

PRODUCT reviews

• Animation-ish

Animation-ish

By Savilla Banister

Animation-ish is a multilevel application that provides an intuitive and powerful approach to creating digital animations. Peter H. Reynolds, author of “The Dot” and “Ish,” provides countless video vignettes within the application itself and on the companion Web site (www.animationish.com). These videos provide 5–10-second “Inspire Me” messages, giving users quick ideas and encouragement, and longer segments detailing the how to’s of Animation-ish.

Animation-ish hosts three levels of animation complexity: Wiggledoodle-ish, Flipbook-ish, and Advanced-ish. Beginning with Wiggledoodle-ish, users may construct simple, three-page drawings to produce animated graphics. Flipbook-ish adds the ability to expand beyond the three-page limit for more sophisticated possibilities, and Advanced-ish adds more tools, quick access to pre-built libraries, and a dual-track time line for finally creating animations with professional flare.

Regardless of the level selected, users are encouraged to explore the tools and develop ideas, rather than perfectly craft designs. In other words, the birds I drew initially were “seagull-ish” and that was just fine. Animations aren’t supposed to look exactly like what they represent. As long as they convey the essence of the thoughts you are trying to communicate, the animations are perfect just as they are. Again, the brief video clips available from the “Inspire Me” link on every Animation-ish screen keep



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these affirmations only a click away, as you experiment with the program—a welcome relief for the I’m-not-really-an-artist types.

Once created, Animation-ish files can be exported in a variety of formats, including Flash, Quicktime, AVI, digital video stream, or an image sequence. This allows animators (that means you!) to place their products in numerous environments (Web pages, videos, or presentations) and import animations into other applications to add audio, if that is desired.

Drawing in the program is most effectively done by using a Wacom tablet. This allows the user to mimic the feel and ease of drawing with a pencil and paper. Obviously, the “Pressure” feature of the drawing tools can only

be used with this type of device, creating lines that vary according to the pressure applied with the pen to pad. However, I had relative success just using my laptop touch pad, and so the use of a mouse could work quite effectively if a Wacom tablet was not available.

Teachers interested in using animations that aid in conceptual understanding of academic content will find Animation-ish, and the resources provided at www.fablevision.com/education/resources/index.html beneficial. Curricular integration ideas, such as animating a diagram of the water cycle or of cell division, are provided. There are not step-by-step how to’s for these types of activities, as the key Animation-ish focus is on



Animation-ish is packed with inspirational tips by author/illustrator Peter H. Reynolds.

encouraging multiple ways of solving problems. In my view, this is exactly the philosophy embedded in the NETS and a constructivist teaching philosophy. Students and teachers will find strong support for such classroom uses in the Classroom Edition User Guide (Download the PDF under the application's HELP menu). Why not try your hand as an animator? Who knows whom you might inspire.

Animation-ish

\$59.95 single/\$499.95 lab pack (10)
animationish.com



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