MAKING LEARNING FUN, EASY, AND INTERACTIVE WITH QUARKXPRESS

The Salvation Army creates its first interactive resources for schools and colleges through the power of Flash in QuarkXPress

The Schools and Colleges Unit within The Salvation Army's UK and Ireland operation faced the common problem of limited budgets and resources. By harnessing the interactive capabilities of QuarkXPress they were able transform and modernize their material using existing internal resources.


The Salvation Army is a Christian church and registered charity. Besides the government, it is one of the UK's largest, most diverse providers of social services. Founded in East London in 1865, it now operates in more than 120 countries and offers a variety of activities and services within local communities. Like any organization, The Salvation Army uses a wide range of collateral to help promote their services, spread their message, and in this particular case, teach students in schools throughout the UK about their work.

Limited Budget and Resources

The Schools and Colleges Unit produces curriculum-based, educational resources about The Salvation Army for schools as well as for The Salvation Army church ministers and members who visit schools. The resources consist of lesson plans, books, posters, CD ROMs, DVDs, and student packs. Although they already had a host of existing materials, many of these needed to be updated and modernized to reflect current trends and the latest technology. However, this raised an issue commonly faced by charities, churches, and other not-for-profit organizations: how to create these resources with limited skills and budget.

"We are an incredibly small department and not only do we have an extremely tight budget, but we have a real responsibility to spend it wisely. Our first thought was to outsource the project, so we spoke with a number of designers regarding updating and re-branding the materials but we realized that we simply couldn't afford it. We needed to rethink how we could do this given our budget constraints. We looked at bringing the project in-house and thought about what we could do to make the materials look professional," said Shelley Drake, Schools Resources Development Officer at the Salvation Army.
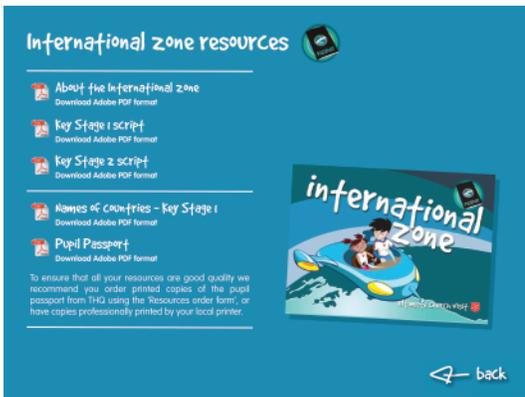
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THE SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army
Schools and Colleges Unit
www.salvationarmy.org.uk/schools

CHALLENGES

- **Need for new interactive and modern promotional materials**
- **Limited budget and skills**
- **Time constraints**

SOLUTIONS

- **With QuarkXPress 8 organizations can create professional-quality promotional materials for print, Web, and interactive formats in a single, affordable application**
- **Charitable organizations can purchase QuarkXPress 8 with a discount of 80% off the original price**
- **With its intuitive interface, QuarkXPress 8 is user-friendly and easy to learn for in-house production**

Tried and tested

"I had heard of QuarkXPress and decided to use the Test Drive version from the Quark Web site to see if I could figure out how to use it. I found it quite easy, so based on this initial test we decided to invest and purchased a copy of QuarkXPress for the department. It was very easy to use and I figured it out myself without any training. Our IT department suggested that we take a training course but we didn't feel like we needed it as QuarkXPress is just so intuitive and easy to use. We felt that we could put the training budget to better use but may potentially use it for future, more specific, training," continued Drake.

"QuarkXPress enabled us to completely re-brand our existing materials including lesson plans, leaflets, and newsletters. Previously we were using Word but we found it incredibly frustrating and QuarkXPress gave us much more control to do everything that we wanted to do."

Interactive Design

After updating their existing materials the team then embarked on a new project, one that would really test all the functionality in QuarkXPress - particularly its interactive capabilities. They needed to create materials for a specific "Ultimate Church Visit," which is when a school visits a Salvation Army place of worship. They needed to provide resources that could be used by the church to host this visit. Given the target audience of young children, they felt that it would be better to produce something more interactive and interesting.

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> — Shelley Drake, Schools Resources Development Officer at the Salvation Army.

"The concept already existed but the resources were in Word and didn't look very professional. We wanted to revamp everything and decided to completely change the format from a written manual to an interactive CD ROM. Again we were going to outsource the project, as we felt that we didn't have the skills internally to tackle a CD. But it didn't work out time-wise, so I thought that I would try to use the interactive capabilities in QuarkXPress and do it myself, "explains Drake.

"Basically I just followed the manual and looked at some of the free online training resources and I figured it out. I was able to build approximately 50 pages which all link together using a menu system with links to all of the additional PDFs, PowerPoint Presentations, and other resources on the CD. I created Master pages to contain all the menu items and they fade out when you scroll over them. It looks amazing and everyone is thrilled with the results."

The Ultimate Church Visit resources consist of lesson plans, assemblies, books, posters, CD ROMs, DVDs, and student packs.

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QuarkXPress gives designers and page layout artists the ability to create engaging interactive materials by leveraging their existing design skills without having to learn multiple applications and diverse design concepts. It is based on an easy-to-understand, event driven, and paged-based method of creating interactivity rather than having to think on a timeline and in scenes. Unlike many other Flash creation applications, with QuarkXPress users do not need to have programming skills and can still create rich elements such as animations, transitions, interactive menus, etc. without having to write a single line of code. As well as exporting Flash (SWF) files, QuarkXPress can also output Mac and Windows projector files (self-running files) that are ideal for using for interactive DVDs and CD ROMs, as well as point-of-sale material and digital signage where it may not be appropriate or possible to use a Web browser.

Savings Now and In the Future

"The CD-ROM is currently being used by over 100 Salvation Army churches across the UK. We saved a significant amount of money, which is important for an organization and a small department like ours. Although it did, of course, take up a fair amount of my time, I would have had to invest this time anyway because I would have been managing an external resource. But this way I could be in complete control and figure things out as I went along. I could make changes as I liked and I didn't have to wait to see a finished product. There were no surprises, as I was the designer. Now that I am adept at using the application, I have lots of other ideas of things that I can use it for. I'm excited to see what we can do going forward."

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