

## Britannica® ImageQuest™ Case Study

Uxbridge College, London, UK

Uxbridge College, opened in 1965, is the #1 college in London. Josh Barton, Course Team Leader in Media and Game Design, has been teaching animation and game design for over 12 years: 4 years at Uxbridge College and previously at the University of West London for over 8 years. At Uxbridge College, Josh leads on the BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Creative Media Production (Game Design) course to a cohort of about 30 students.

### What were their goals?

The rigorous course is very industry-focused and in such a competitive field, Josh needs to teach his students skills they will use in the workplace. As part of this, Josh spends time working with students on researching and using tools that they would not have access to in a trade school.

### What were their needs?

One of the first major research projects is to create a mood board, an arrangement of images used to inspire their later project. "I needed students to gather a collection of visual references that would influence their design," explained Josh.

For this project, students needed an image database that was "easily searchable, with content [that was] relevant to the target set for the students." As this would be the first time that students would be researching, Josh wanted a resource that would make it "enjoyable to do that first piece of research."

He found that many free image searches, like those with popular search engines "had no real sense of curation" and that "certain websites were blocked through the college" so students could not retrieve all of the images. In general, this made the task "much more unpredictable" and therefore difficult for students to complete.

Finally, Josh said the images needed to be real and historical (not from other designers), explaining "You want the images to be a good photograph and of high digital quality."

***"Students were able to perform the task quicker and the quality of the images was higher and more relevant"***

### How did Britannica satisfy those needs and help them meet their goals?

Josh had previously used Britannica ImageQuest as part of professional development when teachers familiarised themselves with the e-resources available through the VLE on the library resource page.

Now, ImageQuest is considered a vital part of his teaching process that has produced award winning students in game design. "I really loathe to use other image searches," said Josh. "It is a tool that has been built for visual research."

"Students were able to perform the task quicker and the quality of the



images was higher and more relevant," said Josh. "Because of this, they were able to create a piece of work that they could see the usefulness of and their work is approaching professional expectations within the industry."

There were specific features that Josh found particularly helpful in Britannica ImageQuest, including the ability to easily cite each image. "The fact that you can take those pre-formatted citations is really such a big deal," said Josh. He also appreciated that

the images were safe for students to search and that ImageQuest meets the safeguarding needs of Ofsted.

"The My Images area is also important," said Josh, as it allows students to store images to come back to later. He also said he appreciated how easy it was to download images. "I love that you can download all the images in one zip file."

"Britannica ImageQuest has changed in a fundamental way how we do visual research," said Josh. "It allows students to better understand what a high-quality image is, it trains their eye and it is THE place for us to go for high quality visual and image research."