



CASE STUDY | BSKYB

FLYING THE FLAG
FOR TRAINING IN THE
DIGITAL ECONOMY

Leading UK broadcaster BSKYB is keeping creative skills sharp as it moves towards 3D.

It's hard to believe today but when Sky burst on to the scene in 1989, the UK just had four terrestrial channels.

Today, Sky operates the most comprehensive multichannel, multi-platform television service in the UK and Ireland, carrying over 500 channels on its broadcast platform, with over 9.5 million homes enjoying an unprecedented choice of movies, news, entertainment and sports channels.

Sky's own portfolio of channels continues to break new ground: Sky1 combines its commitment to UK production with the best of the US; Sky Arts continues to embrace new audiences as the UK's only dedicated arts channel brand; Sky Sports is still raising the bar in sports broadcasting; and Sky News remains a pioneer in multiplatform television news.

Almost 6 million Sky homes now enjoy the control and flexibility of Sky+ and 1.6 million homes have already joined Sky+HD, which provides access to 37 dedicated HD channels.

The UK is leading the world in the creative industries and the need to keep creative skills sharp has never been greater.

Sky is a case in point as it blazes ahead with high definition (HD) TV. In 2010, it plans to offer selected content to subscribers in 3D rather than 2D. Mike Hurst is Director of Sky Creative, in charge of a 230 strong Creative team making promos (short audio visual programme trailers), commercials, sponsorship and graphics for entertainment, news, and sports channels.



Mike says: "Anyone who's seen movies in 3D at the cinema will know the extra depth and quality that 3D brings to the viewing experience. We're an innovative company and constantly focus on improving our customers' experience. We plan to launch the first 3D TV channel in 2010. Viewers will need to wear special glasses, just as they do in the cinema. Increasingly, we are creating promos and graphics in 3D, which affects how we shoot, edit and post produce, in fact all parts of the process."

His team of creatives, designers and special effects staff work with writers, producers and channel production teams to make the exciting content customers expect. In 2010, Sky plans to be the first broadcaster to launch a full news service in HD. This, combined with 3D, is leading to an increased demand for training – or strictly speaking, upskilling, as the team is already a highly-skilled workforce.

Victoria Box is a Senior Creative in Mike's team and creates promos for Sky News. "If it's a breaking news story, such as a flood, for example, I come up with an idea that will entice the audience. From this, I view the rushes (early shots) from the scene, try and get more information, which is not always easy at that stage, consider using special effects with After Effects and look for music that will drive



or reinforce the idea and ultimately produce a clear direct message,” she says. “If I don’t have access to any material i.e. there are no rushes, I commission graphics for the promo. Sometimes, I also use doughnuts – top and tail standard packages containing video and graphics, that we add text to and reuse each time. I also work on promos to promote the brand of Sky News.”

She attended an introduction to Final Cut Pro course at Academy Class, a new media training provider with a network of centres across the UK. Final Cut Pro is the audio visual equivalent of word processing for broadcasters. Today, they cut, paste and refine frames taken using digital technology on their desktop. In the past, they had to manually cut and paste negatives, which was a destructive and time-consuming process.

The three-day Academy Course includes:

- Setting preferences
- Editing functions
- Working with photos and graphics
- Transitions
- Colour correction
- Music editing
- Sequencing
- Shortcuts
- Making files available to different platforms – online, text message, mobile

At Academy Class, each student has a workstation and a separate monitor. The instructor’s PC is linked to all monitors so students can follow a keyboard move easily instead of craning their necks up at a blackboard. This saves time and keeps students happy.

Victoria attended a private group course tailored to the needs of broadcasters rather than those working in print. She says: “Being able to edit images on the desktop is one of the best things about Final Cut Pro because we can turn the work out in less time. Getting hands-on experience of using the software, backed up by the monitor, worked well.”

Everyone in Mike’s team has a personal development plan established with their manager, so he knew who



→ Fast Facts about 3D

3D is based on the way the human brain and eyes work.

Each eye views a scene from a different angle and generates a unique image.

The brain merges the images to create a single picture. The difference between the image from the right and left eye allows the brain to judge depth

Each eye gathers essentially the same information.

As the image has no real depth, there is only one way of viewing it.

3D gets a distinct image into each eye.

Then the brain takes over, processing each image as if receiving an image from the natural three-dimensional world.

A characteristic common to all 3D displays is the creation and display of more than one view of a scene.



required beginner, intermediate or advanced training upfront when he made the decision to use Academy Class to deliver training in consultation with his PA Sara Dawson.

Sara says: “I inherited Academy Class when I joined Sky and got good feedback from staff who’d been on their courses. They tend to be vocal, so to get positive feedback was great. In 2008, we sent 71 staff members on 80 courses. This year, to make sure we got the best value for money, we went out to tender and Academy Class won again based on pricing, value for money and performance. It is a good performer.”

Understanding what customers want is key for Academy Class, which is why many of its staff are either working in the creative industries and lecturing part-time or are full-time lecturers and former creatives. Academy Class account manager Sarah Paton, for example, is a former graphic designer.

Mike says:

“We’re very happy with Academy Class. Training is absolutely vital if we’re to compete on the world stage.”

→ Fast Facts about the Final Cut Pro course from Academy Class

Editing in Final Cut Pro: understanding the interface, workflow, importing, marking and editing clips, sequences.

Building the Rough Cut: inserting edits, overwriting edits, managing timeline tracks, editing audio clips.

Finishing the Rough Cut: adding cutaways, editing to narration, editing to music, pasting and positioning clips, sharing sequences.

Trimming the clip: rippling edit points, rippling in the viewer, trimming one track of a linked clip.

Refining Edit Points: adding markers to clips, using markers to align actions, using storyboard editing and editing multi-cam footage.

Capturing and Transferring Footage: connecting sources for capture, choosing preset format settings, previewing and marking your source and transferring files from tapeless sources.

Applying Transitions: viewing transition options, applying transitions, using the transition editor, previewing and rendering effects.

Mixing Audio Tracks: preparing the project for mixing, organizing and editing audio effects, using the audio mixer, recording a narration track and importing audio files.

Creating Titles: working with video generators, creating a credit roll and using master templates.

Changing Motion Properties: using the speed tool, creating a freeze frame, changing motion parameters.

Applying Filters: applying and viewing video filters, applying audio filters, using a colour correction filter.

Finishing and Outputting: adjusting video levels for broadcast, outputting to tape, making a time code, saving and backing up projects.

ABOUT SKY

Sky operates the most comprehensive multichannel, multi-platform television service in the UK and Ireland. Over 9.5 million homes enjoy an unprecedented choice of movies, news, entertainment and sports channels. Sky continues to break new ground with its own portfolio of channels: Sky1 combines its commitment to UK production with the best of the US; Sky Arts continues to embrace new audiences as the UK's only dedicated arts channel brand; Sky Sports is still raising the bar in sports broadcasting; and Sky News remains a pioneer in multiplatform television news.

Almost 6 million Sky homes now enjoy the control and flexibility of Sky* and 1.6 million homes have already joined Sky*HD, which provides access to 35 dedicated HD channels. Sky is also the UK's fastest growing broadband and fixed-telephony provider.

ABOUT ACADEMY CLASS

Academy Class is the training company of choice for creatives and developers in UK and beyond. We are passionate about new technology and believe in its power to help businesses to grow and individuals to succeed. Our mission is to enable delegates to compete locally and worldwide. Academy Class is the only UK training centre certified by the major IT vendors in the creative industries Adobe, Apple, Autodesk and Quark. With a network of training centres across the UK, including London, Manchester and Glasgow, we are committed to our clients, our services, and our brand.

For further information, visit www.academyclass.com or call your training consultant on **0800 043 8889** for more information.

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