CAST Software Helps Design A Solid Future For Students With **wysiwyg**

About this time each academic year CAST Software of Toronto Canada, proud owner of **wysiwyg**, likes to inform schools about ways to help them equip graduates as they move into the real world. This is an important extension of CAST’s already widespread **wysiwyg** Learn Programme, currently in more than 300 schools, colleges and universities around the world and, last year, each of these Learns averaged more than 20 students – that means more than 6000 students!

To demonstrate CAST’s commitment to the production professionals and designers of tomorrow, this year CAST is offering the **wysiwyg** New Graduate’s Opportunity. Simply put, until 15 Jul 09 grads can purchase a **wysiwyg** Design license for USD1250 or a **wysiwyg** Perform license for USD2099 - that is half-price - a savings of up to USD2000.

CAST recognizes the importance of equipping these highly computer literate aspiring professionals with the right tools to start off their careers. The New Graduate’s Opportunity is an incredible offer. Grads will get the edge-up and the help they need to beat their competition for the best jobs. This opportunity means grads can launch their career with **wysiwyg** — the state-of-the-art lighting design and pre-visualization professional production software that is the Industry Standard.

The offer is only open to graduating students. To take advantage of the Opportunity, grads must first register their new graduate status with CAST by submitting the Student Opportunity Registration form (which requires information about their school, course and educational status) available at [http://media.viviendesign.com/wysiwyg/learnprogram/forms/learnform.html](http://media.viviendesign.com/wysiwyg/learnprogram/forms/learnform.html). Alternatively, grads can telephone +1.877.989.2278 extension 221 in North America or SKYPE Michell.Perez and speak to Michell about the New Graduate’s Opportunity, or just send an email to learn@cast-soft.com.

**Why Students Love **wysiwyg**

1. It’s Easy and Inexpensive to Learn.

   CAST invests an enormous amount of time and research to keep **wysiwyg** intuitive and easy to learn. Like any good tool and as a young professional just starting out, it’s vital to have the tools you know from your training, tools that will do the job for you so that you have the confidence that you are equipped and know how to use them. Our aim is to be sure that students have easy access to gaining valuable experience learning **wysiwyg** – The Industry Standard. We receive dozens of letters regularly from young people around the world sharing their stories of how they basically self-taught themselves the program. Read our latest story below: “**So Easy a High Schooler Can Do It.**”

2. Previzualization means students gain valuable experience about stages and staging by building and playing with various concepts and ideas – safe trial and errors in the virtual world – using **wysiwyg**’s infamous library of 20,000+ objects specific to the industry.

3. Students can purchase **wysiwyg** Education that runs for an academic year and costs about as much as a textbook.

4. **wysiwyg** can be upgraded as careers build.

5. Knowledge and skill gets you the JOBS.

**Why Faculty Love **wysiwyg**

1. Previzualization means that with any CAD drawing of the stage or venue, using the tools and **wysiwyg**’s massive library of dynamic industry objects, virtual scenarios can be projected in the classroom to demonstrate rules, standards, options and alternatives. It’s possible to assign a standard stage/venue set-up for all students to work on in the school’s computer lab.

2. **wysiwyg** Learn comes in network form packaged for 10, 20, 30, 40 or more seats. Approximately 300 education facilities around the world run **wysiwyg** Learn to teach students about CAD-ing and theatre arts/production.

3. CAST also delivers an inexpensive version of **wysiwyg** – Education that only students can buy. It runs for the academic year only and comes in 3 levels – Report, Design, Perform – which students can purchase for less than the cost of an average textbook these days.

4. CAST installs and supports, and also trains the teaching/coaching staff. CAST provides updates that keep the school’s lab software current with the leading edge in the industry.

5. CAST’s tech support is second to none. Also, **wysiwyg** is so widely used, it is always...
possible to connect with local professional Users for help, pointers, or even the odd classroom visit. And the wysiwyg PLAN (the bi-monthly magazine) is interesting, full of ideas, has good tips and tricks – on an international scale which is vital for students to grasp.

6. wysiwyg is a virtual, previsualization software and that means that Faculty and students can share media for course work and yet be independently creative (within the safe haven provided by wysiwyg) for individual projects.

7. Whether in the school computer lab or by using wysiwyg Education on their laptops, students gain valuable experience it usually takes years to get (and saves teaching time too) about stages and staging by building and playing with various concepts and ideas – safe trial and errors in the virtual world – using wysiwyg’s infamous library of 20,000+ objects specific to the industry.

8. Apart from all the advantages of wysiwyg, since it is taught at so many other schools we feel we have to keep our graduates as well trained and prepared.

9. CAST visibly helps students not only with special “getting started” offers for new graduates. CAST also sponsors a number of student design competitions throughout the academic year including The USITT Southwest Student Design Competition (http://theplan.wysiwygsuite. com/issue23/USITT%20March%2009%20Plan.pdf), the USITT National, and the wysiwyg R23 Showcase at the University of Glamorgan (see winners below). CAST sponsors these awards through the donation of the Educational Licenses of wysiwyg Design.

Knowledge and skills get JOBS. We hear plenty of stories about how young professionals (often self-taught) have used wysiwyg to great success, even in the face of odd challenges. See our article “How wysiwyg Saved the Day” in our October issue at http://theplan.wysiwygsuite.com/issue21/page7.html

For more information or to download a wysiwyg R23 demo version – which is also a tremendously useful free tool for developers (imagine using one of the 4 different custom-built demo files to demonstrate or learn about using consoles in showrooms, classrooms, testing labs, trade shows) -- go to www.wysiwygsuite.com.

Finally, if you are a school interested in acquiring or updating Learn, or receiving regular updates about specials, sponsorships, wysiwyg The PLAN (a bi-monthly e-newsletter), and important industry and technology materials (which you can also pass to your students), email CAST: learn@cast-soft.com to register your school for free.
Technology is constantly changing, and it is hard to keep up, but for a high school student it is almost impossible. I was lucky enough to get my hands on a copy of wysiwyg Design Educational Edition R22 and then later upgrade to R23. I was expecting to only be able to use it as a basic tool, because I do not have formal training, but boy was I wrong.

The most advanced software I have had any training with is AutoCAD and that was only a very basic three-week part of a required computer class for school. The first time I worked with wysiwyg was an experience in itself. The first version I used was the Report Educational Edition. The drafting tools were easy to find and use. I used the “draw: venue” option and got a rough sketch of what the shape my school’s auditorium was like. Then, I proceeded to add the catwalk and batons that our lights are hung on. This took me about an hour from start to finish. When I had finished that, I was amazed with the software and that was all I used it for until about a week later. This is when I noticed that there were “DATA” and “PRES” tabs up top. I looked through these for a bit, then went ahead and assigned all the lights to a channel and focus position that I had just created. That alone made my next focus 300% faster, and that’s all I used the software for until I upgraded to Design.

Upgrading is as easy as 1-2-3. E-mail Cast, fill out the form, get your code, put it in, and then you’re done. After upgrading and looking at the shaded views, I realized that what I had was great for doing plots, but if I wanted to use this as a design tool I would actually have to draw out the auditorium. Looking at a job that big for the first time is a daunting task, so I broke it up into sections. The first parts I took care of were the house and catwalk, and those took me about four hours to complete. Then I went ahead and did the stage and all the curtains and batons, all kept in the same file, yet separated. Then I moved the two together and recreated a set from a previous show so I could see how close I could get a rendering to an actual photo. The day after I got all this done, Release 23 came out, and I wanted to see the difference between 22 and 23. The results actually surprised me; having variable focus and hot spots made a big difference to me.

Now that I have had the time to work on other stuff with wysiwyg, I have found many of the quick tools are lifesavers, especially the quick fixture tool in DATA mode. A few other things that I really enjoy having access to include but are not limited to: a large and ever-growing fixture library, people and mannequins of all different poses, enough gels and gobos to last a lifetime, and the modeled difference between a board operator and a bored operator. In Design mode, the tools are very easy to use and being able to put them where you want them on your screen allows the user more comfort with their designing preferences. Overall, the software is such that at first glance it is completely overwhelming, but it is extremely easy to learn and is very beneficial in helping you design and get paperwork for whatever event you are doing. However, I am sure having a board connected would make life even easier.

I started using the software with no experience or training. Now I am very comfortable using the software and wish to upgrade to Perform, but that is neither necessary nor financially worth it to me right now. Since I started using wysiwyg, design has become faster, more efficient, and the overall effect the lighting has had on the shows has increased greatly. I even have begun to wonder how I lived before wysiwyg. This software is one of the easiest and best lighting softwares I have ever used; VectorWorks Spotlight with Vision (from the demo) is way more complicated and the looks it gives you are nothing compared to those of wysiwyg, in my opinion. Just remember, wysiwyg is so easy a high schooler can use it.
My name is George Jackson and I have been teaching an Advanced Lighting class for over 5 years now at a community college in Orlando. The main focus of the class is the design, implementation, and programming of automated lighting for various entertainment events. When I first started teaching the class, I was faced with an interesting challenge. I have 16 students but only one Wholehog 2 lighting console to teach programming from. I had to figure out how to train everyone so that each gets an equal amount of time on the board. The answer came in the form of pre-visualization, namely \textit{wysiwyg}. Even though we only have one copy, I was able to make it work by having two students come in at a scheduled time every hour during the course of the day. One student programs on the actual console, and the other one programs on HogPC connected to an identical lighting rig in \textit{wysiwyg}. Both stations are side-by-side so that I can stay in the middle and answer questions. In addition, I have both systems connected to timecode so they can have their song trigger their lighting cues.

This setup has worked great and gives everyone the most time on the console. Oddly enough, some students prefer \textit{wysiwyg} over the real thing because of the haze -since we are not allowed to use any sort of fog or haze machine in our lab until the final project. \textit{wysiwyg} is great because I get to show them how to setup a show from beginning to end—starting with the plot, paperwork, and then pre-visualization. Over the years, I have seen \textit{wysiwyg} progress to its current form today with realistic beams and haze animation. Because of this, I try my best to replicate our lighting rig down to the smallest details such as scroller colors, fabric transparency, and exact measurements. I need to do this because after programming in the computer, my students then move a couple of feet to upload their show in the actual console and expect their show to look exactly like the pre-visualization.

Lastly, the best thing I love about this program is the support that I have received whenever I have a problem. When we had discrepancies with our fixture profiles, I called tech support and they provided me with an updated profile the next day. The future looks bright for \textit{wysiwyg} and I cannot wait to see what is in store in the years to come. Because of this product, all of my students will get to have a chance to express their creative ideas through light. 😊

\textbf{Programming With \textit{wysiwyg}}

by George Jackson

The official bi-monthly publication for \textit{wysiwyg} Members