

Animation Technology Uses Motion to Instruct, Promote and Entertain

By Rose Muenker

Marty Topping thought that he would have to live in Hollywood to do well in animation technology.

"It's what I enjoy doing, so I decided to start an animation business to see if it would float," says the founder of PING! Studios.

Then a year ago, he had a chance encounter with an old friend who works for FlightSafety International, the world's largest aviation training company. Their need – a developer to create animated visual training aids for the classroom – fit perfectly with Topping's experience and expertise. He had developed computer-based pilot and navigator classroom instruction content while serving as an officer in the U.S. Air Force. And when he left the military, he transferred that expertise into private business.

As a result, Topping is getting all kinds of work from the flight training company. Using animation technology, he develops training aids that show students 3D simulations. For example, the training aid can illustrate an aircraft's approach pattern as it comes in for a landing. In addition, the fully interactive training aid allows the instructor to stop and talk the trainees through each critical point. "An instructional designer, graphic designer and programmer are typically needed to make this," Topping explains. "Luckily, I have a background in all three."

He also helps other businesses use animation technology effectively. Some typical multimedia applications are website introduction pages, games that reinforce a company's brand, and quick online presentations. And, even in business functions, classic Walt Disney-type animation, i.e. cartoons, still plays a role.

Animation is not limited to cartoons. "In the true sense of the word, animation implies motion over time," Topping clarifies. Even a photo fading in and out in a presentation is simple animation. As an easy example to view, Topping points out the menu options on the West Chamber website. When a visitor clicks on About Us (or any other main option), the menu moves, listing the options, such as Meet the Staff, contained within it.

In addition to running his animation technology business, Topping teaches at Red Rocks Community College, manages marketing and technology for the Jefferson Economic Council, coaches youth soccer, and actively participates in numerous community groups.

Topping turned his lifelong interest in animation into a successful business without moving to Hollywood. When asked what his long-term goal is, he responded without hesitation, "Retire and make online cartoons all day."



Marty Topping, Founder, PING! Studios