

## INDUSTRY

Media and entertainment

## SOFTWARE

Autodesk® Maya®  
 Autodesk® 3ds Max®  
 Autodesk® Mudbox®  
 Autodesk® MotionBuilder®

# Helping students create the future of animation

## Autodesk gives aspiring animators tools that can help them succeed in school and beyond

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— Eamonn Butler  
 Animation Director  
 Cinesite



Image courtesy of Christopher Erickson

### Wanted: professional-grade animation experience

These days, student animators compete in the job market with candidates from around the world. To succeed, they need experience that will help them stand out from the crowd—and hit the ground running when they get a job.

Of particular interest to employers are students with an understanding of the ins and outs of animation as it's done in the real world—of workflows and technologies across the animation process, from 3D digital sculpting and texture painting to 3D character animation, and from modeling, simulation, and visual effects to rendering, match moving, and compositing.

Employers also are on the lookout for job candidates who have experience with using the same animation tools they'd be using on the job. According to Christopher Erickson, a recent graduate of Academy of Art University who's now a lighting apprentice at Walt Disney Animation Studios, "Knowing the right software gave me a definite leg up in getting my job." (See the profile of Erickson on the next page.)

### Inspiring and preparing student animators with Autodesk tools

Students seeking the kind of animation experience they'll need on the job can look to Autodesk. Autodesk offers students a range of free\* professional animation product downloads, including:

- Autodesk® Maya® software, for 3D animation, modeling, simulation, rendering, and compositing
- Autodesk® 3ds Max® software, for 3D modeling, animation, effects, and rendering
- Autodesk® Mudbox® software, for digital painting and sculpting
- Autodesk® MotionBuilder® software, for motion capture, virtual production, and 3D character animation

Autodesk also works with educators at schools around the world, providing educational software, certification, and learning materials to align classes and curricula with industry-standard practices.

# Students around the world can build skills with Autodesk software and educational resources

## The benefits of learning animation with Autodesk

Students using Autodesk animation tools can enter the job market better prepared to be professional animators. From sculpting tools to production tools—all integrated seamlessly—Autodesk offers a range of animation solutions that competitors find difficult to match.

“I like the breadth of Maya’s core tools—the way Maya covers the entire animation pipeline,” says Erickson. “And I like the flexibility it offers, how easy it is to expand on the existing Maya platform.”

Students using Autodesk animation tools also may find they have a significant edge when it comes time to impress potential employers.

“We use Autodesk Maya for everything from motion capture data to creating digital doubles to building animated creatures. It’s the software of choice at most visual effects houses,” says Eamonn Butler, animation director at London- and Montreal-based Cinesite, which creates world-class visual effects. “That’s why I tend to look for students with experience in Maya.”

### Student case study: Christopher Erickson

Christopher Erickson’s first experience with Autodesk software products was in 2008, when he was in high school and decided to enter an Autodesk contest. Using an outdated version of Autodesk 3ds Max, in just three weeks he went from knowing nothing about animation software to being named regional champion of the Autodesk Animation Competition.

In college, Erickson studied animation and visual effects, and earned additional experience in other aspects of computer graphics (CG) including



Image courtesy of Cinesite

lighting, shading, and character animation by creating an animated short student film, entirely on his own, using tools such as Maya and Mudbox. He also became an Autodesk Student Expert, and mentored on two award-winning animated films in the same annual contest that had given him his start using Autodesk products.

After earning his BFA from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, Erickson was highly sought by employers.

“There were a lot of raised eyebrows from interviewers when I told them I made my student reel by myself,” he says. “It meant that I was versatile, could solve a variety of problems, and understood the full range of workflows and environments I’d be dealing with on the job.”

Erickson’s efforts paid off in a big way. Today, he’s a lighting apprentice at Walt Disney Animation Studios, where he’s currently working on *Big Hero 6*, an action-packed comedy adventure releasing Fall 2014.

### Download and learn to use free Autodesk software today

Autodesk Education Community members can download free\* Autodesk software. Visit [www.autodesk.com/education](http://www.autodesk.com/education) to learn more. And visit AREA, Autodesk’s online community for 2D and 3D artists, to access free tutorials and other resources for students and educators. There, you’ll find the Autodesk Media and Entertainment Education video series, which highlights workflows, provides tips and tricks, and reviews best practices to help you advance your career in animation and effects. You can also post your portfolio and interact in a variety of fun and informative forums. Get started now at [area.autodesk.com/students](http://area.autodesk.com/students).

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### About Autodesk

Autodesk helps people imagine, design, and create a better world. Everyone from design professionals, engineers, and architects to digital artists, students, and hobbyists uses Autodesk software to unlock their creativity and solve important challenges. For more information, visit [autodesk.com](http://autodesk.com) or follow [@autodesk](https://twitter.com/autodesk).

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—**Christopher Erickson**  
Lighting Apprentice  
Walt Disney Animation Studios



Image courtesy of Christopher Erickson

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