

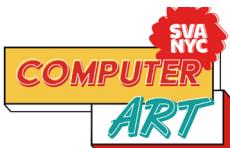


CUSTOMER STORY

School of Visual Arts

BFA Computer Art Department Staff, Faculty, and Students Talk About Remote Education

Disillusionment by Sungkyung 'Annie' Yoon
and Mauricio Velazco



At the School of Visual Arts (SVA) in Manhattan, the BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) Computer Art, Computer Animation, and Visual Effects Department teaches aspiring animation and visual effects artists the most advanced digital applications used in the film industry. Taught by more than 60 working professionals each semester, students develop the personal and professional skills required to succeed in a highly competitive, creative medium.

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EDUARDO LYTTON
SENIOR SYSTEMS DIRECTOR,
SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

Challenges

- Continue same caliber of instruction when the campus closed for the pandemic
- Enable students learning from home to use powerful campus workstations and applications
- Keep the experience simple

Solutions

- Installed Teradici Cloud Access Software (CAS) on campus workstations: HP Z8s with NVIDIA Quadro 4000 graphics processing units (GPUs)
- Directed students to install CAS on their home devices
- Brokered connections to campus workstations using Teradici CAS Manager (CAM), deployed as a virtual machine in the data center

Results

- Supported remote student work and the remote screen visual clarity was much better than from other vendors
- Gave students experience with a tool used in many major studios, an interviewing advantage
- Enabled faculty to demonstrate application techniques from home using campus workstations



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When the SVA Manhattan campus closed for COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) Computer Art Department had to suddenly rethink its computer strategy. “It’s up to our tech team to make sure student artists have all the tools and technology they need to create their best work,” says Eduardo Lytton, Senior Systems Director. “We had to shift from on-premises support to remote education—and do it quickly.” Students learning from home would need remote access to workstations in the lab, which have the NVIDIA Quadro 4000 GPUs needed for a good experience with demanding applications like Autodesk Maya, Pixologic Zbrush, DaVinci Resolve, SideFX Houdini, Foundry Nuke, and Adobe Creative Suite.

“We had been thinking about remote classes for awhile, and the pandemic pushed us into the process suddenly,” says Richard Hagen, Senior Systems Administrator.

After evaluating seven remote access solutions, SVA Computer Art selected Teradici CAS. “CAS is the best fit for our animation and visual effects workflow,” Lytton says. “It’s stable, with better performance and color fidelity than other solutions.” Hagen adds, “Its uniqueness stems from its ability to deliver a remote desktop experience that is much better than competing remote screen share services, including supporting analog drivers such as Wacom tablets. This is one advantage - the ability to use Wacom interfaces over the remote screen share. Other screen sharing services like RemotePC absolutely cannot do that.”

Another plus is Teradici’s proven track record in the media and entertainment industries. “Knowing how to use Teradici will be a feather in the cap for our students because more and more studios use it,” Lytton says. “If students are going to learn one solution, it might as well be the one used in the workplace.”

Students log into the campus workstation from their personal device—Mac, Windows, or Linux. “We integrated CAS Manager with our campus-wide Active Directory for user authentication,” Hagen says. CAS Manager brokers a connection to an available workstation. SVA Computer Art started with enough CAS licenses for about one in eight students to work currently, and will periodically re-evaluate to make sure students can log into a remote



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STUDENT,
SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

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RICHARD HAGEN
SENIOR SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR,
SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

workstation when they need it. "The Teradici licensing model gave us some flexibility and helped us manage costs," says Lytton.

Current and prospective students like knowing that they can remote into a school workstation whether or not the campus is open. "CAS lets me work smoothly without getting stressed about delays and disconnections," says SVA Computer Art student Sungkyung (Annie) Yoon, who moved home at the start of the pandemic. "It is just like I am using the school workstation." Yoon's initial fear that she wouldn't get to see her peers' work proved unfounded. "With CAS we all get to share and review our peers' work in detail during remote class," she says. "The most significant change is that I do not have to go to school to access the computer." Here is *Disillusionment*, a film by Annie Yoon and her thesis partner, Mauricio Velazco.

Another student, Qianyue (Frida) Ding, notes that remote access to SVA's workstations saves her a commute. "And by doing the more graphics-heavy jobs on Maya in a lab workstation, I can do other work on my personal computer so I don't waste any time," she says. Here is *Apes in the Finery*, a film by Frida Ding and her thesis partners Tianji Yang and Haijing Lin.

Even students working on their senior thesis during the pandemic year completed their work remotely. "The system was able to help our students enjoy faster remote screen refresh speeds, which allowed them finer control over their animation viewports and more accurate color reproduction than other competing remote screen share services," says Hagen. "They produce work that is on the same level as that of many major studios, and the Teradici system allowed them to have faster and more accurate viewports for animation and editing."

Faculty appreciate that CAS enables them to demonstrate techniques while students watch from home. "I don't have all of the school's software on my home computer," says Da Suel Kim, who teaches classes on computer animation and production skills. "With CAS I can show possibilities to the students the same way I would in class. I like CAS better than other remote access solutions I've tried because of its stability and speed."



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DA SUEL KIM
ADJUNCT PROFESSOR,
SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS

For the fall 2021 semester, SVA Computer Art will offer hybrid instruction, combining in-person and virtual teaching. The department is preparing to install CAS in the school's Mac labs in addition to PC labs.

Lytton concludes, "In the midst of the pandemic and post-pandemic landscape, we're encouraging our students to look at the positive side of things. With CAS, not only can they continue learning, they also have an opportunity to shape new ways of working by becoming familiar with an industry-adopted brand."