

Adobe Takes New CS3 Suite to Phones, Too

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At the CTIA show here, Adobe showed off Adobe Device Central CS3, an integrated software component that works across different applications in their new Creative Suite family, offering both professional and individual web designers an easier way to create WAP sites for cell phones.

Compared with traditional Web design, which usually requires testing through just a few browsers (Internet Explorer, Firefox, maybe Opera), WAP page designers currently have to load files onto dozens of handsets, test them, and re-code them in a seemingly endless loop.

Adobe estimates that mobile Web designers spend anywhere from 30 percent to 50 percent of the entire development cycle just on testing between different handsets.

Developers can now alleviate this problem by using Adobe Device Central in conjunction with some of Adobe's newest products, including Dreamweaver CS3. Designers and coders can now get a comprehensive testing facility that approximates how pages and graphics will look on dozens of different cell phones, most of which have different screen resolutions, color depths, memory constraints, and other performance characteristics.

In a private demonstration, I saw how developers could rescale graphics, simulate a phone's backlight after it dims, or even add artificial screen reflections and change the color balance so that it's as if you were standing outside in the sunlight with each handset. This way, artists can

tune their graphics to look good in different conditions without a lot of extraneous footwork.

Adobe Device Central supports over 200 handsets at launch, with plans to offer quarterly updates that contain profiles for whatever new handsets were released during that quarter.

At CTIA on Wednesday, Adobe also announced an exclusive partnership with Verizon Wireless to deliver richer data services over Adobe's new FlashCast mobile platform.

FlashCast technology allows developers to deliver more capable interfaces and detailed graphics to newer Adobe Flash-capable handsets. One FlashCast example I saw demonstrated animated wallpaper that changed its look from a daytime scene to a nighttime scene depending on the phone's remaining battery life.

Expect the first handsets and services using FlashCast technology to appear on Verizon's network in the second half of 2007.

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