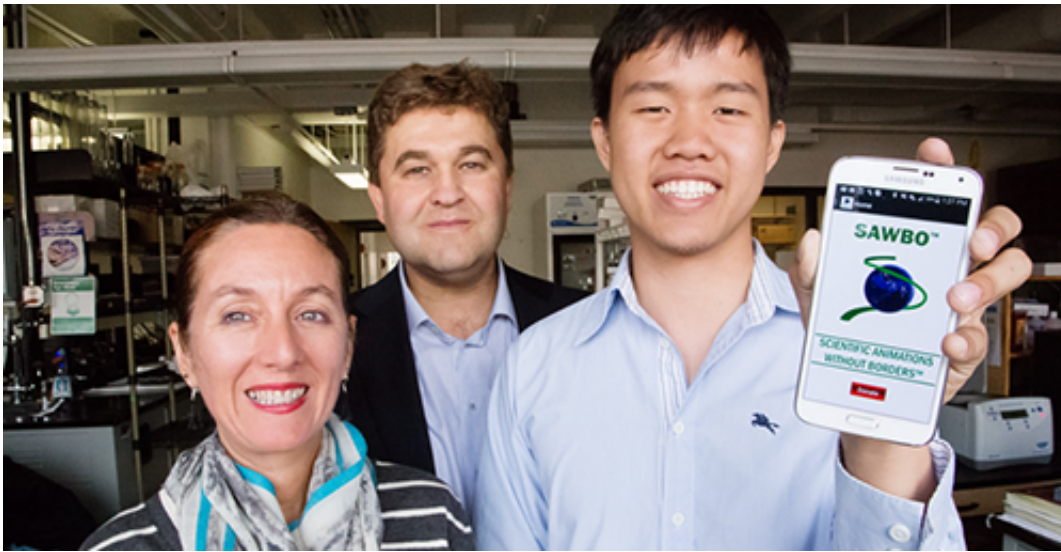


New mobile app extends outreach of SAWBO educational videos

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Pakpoom Buabthong, a senior in physics, displays the Deployer cellphone app, which enables users to access and share animated educational videos created by Scientific Animations without Borders. Pictured with Buabthong are SAWBO co-founders Julia Bello-Bravo and Barry Pittendrigh. Credit: L. Brian Stauffer

Whether the need is to educate people in West Africa about preventing Ebola or to train farmers in Latin America on preventing postharvest loss, Scientific Animations without Borders has an app - and an animated video - for that.

SAWBO, an initiative out of the University of Illinois that develops animated educational videos, recently released a mobile [app](#) for Android

devices. The Deployer app enables users to view, download and freely share SAWBO's ever-growing [video library](#) over Bluetooth connections.

Covering topics of importance to the global community, such as health and agriculture, SAWBO's videos strive to better the lives of people in [developing countries](#). Developed in collaboration with community outreach workers and relevant experts, the videos communicate information in culturally relevant contexts and local languages so the content is accessible to anyone, regardless of their literacy level.

SAWBO's collection of 2-D and 3-D animations currently spans about 50 topics, and the Deployer app enables users to scroll through and filter the list by topic, language or country. Each video is available in both a high-quality version and a "light" version - an option for users who want a smaller file that downloads faster.

"Individuals around the world can download our videos through the app when they have Internet access, store the animations on their phones and share them with other devices whenever and wherever they want," an advantage for outreach workers in remote locations that lack Internet connectivity, said SAWBO director and co-founder Barry Pittendrigh, an entomology professor at Illinois.

According to Julia Bello-Bravo, SAWBO co-director and assistant director of the Center for African Studies, "It also means that as we work with other agencies and organizations around the world, they can take our app and give it to others to deploy the digital content in the field. The goal we're working toward is a one-step, automated system of transferring knowledge from experts directly into the field."

The software also enables the SAWBO team to track the geographic locations - but not the specific users - where the app and videos are downloaded or shared, said Pakpoom ("Pai") Buabthong, a senior in

physics who has worked with SAWBO since his freshman year at Illinois, first as an animator and more recently as a programmer.

Computer science professor Tarek Abdelzaher and graduate student Shaohan Hu collaborated on building the app, developing many of the critical functions that enable users to deploy animations while offline.

Although the app currently is available only in English, SAWBO is working on interfaces in Amharic, French, Portuguese and Spanish, some of which will be available later this year, Pittendrigh said.

Pittendrigh and Bello-Bravo plan to visit several African countries soon, sharing the app and training collaborators and nongovernmental organizations on its use.

Bello-Bravo recently presented the app during her plenary talk at the 60th meeting of the Society of the Central American Cooperative Program for the Improvement of Crops and Animals, held in Guatemala City.

A [tutorial](#) on SAWBO's Deployer app is available on YouTube.

More information: sawbo-illinois4.org/

Provided by University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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