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Faculty Spotlight: Blogs as Digital Workbooks

Professor Wobbe Koning discusses his experience with using Blogs in the Fine Arts.



I am teaching 3D computer animation within the Animation and Illustration BFA program. For my intro courses, student are required to keep a sketchbook. On paper they document their process and create designs for virtual objects.

The first advanced 3D course my students take is one that focuses on lighting and rendering. What they produce are digital images to document that process, a physical sketchbook does not seem appropriate. Instead I started a blog as digital workbook (msu-aril.blogspot.com) which I manage and where my students are (invited to become) authors. They are encouraged to publish both work in progress and final images and to share interesting links. I have since extended the use to the advanced animation course.

The blog was initially quite successful and well used. I have noticed however that it is getting harder to get students to post work. The increase in class size may be a factor, but I suspect the surge in social media with their greater immediacy is a more important cause. Writing a blog post is a little more involved than a status update or tweet. I do still consider it a useful tool for the classes I teach, and the fact that a blog keeps an

archive of older posts means that students can not only learn from each other, but also from students who have previously taken my classes.

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