something **a**bstract
media in motion

Freeway Education

Communicate
Curriculum e-Delivery
Live Video Delivery
Store
Archive

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Freeway Media System In Education

Playout to a wide range of different types of display. Large screens, classroom white boards, active white boards or individual computers.
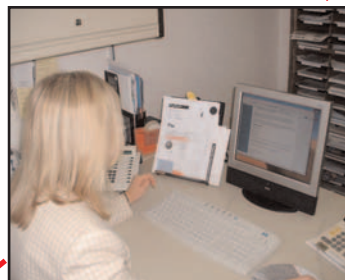
Present the required information in class. Either use a projector and computer system, individual PCs or have full interaction with an Active White Board.

Schedule playout on an instant, looped or timed basis. Control all of this remotely. Communicate, inform and entertain in a planned and controlled way.
Quick Message allow you to instantly send out messages which overlay the current playout material.

Pre-plan a lesson delivery by browsing the contents of the central storage system and select the group of video clips, still pictures or PowerPoint presentation etc. that might be used in the classroom.

Freeway is a complete Media and computer file management system. **Store** material centrally complete with full cataloguing information. **Search** for the item or group of items that you want using the powerful key word search system from your own networked computer. **View** items of interest by simply clicking on them - required viewers for each different type of file will automatically open up as required.
Playout items from the central storage system.
Remotely control playout of items to informational screens.
Add **Quick Messages** which superimpose the current items being played out.
Pre-plan playout to a classroom by pre-selecting the clips, documents and still images that are going to be used in a lesson. These can be played out on to a computer screen or projector as required or can be fully **interactive** with active whiteboards.

Introduction to Freeway in Education

The Freeway system from Something Abstract is a comprehensive media and computer file handling and delivery system which allows educational establishments to make maximum use of today's multimedia technologies without the problems which can arise from the introduction of these technologies. This system combined with a wide range of experience from the team at Something Abstract can mean that you, like a lot of customers all over the UK, can use the latest teaching techniques to deliver information and teaching across your whole organisation.

The Different Functional Elements of a Freeway System

The Freeway System consists of several different functional elements, each with their own particular task. However, depending on the type of system required, it may be possible to combine functions or to implement a function onto an existing computer in the organisation. The principal functional elements are,

Content Creation - create videos for presentation or learning
Central Storage - store your materials centrally for easy access
Recording, cataloguing and archiving - catalogue all material and store it long-term
Browsing - searching for files and viewing them to select the required ones
Streaming - put live or recorded video and audio on to your network for everyone to view.
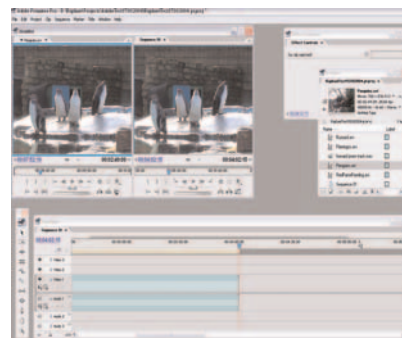*Playout* - remotely controlled playout for information, communication and entertainment
e-Delivery to classroom or lecture room - deliver media material directly to the classroom.

Content Creation

Content for playout or informational use is typically done in a number of different ways. First of all, many organisations use PowerPoint to create information regarding the day's activities or for presenting information. Do also remember that video and audio clips as well as still images can be integrated into PowerPoint presentations to improve the quality and impact of a presentation.
In addition, the onset of multimedia applications has also meant that many organisations now find that they need a non-linear video and audio editor as part of their toolset, both for staff and student use. At Something Abstract, we are able to supply a wide range of different tools for this job but have found that a package including a powerful workstation, Adobe Premiere Pro Video and Audio Editing, Adobe Encore DVD Authoring and Adobe Audition Audio workstation software offers a good range of stunningly powerful tools at an excellent price. Finally, Freeway also supports the use of more traditional computer files such as those from a word processor, spreadsheet etc.

Central Storage

Something Abstract supplies a wide range of different storage solutions to suit many different needs and budgets. Solutions range from small 250 Gbyte Firewire drives up to several Terrabytes of RAID-protected storage. Rest assured, with storage prices remaining highly competitive, the correct solution, at a competitive price, is readily available.

Recording, Cataloguing and Archiving

There are three main key elements involved in the action of creating and using central storage for a wide range of different files - recording, cataloguing and archiving.

The entering of files into the system can be separated into two forms. First of all consider a media or computer element that already exists in a file format, say, a PowerPoint presentation, a Windows Media Player video file or still image. In this case the Freeway Archiving system can read the file into the central storage system and can also, at the same time, be used to create additional cataloguing information. Alternatively the information for storage might only exist on a video tape machine. In such a case, the Freeway Archiving system can take the video and audio output from the video tape machine and can record it in. Once recorded in, it can then be saved and catalogued in the same manner as other files.
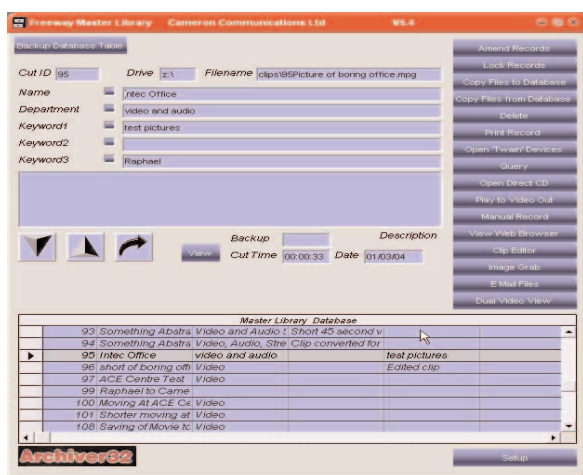

Cataloguing is a highly essential part of any central storage and Freeway uses a powerful cataloguing, searching and browsing system. This allows users to catalogue every file using 5 different naming fields and a large description area. Users subsequently searching for any file can search the system using these or a combination of these keywords.

After some time, it is useful to perform some housekeeping duties on any archiving system. This means that files which are no longer regularly used or required can be moved off the system to clear up space.

The Freeway system handles this process very elegantly by recording these files onto CDROM or DVD before deletion from the system. However, even after a file is deleted from the Freeway system, its cataloguing information will remain. Therefore, anyone searching for an item that was last used some time ago will still see all the cataloguing information relevant to it. However, instead of simply playing or displaying the required file, the Freeway system will simply cross-reference the file location to that of the catalogued CDROM or DVD. In this way, files that are no longer regularly used can be archived off the active system whilst all the cataloguing information on them remains. This leads to efficient archiving and meets current best-practice recommendations.

Browsing / Searching for Files

Searching for relevant files in the Freeway system is an efficient process. Simply open up the Freeway system, type in the keyword or combination of keywords which describe that file and the Freeway system will return the list of files that correspond to the search criteria. To view any file, simply click on it, the Freeway system will then automatically play back that file using the appropriate viewer. For example clicking on a PowerPoint presentation will automatically play back the presentation, similarly clicking on a video/audio file, will automatically play that back.

To add to the efficiency of this process, it is possible to perform this browsing and searching process remotely from the main Freeway system. All that is required is that it is performed on a computer on the same computer network as the Freeway system and on which the Freeway software has been installed.

Streaming

So far all descriptions of the Freeway system have centred around using media information that has already been or will be recorded into the Freeway system. Whilst this may satisfy most requirements, it will sometimes be necessary to send out live video around the organisation, perhaps to send out a live television feed or to transmit a live personal address. This can be done within the Freeway system using a Freeway video streamer.

This video streamer takes as its input a live video and audio source, perhaps from a television tuner or camera. It then, using some localised software preparation, plays out this information in the form of a television channel on the computer network. Users who want to view or playout this transmission simply have to open up Internet Explorer and switch it to view the video streamer address (URL).

Playout

The process of playout is normally the playing out of an assortment of different material onto different informational screens situated all around an organisation. These screens might carry daily information about events on that day or could be used to playout live video from a video streaming unit. Playout can be controlled remotely to the actual Freeway main Archiving unit and storage system. Indeed in most organisations, playout is controlled from the main administration office. From here, material can be set to play out on a manual, automatic loop or timed basis.

In addition to controlling the playout of material, it is also possible to superimpose Quick Messages onto the playout screens. This might be to convey up to the minute information about something that is about to happen and schedule change etc.

e-Delivery of Material into a Classroom or Lecture Theatre

It is now clearly understood that curriculum delivery into the classroom can be greatly enhanced using various different types of media. This offers great benefits to the student, teacher and lecturer alike. Freeway has been designed with this in mind and delivery can take place in a very convenient and simple manner.

A typical situation might be that a teacher or lecturer is planning to use a selection of different multimedia items held within Freeway. From his or her own computer at their desk, they can pre-select a set of items that might be used within a class using a process called Tagging which means that they have been identified and grouped with a tag number, say 7. Once in the classroom the teacher can then go to the classroom computer and use the Freeway system to identify all items which have been tagged with identification number 7. This means that the teacher can, quickly and efficiently, go to and playback the individual items that have been pre-selected.

In addition to playback of material using traditional screens or projectors the Freeway system can also be fully integrated with any active whiteboard system to jointly offer an exceptional experience for students, teachers and lecturers alike.

Ease of Use

90 % of the many Freeway installations in the UK are operated by non-technical staff on a daily basis. This is because it was designed to be operated by the lecturers, teachers and administration staff that make education work. A simple rule of thumb is that anyone who can make up a modest PowerPoint presentation can become a skilled operator of the Freeway system. You can therefore be rest-assured that your team will have no problem coming to grips with the Freeway system and squeezing the best out of it.

Installation of a Freeway System

The introduction of technology into an existing organisation can sometimes seem to be fraught with problems and technical issues. Fortunately the Freeway development team have taken this into account and overcome it. Freeway can be implemented as a new system or can be integrated into a currently existing system. In addition Freeway can be customised to exactly match your operational requirements and budget. All this and the reassurance that the system can be easily expanded and grown as and when required means that you can have absolute confidence in the investment that you make in a Freeway system.

Pricing

Freeway has been designed from the outset to use industry-standard workstations, hardware and software. This means that we are able to take advantage of high volume manufacture to deliver a system at a remarkably cost-effective price. In addition, it is often possible to take advantage of existing equipment already in your organisation and adapt it to to be used as part of a Freeway system.
Prices do vary greatly based on the specification of system required but one thing is clear - Freeway can deliver a powerful and reliable media solution at a very competitive price.

What to do next?

If you like what you now know about the Freeway system and would like to know more then please contact us. Our contact details are,

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we would love to show you a system in action.