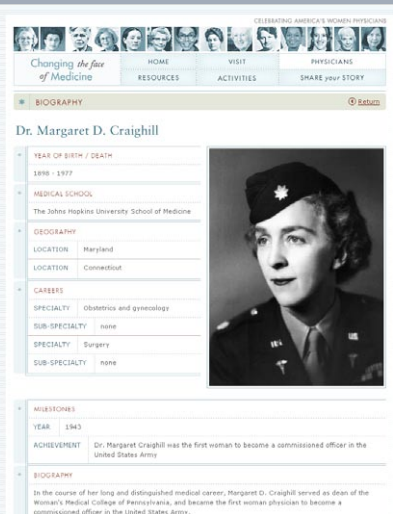
Use new automation features in Adobe Photoshop CS software to streamline production while taking advantage of the software’s creative options, such as Text on a Path.

Benefits

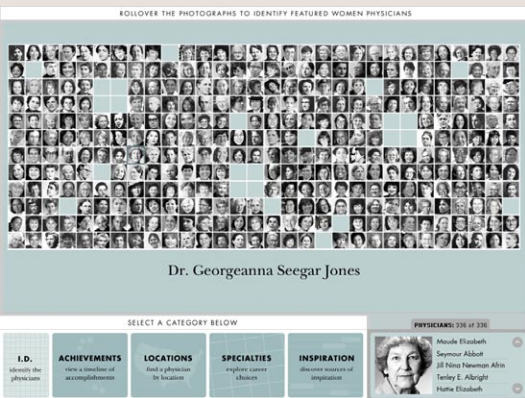
Second Story can automate tedious production tasks while exploring new creative ways to more effectively tell clients’ stories.

Tool Kit

- Adobe Acrobat®
- Adobe Illustrator®
- Adobe InDesign®
- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe ImageReady
- Apple Power Macintosh G4 computers
- Dell PCs with Intel® Pentium® processors

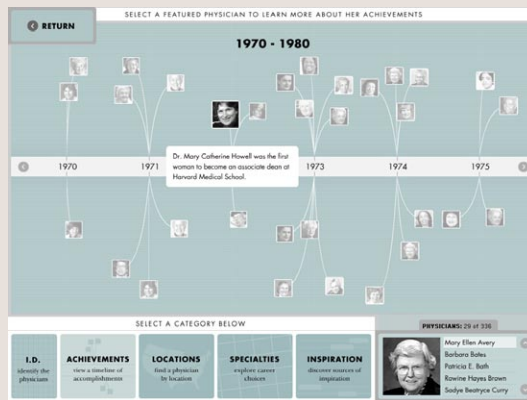


Second Story is renowned for developing informative and entertaining interactive experiences including interpretive installations and database-driven applications. For the National Library of Medicine’s exhibition, “Changing the Face of Medicine: Celebrating America’s Women Physicians,” the studio used Adobe Photoshop CS software to develop a complex Web site and interactive kiosks in just two months.



Automating a tedious task

The Second Story designers used the Conditional Actions feature in ImageReady CS, the integrated Web component of Adobe Photoshop CS, to automatically resize hundreds of photographs, saving hours that would otherwise be spent resizing each image individually.



Second Story also uses the enhanced File Browser in Photoshop CS to peruse the contents of entire directories and apply actions to selected files using the new File Browser Automate menu. For the National Library of Medicine project, for instance, the team previewed a large directory containing thumbnail photos of women physicians and applied a blue tint to all of the files that were not yet properly tinted. Conditional Actions in ImageReady CS enabled the team to resize all images that were above a certain minimum size, saving hours that would otherwise be spent resizing each image individually.

Since its founding, Second Story has been passionate about furthering its inventive mix of technology and storytelling. The studio uses Adobe Photoshop software for everything it creates, from concepts for visual treatments to sketches, comps, and production—and today, Adobe Photoshop CS software is more integral than ever to the process. “Photoshop CS makes it faster and easier than ever to produce Web pages and interactive content,” says Beeler. “And, as always, Photoshop CS takes center stage when we’re looking for more artistic ways to tell our clients’ stories.”

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