School of Creative Media SIG

Special Interest Group (SIG)

Learning-by-Exploration

BScCM, School of Creative Media
City University of Hong Kong

First of all, we warmly invite and urge you to join SIG because, simply, it's *good for you*.

1. The Aims of the SIGs

In 2006 we created seven special interest groups (SIGs) to establish a *learner-centered*, *learning-by-exploration* in-depth learning environment for the students of BScCM in the School of Creative Media. In the SIGs you will participate in supervised extracurricular, professional research and development activities. Through projects in the SIGs you will gain first-hand experience in developing digital media products and prepare for successful careers in digital entertainment industry.

2. Enhancement of Learning

We believe in order for you to effectively learn the subjects and become successful professionals you should take all opportunities to learn, explore and practice in addition to rigorous and disciplined curricula for a degree and the usual internship practice. To achieve this it requires motivation and passion from the learner, **YOU**. With the support of the BScCM staff members and passionate and enthusiastic participation of our students, we have successfully developed a *Learning-by-Exploration* program through SIGs. Within such a framework, teaching and learning are highly integrated with well-defined projects.

The outcomes of the SIG are:

1. **Developing close-to commercial-strength media products**: Since the activities in the SIGs will be based on requirements from the creative industry and developed for at least two years with the supervision of staff supervisors who are experts in the field, it is possible for you to continually work on the projects and to refine according the industry standards and market requirements. The projects will be monitored by the staff supervisors and managed by the students for at least two years according to the industry standards. As a result, it is highly possible, for instance, for you to modify a computer game with the help of game companies to make it a marketable product.

2. **International exposure**: Exhibitions in some top, prestigious events in the world, e.g., ACM SIGGRAPH and ACM SIGGRAPH Asia: As all projects in the SIGs are based on team work, you will be able to work on media projects and make significant contributions to media art and media technology.

3. **Portfolio development**: Building excellent and substantial portfolios that will impress potential employers. For a media student a professionally designed portfolio may open doors for good employment opportunities. As a natural result of what have been described in Points 1 and 2 above, the students in the SIGs will be able to produce portfolios that are far more substantial than that from projects in their normal cause work or final year projects. Such portfolios would surely help you get a good job.

4. **Building your own business**: With sufficient development experience in practice, upon graduation some you may be ready to establish your own business/companies. Indeed, since the you are mostly responsible for the management of the SIGs for more than two years, you will have an enormous exposure to close-to real-world problems in terms of management, communication and team work, learn professional skills in developing digital media products and gain substantial knowledge in industrial practice. These will well prepare you for establishing your own businesses with a high success rate.

5. **Inter-disciplinary collaboration**: We also intend to have this *learner-centered*, *learning-by-exploration* in-depth learning and training model extended to including students from other faculties and schools in the university, other universities in Hong Kong and, if feasible, the mainland. For instance to invite students from business faculty in SIGs to work on marketing aspects. It will give the business students an opportunity to gain practical experience that is relevant to the line of business that the SIGs are in, and make the SIGs more successful, which will in turn enrich and enhance the students' learning experience.

6. **Industrial outreach**: Finally, we will organize "Industry Days (or Nights)" regularly during the course of the activities. We invite industry leaders to give talks and meet students. The outcomes of SIGs will likely to generate great interest from the industry and receive financial sponsorships.

Because you join the SIGs freely on your own choices, we are sure that you will be very highly motivated and passionate about your projects in the SIGs. This will be the basis for effective learning leading to a successful career.

Organization
1. The SIGs are managed by the student members.
2. The SIGs must report to staff supervisors regularly, e.g., on a fortnightly basis.
3. A manager is appointed and responsible for
    *   Organizing development plan, timeline, deliverables;
    *   Communicating with members and supervisors/advisors;
    *   Reporting progress regularly.

The managerial roles should be on a <u>rotational basis</u>: each semester a student will be appointed as the manager. In this way more students will have a chance to learn and practice managerial skills that will be essential in your future careers.