



Learning Studio

NON-INTERACTIVE PDF

Some features are disabled. Download the full interactive book from the Apple iBookstore to enjoy this book's video and interactive content on an iPad or Mac.

Year Two Report



CHAPTER 1

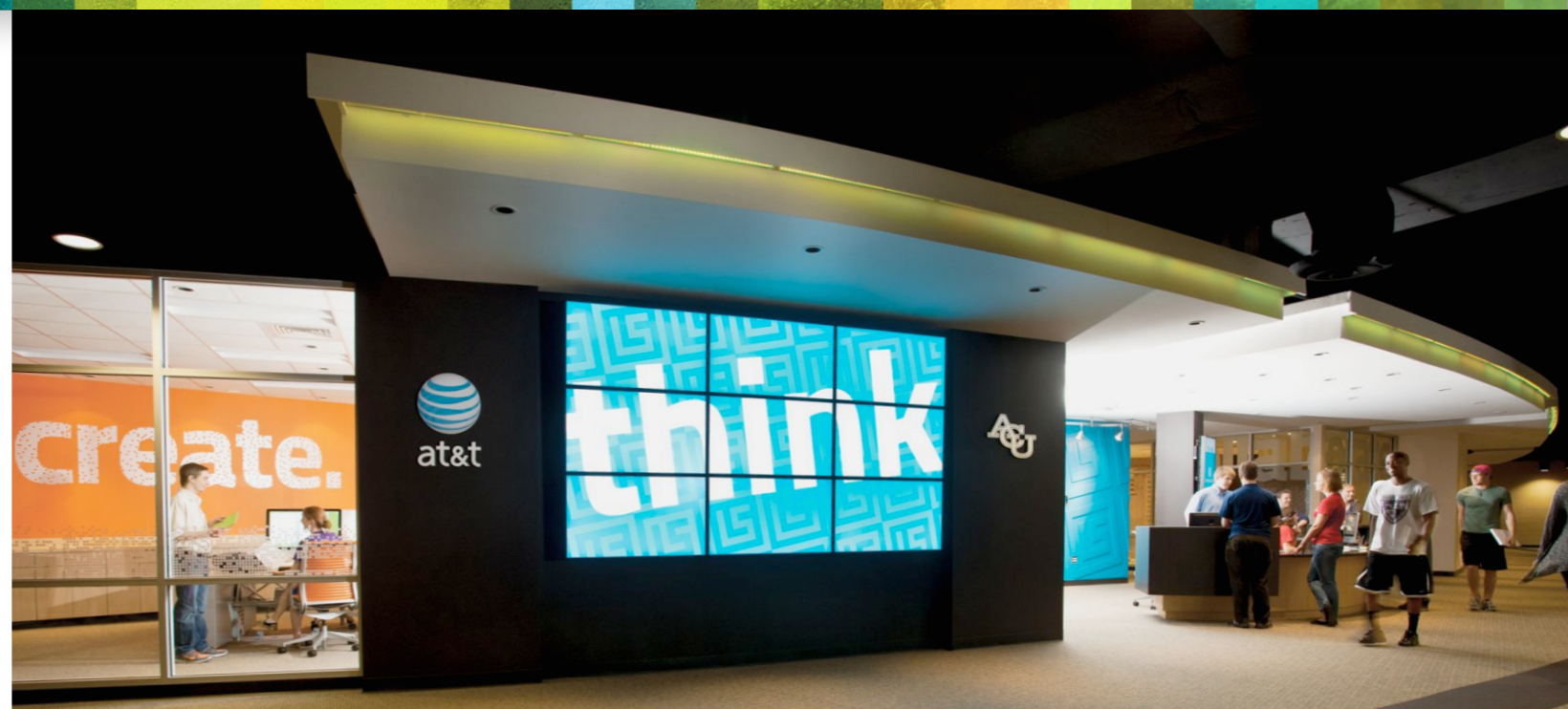
Introduction

Sparking Good Ideas

In 2009, tucked away in a remote corner of the Brown Library, ACU's first digital media center opened. Dr. Dwayne VanRheenen, provost, and Dean Dr. Mark Tucker agreed to provide space in the basement for a small media lab that some dubbed the "Digital Media Cellar." It was a meager operation with two student employees, five computers, and two (tiny) recording rooms.

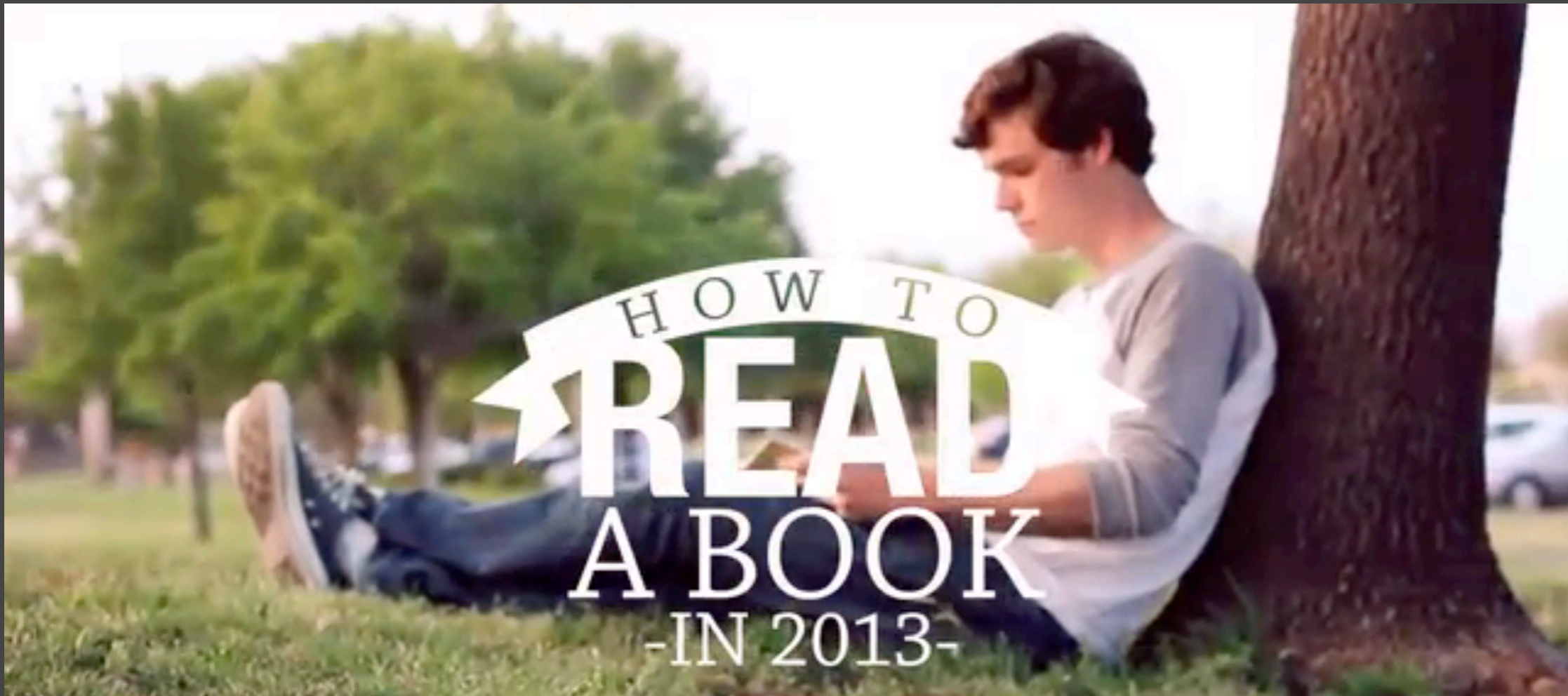
But behind this early experiment was the spark of an idea: that students and faculty across campus should have the software and equipment they needed to share media messages with a global audience.

In the spring of 2011, the expanded Learning Studio opened on the top floor of the library as part of a generous gift from AT&T. The 8,800 square-foot facility along with a stream of



student and faculty projects have been an affirmation of this core idea. After just our second year of working with the ACU community, we're more convinced than ever that making software, professional gear, training and support available to the campus is connecting local messages with communities of learning, advocacy and belief around the world.

Last spring, Hilary Commer was a sophomore graphic design major from San Antonio taking Introduction to Visual Media. When her class was assigned a basic how-to video project, she decided to try her hand at advanced filmmaking




Download the full interactive book from the Apple iBookstore to enjoy this book's video and interactive content on an iPad or Mac.



"How to Read a Book," by Hilary Commer

with a Canon DSLR camera from the Learning Studio. She cast a handful of her friends to star in her directorial debut. Her concept: an instructional video on book-reading for today's iPad generation. What's unique about Hilary's film is

that, even as an assignment produced for a course last term, "How to Read a Book" has already amassed more than 24,000 YouTube views (and counting).



Hilary's story as writer, director, editor and producer of this remarkable short film is one that should focus entirely on her work, a light-hearted look at the power of reading. But in her conversations about the project, she also reflects on the importance of wide access to the media tools now available to almost anyone with a will to learn.

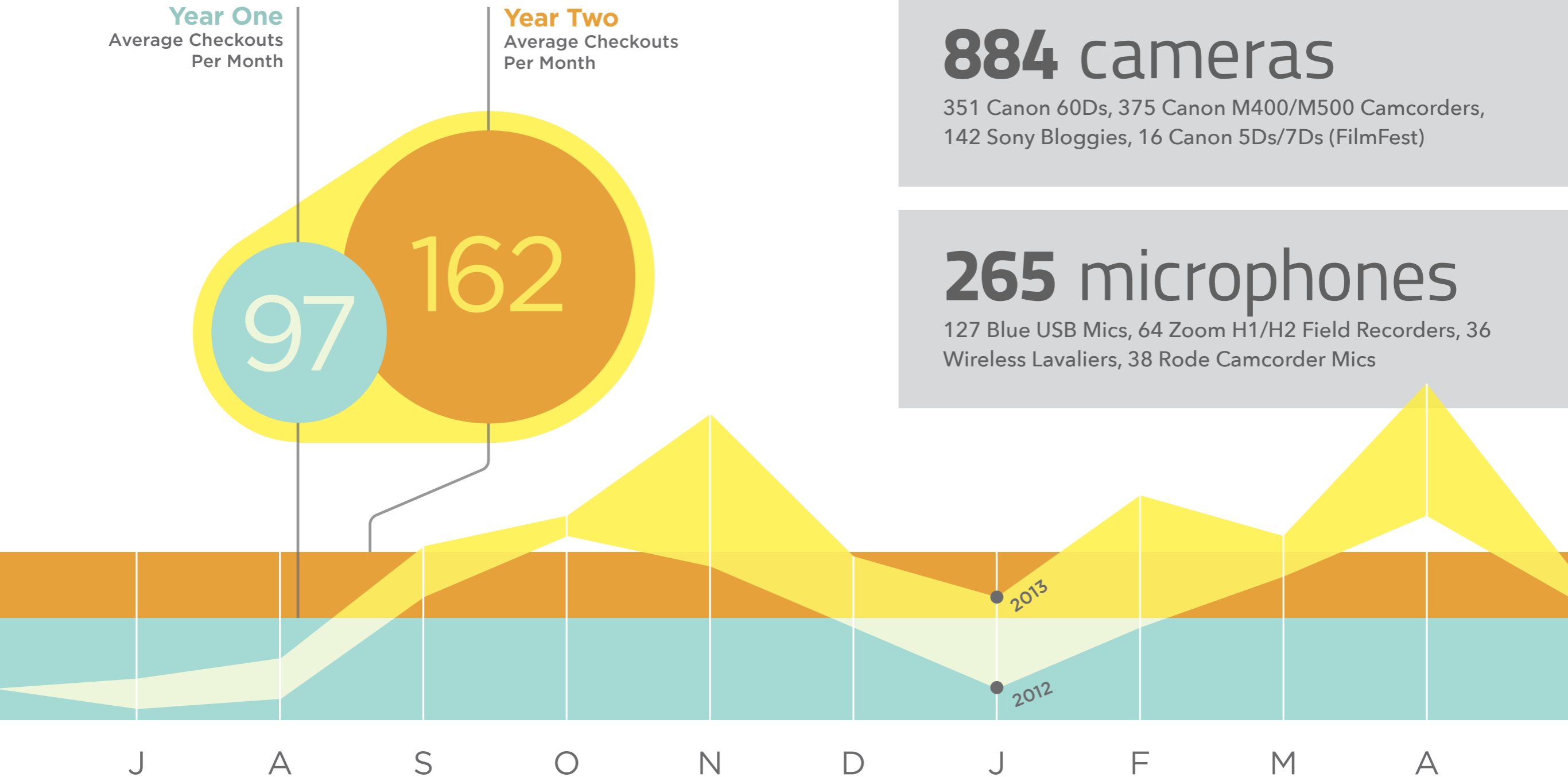
“Often, limited technology can be crippling,” Hilary told us in an email. **“Though I am a huge fan of books, I love the way that technology allows us to see and do things we may not have been previously capable of. The Learning Studio reminds me that if a student has a willingness to work and learn, he or she can really accomplish almost anything.”**

The stories that follow in our second annual report attempt to demonstrate our commitment to the power of making and sharing messages with audiences around the world. The projects we've contributed to and directed this past year illus-

trate that this is no longer a dream but a present reality. As with Hilary, ours is not simply the story of mastering the technical challenges of filming, editing and publishing media messages. We are committed to working with the ACU community to amplify the reach of their exemplary teaching, significant research and meaningful service as a part of our common mission.

Equipment Checkouts

COMPARING YEAR ONE AND YEAR TWO



Access to high-quality audio and video gear is central to our core belief that media creation is a new literacy informing the way we teach and learn in the twenty-first century.

Checked Out in Year Two:

884 cameras

351 Canon 60Ds, 375 Canon M400/M500 Camcorders, 142 Sony Bloggies, 16 Canon 5Ds/7Ds (FilmFest)

265 microphones

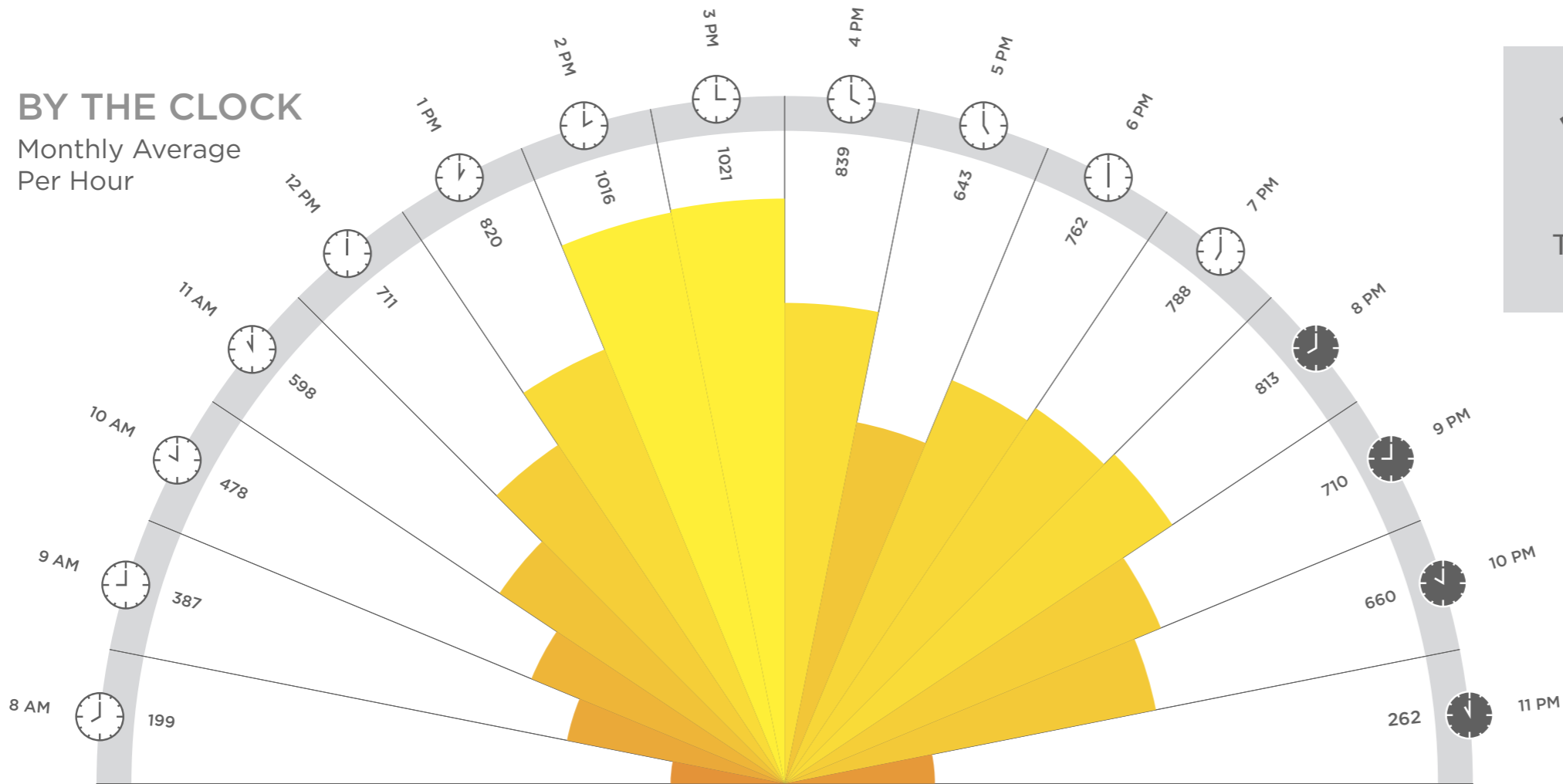
127 Blue USB Mics, 64 Zoom H1/H2 Field Recorders, 36 Wireless Lavaliers, 38 Rode Camcorder Mics

Students have access to collaboration spaces in the Learning Studio whenever the library is open. The charts below illustrate daily and annual peak times for student usage.

Room Reservations

BY THE CLOCK

Monthly Average Per Hour



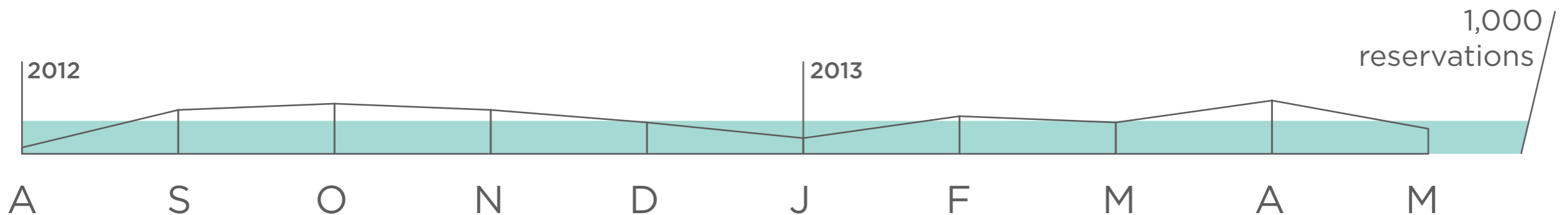
10,776

Total Reservations in Year Two

25%

Increase from Year One

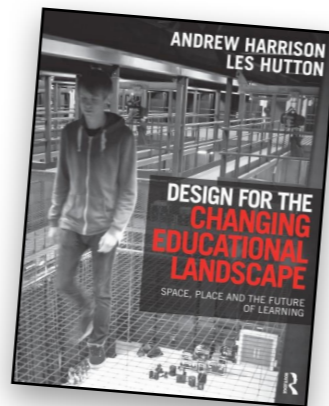
BY THE CALENDAR



In the News

This year the Learning Studio appeared in a number of publications that emphasized the relation between the design of the space and our work with students and faculty.

- Harrison, Andrew, and Les Hutton. *Design for the Changing Educational Landscape: Space, Place and the Future of Learning* (Routledge, 2013).
- Dickson, Kyle. "Beyond Analog: The Learning Studio as Media-Age Library," Les Watson, ed., *Better Library and Learning Spaces* (Facet, 2013).
- Staines, Gail. *Universal Design: A Practical Guide to Creating and Recreating Interiors of Academic Libraries for Teaching, Learning, and Research* (Oxford: Chandos, 2012).



- Domonell, Kristen. "Learning Spaces: Meeting Teaching and Collaboration Expectations." *University Business*, Feb 2013.
<http://www.universitybusiness.com/article/inside-look-learning-spaces>
- Van Vleet, Janet. "ACU Learning Studio Offers High-Tech Education Options." *Abilene Reporter News*, Aug 9, 2012.
<http://www.reporternews.com/news/2012/aug/09/acu-learning-studio-offers-high-tech-education/>

"The AT&T Learning Studio embodies many of the characteristics that contribute toward making an effective and inspirational learning environment. It is a shared community space for both faculty and students, it embraces and celebrates both physical and digital learning processes and artifacts and includes a range of settings, formal and informal, that allows the learner to chart their own learning journey."

—Andrew Harrison, co-author, *Design for the Changing Educational Landscape* (2013)



314

315

CHAPTER 2

Highlights

Beginning the Year

The 2012 school year kicked off with two projects that challenged us to help set the tone for faculty and students.

Over the summer, ACU's Provost Dr. Robert Rhodes asked the Learning Studio to produce a short film to lead off the fall Pre-session conference. We asked faculty and staff across campus to reflect on how they connected to the university mission. The conversations were an inspiring reminder of the commitment of the people here.

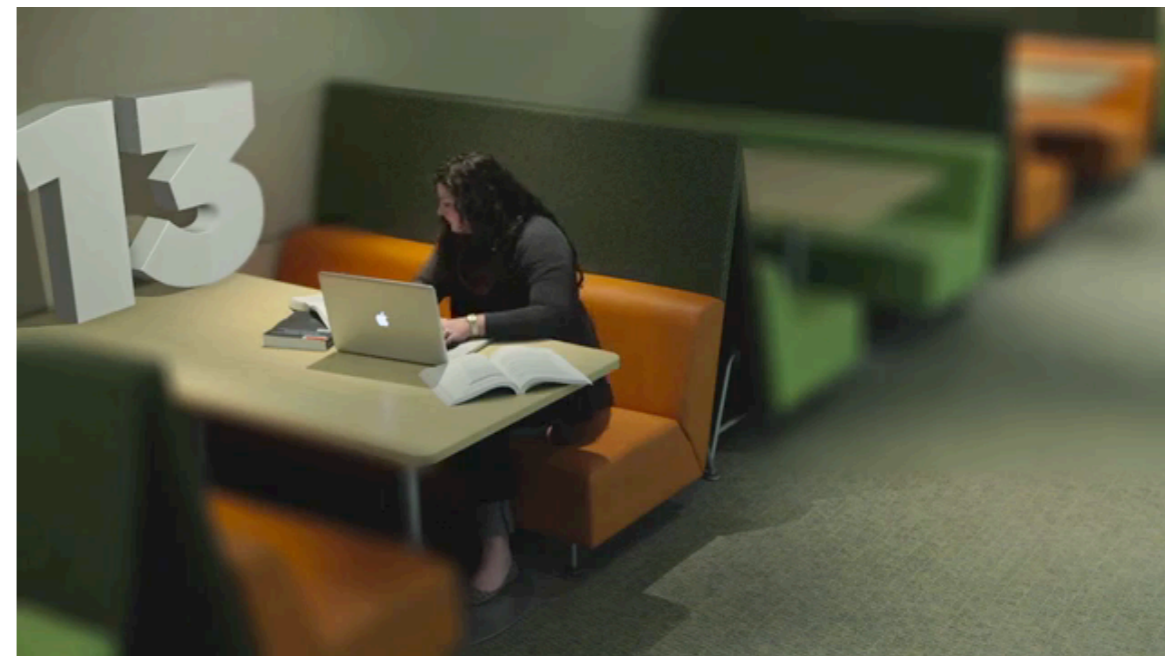
During that time, we also produced a short film project to welcome new students to the first week of Cornerstone, the freshman seminar that every freshman takes. "Counting the Days" was our first time-lapse film, consisting of 2,878 photos and presented a series of technical challenges that helped us explore the way we think about video and message.



Dr. Alfa Nyandoro



"The Mission"



"Counting the Days"

Future of the Textbook

Desktop publishing and the laser printer sparked a revolution in 1985, putting low-cost publishing tools in the hands of regular people. In 2012, we began to wonder if the introduction of iBooks Author would introduce new ways of thinking about custom publishing, putting the development of interactive, mobile texts in the hands of teachers and designers alike.

The production of our [Year One Report](#) in 2012 was the first step in our exploration of the new platform. The report was designed over the course of several months and explored a range of media and immersive content to help tell the story of a busy first year. In addition, media specialists Mathew Bardwell and Nathan Driskell led a series of iBooks Author faculty training sessions during Adams Center luncheons and Honors College workshops, and



in September we shared this experience with other media professionals through a webinar for the New Media Consortium titled "iBooks Author for Advanced Users and Projects."

ACU faculty continue to help shape conversations about the future of interactive textbooks on and off campus. In the fall of 2012 we met with Dr. Curt Niccum and Trevor Thompson from the Department of Bible, Missions & Ministry to discuss an electronic textbook for freshman Bible courses at ACU. They initiated discussions with Baker Publishing, the publisher of *Introducing the New Testament*, about an electronic edition now being piloted at ACU this fall. The Learning Studio developed design proofs to direct the conversation around interactive textbooks and filmed footage of the author and ACU faculty for videos that will be included in the final textbook.

Most recently, the Learning Studio spent the summer designing a custom interactive textbook for the freshman seminar course Cornerstone now being used this fall. A dozen faculty led by Dr. Nancy Shankle Jordan, assistant provost for general education, and Dr. Cliff Barbarick, Department of Bible,

Missions & Ministry, produced original chapters and selected interactive content in the spring. Then we worked with the editors selecting web content and interactive features for the final e-book, now [available free in the iBookstore](#).



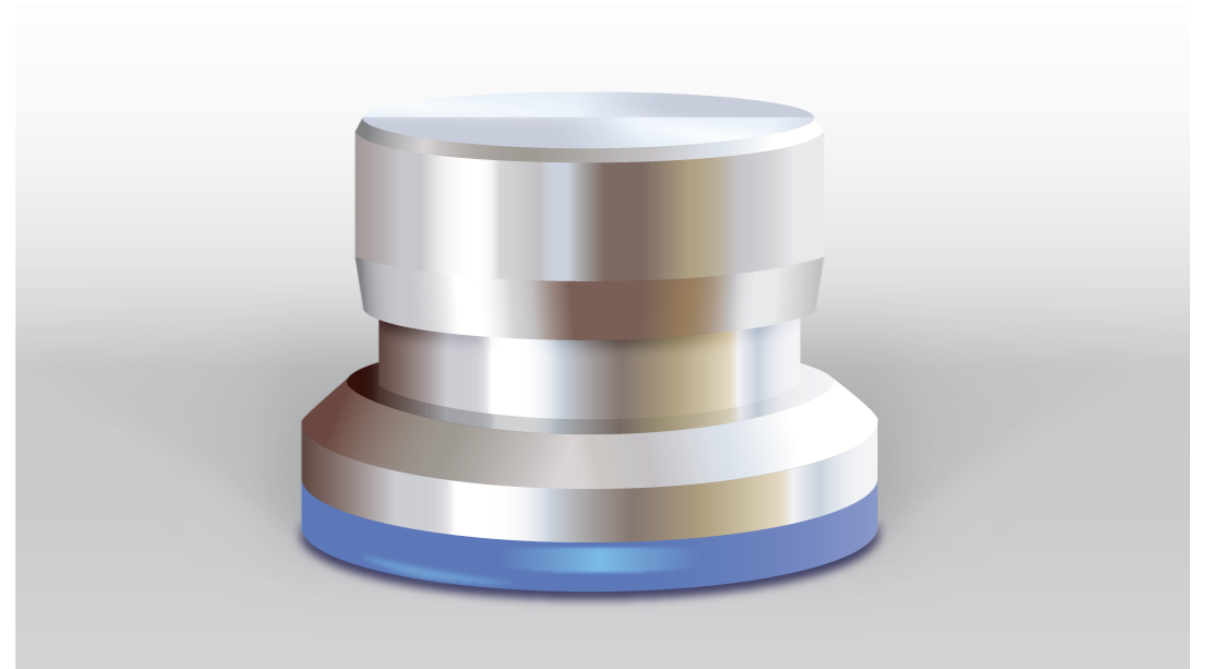
The Cornerstone 2013 e-book has been downloaded more than 1,000 times and is currently in use by 36 sections of CORE 110.

Personal Film Studio

The new One Button Studio that opened this spring is an elegantly simple idea. Provide students and faculty their own private recording booth for capturing practice speeches, short lectures and presentations without investing time in editing or post-production. Walk in with a USB drive and walk out with an HD video.

The project was developed at Penn State University for a new Knowledge Commons that opened last year. In February Chris Millet and Justin Miller from PSU came to Abilene to help install the first One Button Studio outside of the Penn State system, and the room opened for our first pilot semester in February.

For faculty producing a quick online lecture or student projects with a quick turn-around time the One Button Studio is an essential resource.



“It was great to be in the Learning Studio again. It's really matured since opening day. I'm happy Penn State was able to contribute to the great services you provide with the One Button Studio.”

—Chris Millet, Assistant Director of Education
Technology Services, Penn State University



Download the full interactive book from the Apple iBookstore to enjoy this book's video and interactive content on an iPad or Mac.



"We Are Makers"

Making Film

Last January we sat in a room of faculty, librarians and educational technologists to consider adding a makerspace to the ACU library. We all recognized that while new desktop fabri-

cation tools like 3D printers and computer-controlled routers were likely to impact the future work of departments across campus, few faculty had any personal experience with them

or with the growing movement of makers behind them. We set out on an ambitious project: to produce a short documentary to introduce the ACU community to the power of making in education.

In March, we traveled to Austin and New York to film interviews with leading voices. Dale Dougherty, founding editor of Make Magazine, said he chose the term “making” because he wanted a common identity to unify makers of all types—those interested in robotics, weaving, metalworking, electronics and more. He also believed “making” could reward the people “sitting on the fence between two things [trying] to bring them together.”



The project gave the Learning Studio a way to visit a cross-section of the maker community; from hackerspaces like NYC Resistor in Brooklyn, which birthed the MakerBot desktop 3D printer; to science museums like the New York Hall of Science in Queens; to design schools like the School of Visual Arts in Man-

hattan, which shirks many of the traditional notions of the classroom. In spite of the very different contexts, each conversation struck a similar chord: making is a deeply human need. As Randy Hunt, the creative director at Etsy, reflected, “It’s always felt very strange to me that people would self-identify as ‘I am creative,’ or ‘not creative.’ I believe that everyone is creative, or can be satisfied by the act of making things.”

We premiered “We Are Makers” at the New Media Consortium conference in June, and since its launch the film has more than 15,000 views on Vimeo and has received featured screenings at the 2013 World Maker Faire Town Hall in New York, and the Tokyo Art Book Fair.

More than anything we’ve produced in our first two years, this film has become a labor of love for us in the Learning Studio. We enjoyed playing some small part in the development of an important new innovation workshop in the library—the Maker Lab opened its doors to classes from the departments of Engineering & Physics and Art & Design this fall.

Nathan Driskell reflected this summer in a [guest blog post](#) for the industrial design blog *Core77*: “As makers ourselves, immersed daily in the creative process, this project felt deeply personal and intimate in an uncanny way: this was also a story about us.”



Marshmallow Challenge

The Learning Studio has been a vital part of video and web production for the freshman seminar program during its first three years. Last fall, as part of Mike Wiggins' Spotlight presentation on "The Aesthetic Perspective," we created a challenge to test essential skills in creativity and collaboration among freshmen.

Student teams were provided 20 sticks of spaghetti and asked to create an improvised tower that could support the weight of a single marshmallow. Learning Studio staff designed materials as well as a website to lead faculty through the project. More than 750 students from 25 classes participated, and the reception was very positive.



"The Marshmallow Challenge"

As Wiggins' concluded, "A growing number of disciplines are tapping into core skills often described as design thinking—from sharpening an idea through iteration and prototyping to vigorous collaboration with people from a range of backgrounds. I felt like the Marshmallow Challenge allowed students to experience the importance of these skills through a fast-paced competition."

Angry Birds Abilene

In the fall we also partnered with programs like the new Engineering degree in the Department of Physics. In their Angry Bird Challenge, first-year engineering students were asked to design catapults to successfully launch projectiles toward cardboard refrigerator boxes. One key ingredient of the assignment was to capture the steps of their design process on video and produce a final media reflection to be shared with the class. Learning Studio staff worked with faculty to shape the assignment and led beginner and advanced video editing sessions to help students at any experience level develop new skills. The project shows the value of media as a research and reporting tool using mobile cameras we carry with us every day.



“I never saw how the Learning Studio would benefit me until I needed it.”

—**Dr. Rusty Towell, chair, Department of Engineering & Physics**



where select theater majors would get feedback in a live audition.

Mathew Bardwell set up a live camera and large-screen monitor on stage so James and those in the audience could watch the audition. Each student would then take their turn on screen, running lines for a scene they had prepared, and altering their performance based on feedback during the session.

Screen Test Run-Through

In December, Dr. Adam Hester, chair of the Department of Theatre, invited us to help create a unique opportunity for their majors. James Calleri, a professional casting director for film and stage in New York City, would spend the day talking with students about auditioning for film and television projects, concluding with an hour-long casting session

Alexandra Bonneau, junior theatre major, was one of the students given a screen audition. After the experience, she reflected, **“ACU Theatre has always produced successful artists, but the Tepper program is an opportunity that makes our graduates competitive in the New York market. I was really impressed with the workshop with James and how much I was able to soak in from such a short session. Truly remarkable!”**

“ACU is setting the standard for learning innovation in not only higher education, but K-12 as well. From the design of the physical space to designing the learning experience, the Learning Studio embraces the core of twenty-first century skills—collaboration, creativity, communication, critical thinking—preparing students for success in the global workplace.”

—Karla Burkholder, President, Texas Computer Education Association

CHAPTER 3

Programs



Pro Workshops

One emphasis for our second year was increasing training opportunities for students. This year Canon sponsored FilmFest for the third time, providing student filmmakers access to pro-level cameras and lenses. To kick off the competition, Canon pro market specialist Paul McAniff joined us in October for workshops on filmmaking with DSLR cameras as well as visiting advanced photography and video classes to demo Canon's new C300 cinematic camera line.

Then in November, Mathew Bardwell and Nathan Driskell walked students through the process of shooting their first

scene. Student actors Connie Esch and Seth Womack from ACU Theatre ran lines from the opening of David Fincher's *The Social Network* (2010) while students helped set up lighting, capture audio and manage camera placement for a basic dialogue scene. A week later, Nathan provided in-depth software tutorials on Adobe's Premiere Pro in the media lab to introduce students to editing video on pro software.



Learning with Lynda



lynda.com

5,155

Total Videos Viewed Jan 2012-May 2013

With your free ACU lynda.com account



One complement to our live training events this year is a campus subscription to Lynda.com. All ACU students and faculty now have access to over 80,000 hours of video tutorials introducing software and skills essential to the designer, storyteller and media producer. Lynda.com's training videos are designed for both beginning and advanced users, allowing them to develop skills and expertise based on their level of their interest.



[▶ Watch Video](#)

worked with experienced photographers like Dr. Nil Santana and Mike Wiggins in the Department of Art & Design to build confidence in digital creation.

We often hear faculty reflect on the power of photography to focus their concentration. As Dr. Jeff Childers said in an email, "I

learned a lot about technical as-

pects of photography and creating digital content. But one of the most valuable take-aways for me was the reminder to see the world with fresh eyes, and the opportunity to practice that in a disciplined way, to be as attentive as possible to the details around me."

Photograph by Mike Wiggins, Gruene, Texas.



Digital Academy

In Year Two we expanded our photography workshops to challenge faculty to experiment with new skills and equipment. We took groups back to Gruene, Texas, where they



Marfa at Night

In October, we also had Scott Martin, a noted art photographer from San Antonio, lead a workshop on night photography. Scott sees long-exposure photography as the opportunity to see the everyday world in a new light: "Night photography for me is about finding the extraordinary in the ordinary." He met us in remote Marfa, Texas, where participants had time to slow down and think about the fundamentals of composition and exposure in new ways.

Advanced Photography

During the last two years we've benefited from Dr. Nil Santana's expertise and energy, so when he began developing a photography track in the Department of Art & Design, we offered our help. Nil's photography students regularly check out equipment from the Learning Studio, but we wanted to give advanced students greater access for class projects.

Last fall, students from ART 440 joined us in the HD studio for a lighting workshop, led by Nil. Students were introduced to strobe lights, modifiers, soft boxes and remote triggers. Then during the next two weeks, individual students scheduled their own photo shoots in the studio for an editorial portrait assignment. The instructions were to produce a cover story in the style of a popular magazine of their choice. The results demonstrate that when motivated students are given access to advanced tools and training, remarkable things can happen.



Photograph by Stephanie Fink.





Digital story by Dr. Houston Heflin

Digital Storytelling

This year we continued to provide digital storytelling training for a growing number of students and faculty. Student media specialists offered software training for entire classes visiting the Learning Studio before storytelling assignments in Art, Nutrition, and Composition. For example, Dr. Bill Carroll and Dr. Laura Carroll began their first-year writing courses with a literacy assignment that asked freshmen to

tell a story about a past experience with writing and reading or becoming literate in the specialized language and actions of a particular group. This fall their assignment is now being repeated in several different sections.

For the past two years we've provided pre-flight workshops for all study abroad students before their departure from Abilene, but in

April we sponsored our first on-site storytelling workshop in Leipzig, Germany. Learning Studio director Dr. Kyle Dickson and Dr. Houston Heflin, from the Department of Bible, Missions & Ministry, led students through a three-day workshop introducing storytelling techniques in writing workshops and iPad software training. The final products captured mature reflections on their international experiences in a package that can be more easily shared with future students and faculty back home.

Scholarly Storytelling

After previous faculty workshops, we've often been asked for help applying storytelling techniques to research projects in a range of disciplines. Last December, we invited a group of faculty to develop their own scholarly storytelling projects in a three-day workshop. Here are just a few of their projects.



Dr. Jeff Childers



Dr. Mark Hamilton



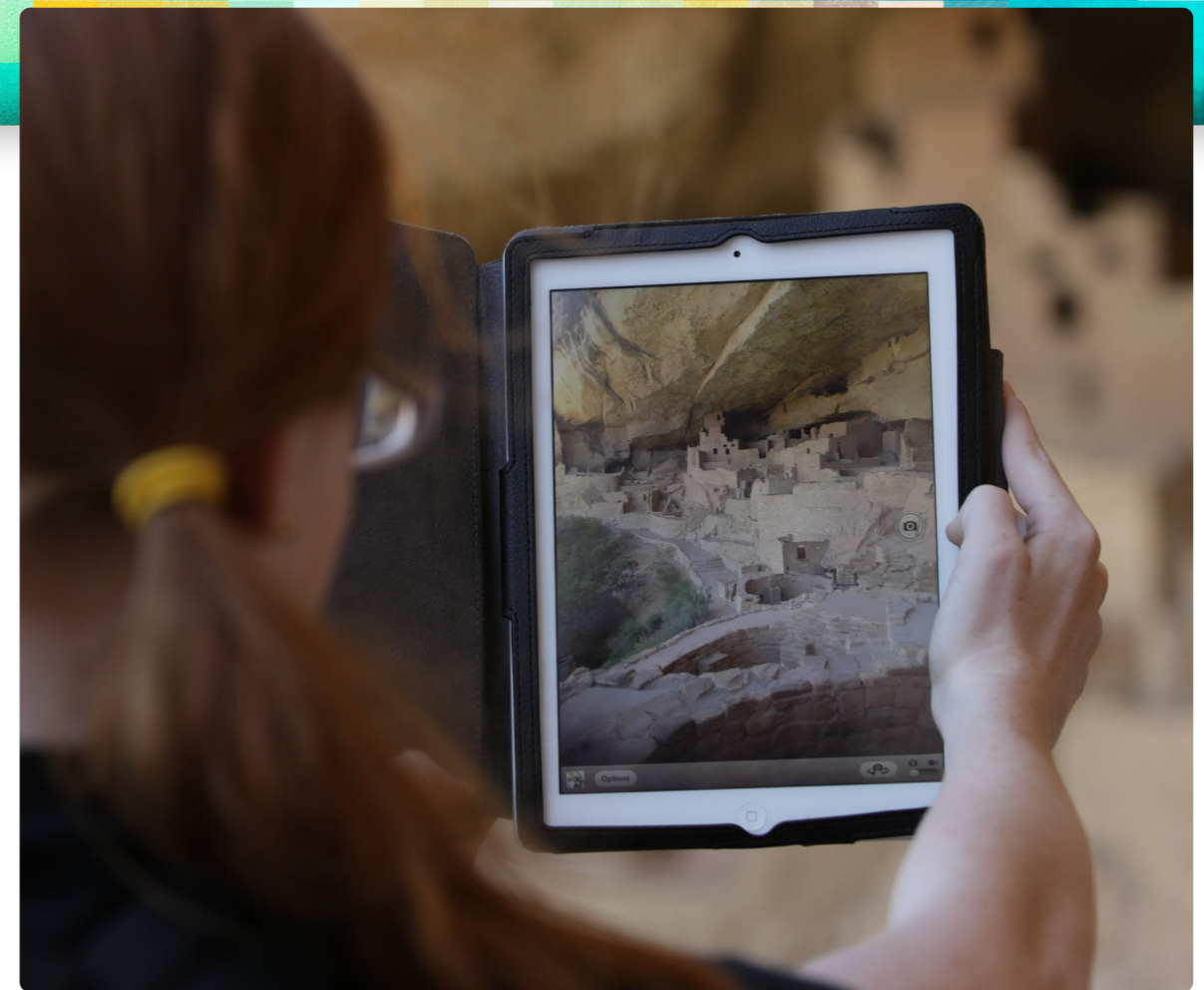
Dr. Kent Smith

Download the full interactive book from the Apple iBookstore to enjoy this book's video and interactive content on an iPad or Mac.

Summer Academy

In 2012 the Honors College asked us to help kick off their new Summer Academy program with courses for juniors in high school. In the first summer, Dr. Kyle Dickson helped students develop digital storytelling skills. All students then practiced these skills as part of a 1,500-mile trip that included visits to the Taos Pueblo, Carlsbad Caverns and Mesa Verde cliff dwellings. While at Mesa Verde, Dr. Nil Santana, from the Department of Art & Design, and Dr. Dickson had their students collaborate on light-painting projects under the southern Colorado sky.

In 2013, Dr. Jennifer Shewmaker from the Adams Center for Teaching and Learning and Dr. Dickson taught a class on media literacy that asked students to engage media messages found in commercials and music videos more critically. Students followed this critical thinking exercise with



creative projects that developed their own skills as media makers later in the week.

The Learning Studio is committed to helping students of all ages develop skills in media production including visits to K-12 digital media classrooms around Abilene and invitations to local media teachers who joined us for digital storytelling training at ACU.



LS Unboxed

Last year we began a video series introducing students to new checkout gear available in the Learning Studio. This year we added several new items including basic three-point video lighting kits and a few additional audio recording options. But our favorite addition was the pop-up green screen.

The media specialists worked with our student staff on our latest *Unboxed* feature, speeding down Judge Ely Boulevard at lunch hour, for a full-featured demonstration of the advanced green screen techniques available to students—with just a few pieces of checkout gear from the Learning Studio.

"For me personally, the Learning Studio provides a physical location where I create, imagine, and challenge my own status quo. I am able to get out of my comfort zone by producing a short film or podcast, sometimes for a class, but also for my own personal growth. Without the studio I would be forced to use out-dated technology, without anyone to assist me in the creation process."

—Dylan Benac, senior, Political Science



CHAPTER 4

Closing

Bringing People Together

We've often said the Learning Studio was designed with groups in mind, and that's true. Every room and piece of furniture was selected to enable students to work together, and many of the projects we've taken on over the last two years have us working with talented faculty across campus.

Authors like Stephen Berlin Johnson in *Where Good Ideas Come From* have observed how unique habitats from the coral reef to the English coffeehouse have fostered innovation by bringing together a wide range of possible solutions. He reflects, "What kind of environment creates good ideas? The simplest way to answer it is this: innovative environments are better at helping their inhabitants explore the adjacent possible, because they expose a wide and diverse sample of spare parts—mechanical or conceptu-



al—and they encourage novel ways of recombining those parts."

The makerspaces and hackerspaces we visited last spring reminded us again of the unique energy of creative spaces. From the fertile chaos of NYC Resistor to the professional design studio at School of Visual Arts, innovative spaces may

look very different but each leverages the power of groups to give its members access to a much wider range of possible solutions.

Keith Sawyer emphasizes this super power in his book *Group Genius*: "We're drawn to the image of the lone genius whose mystical moment of insight changes the world. But the lone genius is a myth; instead, it's group genius that generates breakthrough innovation. When we collaborate, creativity unfolds across people; the sparks fly faster, and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

So much of our work in Year Two was focused on enabling groups to come together around shared experience or expertise. We're energized by exceptional students and faculty and the ideas they bring in the door, and continue to look for ways to sharpen those ideas and give them the broadest possible audience.



The Learning Studio was made possible by a grant from AT&T



Learning Studio



Follow us:

Twitter: [@LearningStudio](https://twitter.com/LearningStudio)

Blog: acu.edu/learningstudio

Credits



Dr. Kyle Dickson

Editor

*Director
AT&T Learning Studio*



Nathan Driskell

Designer & Media Producer

*Media Production Specialist
AT&T Learning Studio*



Mathew Bardwell

Media Producer

*Media Production Specialist
AT&T Learning Studio*

IMAGES

Page 1, Chapter cover photo, Jeremy Enlow.

Page 2, AT&T Learning Studio, Jeremy Enlow.

Page 5, Equipment Checkout infographic, Nathan Driskell.

Page 6, Room Reservations infographics, Nathan Driskell.

Page 9, Chapter cover photo, Jeremy Enlow.

Page 11, Apple LaserWriter, 1987, and Macintosh, 1984, production photos.

Page 12, *Cornerstone 2013* pages, ACU Core and Learning Studio.

Page 13, One Button Studio illustration, Nathan Driskell.

Page 15, "Global Reach of Making" graph, Kyle Dickson

Page 21, Chapter cover photo, Jeremy Enlow.

Page 24, Digital Academy gallery, Mike Wiggins, Cliff Bar-
barick, Michael Daugherity, Nil Santana, Kyle Dickson, Jack
Maxwell, Nathan Driskell.

Page 25, *Prada Marfa at Dusk*, Nil Santana.

Page 26, ART 291 gallery photos, Stephanie Fink, Beth Mai-
sano, Jordan Bell, Hilary Commer.

Page 29, Summer Academy gallery, Kyle Dickson.

MEDIA

Page 3, "How to Read a Book"

Written, Directed, Edited by Hilary Commer

Page 10, "The Mission"

Directed by Mathew Bardwell and Nathan Driskell

Produced by Kyle Dickson

Page 10, "Counting the Days"

Directed by Mathew Bardwell and Nathan Driskell

Produced by Kyle Dickson

Page 14, "We Are Makers"

Directed by Nathan Driskell and Mathew Bardwell

Produced by Kyle Dickson

Associate Producer James Langford

Page 17, "The Marshmallow Challenge"

Directed by Nathan Driskell

Assisted by Mathew Bardwell

Page 18, "Angry Bird Challenge"

Directed by Mathew Bardwell

Assisted by Nathan Driskell

Page 19, "The Tepper Semester"

Directed by Mathew Bardwell and Nathan Driskell

Page 22, Pro Workshops videowall animation

Designed by Nathan Driskell

Page 23, Learning with Lynda videowall animation

Designed by Nathan Driskell

Page 24, "ACU Digital Academy"

Directed by Nathan Driskell

Page 27, Buchenwald digital story

Produced by Houston Heflin

Page 28, Scholarly Storytelling stories

Produced by Jeff Childers, Mark Hamilton and Kent Smith

Page 30, "LS Unboxed: Portable Green Screen"

Directed by Mathew Bardwell and Nathan Driskell

