

HP customer case study: When Bournemouth University's computer animation department needed to replace its dated third-party Workstations, it decided on a long-term solution from HP

Industry: Higher Education

Students animated by HP workstation solution



"The back-up provided by HP is just fantastic, and that coupled with the excellent specifications of the machines, a three-year warranty and an extremely competitive price made the HP xw6400 Workstations the obvious choice." Sofronis Efstathiou, head of the postgraduate 3D animation course, Bournemouth University

Objective:

Bournemouth University wanted to replace the ageing workstations in its computer animation department with top spec machines able to run the latest 3D software.

Approach:

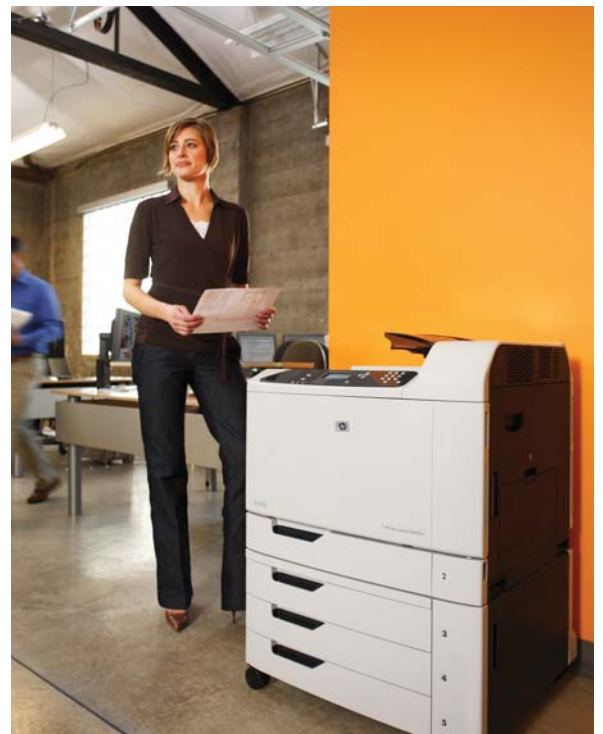
- After looking at the various options available on the market, HP xw6400 Workstations were found to have the top specifications in their range, and met all of the department's requirements at a competitive price.

IT improvements:

- No need for extensive IT support as the machines work straight out of the box.
- Downtime limited thanks to quick backup from HP and partner.
- Workstations guaranteed to perform to same standard for full three-year warranty period.

Business benefits:

- All students able to follow lecturers' presentations on their desktop monitors.
- Smaller workstations take up less space in crowded lab environment.
- Large 24" monitors give students more design freedom.
- Greatly reduced noise levels allow students to concentrate better.
- Rendering time reduced from 18 hours to 90 minutes.



The next generation of film animators and video game developers are using cutting-edge technology from HP and specialist software manufacturers to develop their skills at the National Centre for Computer Animation at Bournemouth University.

Recognised as the top department of its kind in the country by the leading industry trade magazine 3D World, the Centre's alumni can be found working globally at top animation studios from Los Angeles to London, Sydney and Auckland.

In order to keep its top ranking and excellent reputation within the industry, the Centre has to make sure it is using the very latest technology to ensure students can step straight into top jobs.

Customer solution at a glance

Primary applications

- Computer animation and design

Primary hardware (Phase one)

- 65 X HP xw6400 Workstations
- 45 X HP xw4400 Workstations

Primary hardware (Phase two)

- 288 x mixed fleet of 29 models of HP LaserJet and Multifunction Printers
- 128 x Ringdale FollowMe devices

Primary software

- HP Remote Graphics Software
- Windows XP
- Linux
- Avid SoftImage

Top-of-the-range machines

"We operate on a three-year cycle with our IT equipment, and what we were looking for when it came time to refresh was top-of-the-range machines which would perform as we wanted for the full period," says Sofronis Efstathiou, programme leader of the postgraduate 3D Computer Animation course, Bournemouth University.

Efstathiou chose HP xw6400 Workstations for a number of reasons, including having worked on them himself whilst employed at a film animation studio in Sydney, Australia. "The back-up provided by HP is just fantastic, and that coupled with the excellent specifications of the machines, a three-year warranty and an extremely competitive price made the 6400s the obvious choice," Efstathiou says. Another factor was software company AVID, a worldwide OEM partner of HP, being the developer of the SoftImage XSI animation package which the University, and all the world's top animators use.

Fast graphics cards

"The graphics cards in the machines are very, very fast and I know in three years time my students will still be able to produce top quality work whatever applications advances there are. The machines are dual quad with 4GB of RAM which means rendering time has been reduced from 18 hours on the old machines to just one and a half hours now," says Efstathiou.

Another important aspect of the solution is the ability of the workstations to support multiple monitors, coupled with HP's proprietary Remote Graphics Software (RGS). "The RGS allows me to transmit my image on my projector to 19-inch monitors on all students' desks so they can get a clear view of what I'm doing, and they can do their work at the same time on the large 24-inch monitors which were also part of the HP solution," he says. "The alternative would have been very expensive multiple projectors so that feature alone has saved a lot of money."

Very quiet operation

The quietness of the HP xw6400 Workstations is another major plus for Efstathiou. "They don't sound like aircraft taking off as the old ones did," he says. "Even when they are being heavily used there is no noise which is exactly what you want when you are working and teaching."

Having proved so effective on the post grad course, the Centre decided to order another batch of HP xw6400 Workstations for the final year undergraduate students. "Whether I'm running Linux in the undergraduate lab or Windows XP in post grad, we know the machines come out of the box and work straight away. It has been very easy to configure them despite the two operating systems, and the IT support required from the University has been minimal," says Efstathiou.

To learn more, visit www.hp.com