

# The

# EDITING

# REVOLUTION



*Apple's G4 makes video editing affordable and easy.*

The lives of students working with film is about to become a whole lot easier. For years, students in Film, New Media and RTA have been struggling to secure video editing time in both Ryerson and the Rogers Communications Centre's facilities. Editing was a very time-involved process, and with thousands of students vying for the same 14 editing suites, it's no wonder many students sought facilities outside of the Ryerson campus.

In the search for a solution the Rogers Communications Centre assisted Brian Damude, Chair of Image Arts, with the research he conducted while on sabbatical. His research included a look at how lower cost integrated computers, combined with consumer based digital video equipment, could be utilized by the Motion Picture component of the Image Arts program. "It's clear that 14 (editing) units is not enough," says Brian Damude, Chair of Image Arts. Damude has spent the past year on a work-in-progress so remarkable that it may change the way film students work with and store projects from now on.

Part of the challenge for Damude was to provide something that would augment high quality editing technology currently available at the RCC at a fraction of the cost. The DPS non-linear systems are ideal for the later years of the Image Arts program but are overkill in the early stages of the Image Arts curriculum. "We don't want to back away from having a high level of editing," he says.

Even with what's in place, Damude still needs editing suites for hundreds of students who are working on projects. And, as with any computer system, storage is always a problem. "Early on I started thinking about not having conventional storage," says Damude. The answer he was looking for was given to Damude prior to his sabbatical. "Apple lent me a G4 computer which came with the software called FinalCut Pro, an extremely sophisticated piece of software used by professionals," he

## **FIREWIRE TECHNOLOGY MAKES REMOVING AND INSTALLING HARDDRIVES ABOUT AS EASY AS INSERTING AND REMOVING A FLOPPY DISK**

says. Not only is the G4 a "hardy" computer, which will have some longevity, but it is inexpensive enough that Ryerson could afford to buy several of them.

Further research into the G4 led to a revolutionary discovery and a highly plausible solution. "With the G4 you can actually swap hard drives with Apple's firewire technology," he says. This technology makes removing and installing hard drives about as easy as inserting and removing a floppy disk. "Over the year that I've been working on this, Apple has developed even smaller portable hard drives to work with their G4's," adds Damude. The G4 hard drives are about the size of a palm pilot, are lightweight, and can hold anywhere from 8 to 23 gigabytes of data. "So my thinking was if these hard drives are inexpensive enough, and hold enough data, then possibly students can start owning their own hard drives, and just pop them in when they come in for a session."

The result of Damude's research is a low-cost, yet powerful computer and software combo, plus ample storage for each student. "So far it's worked fairly well," he says. "The hard drives are only getting faster and smaller, and can only come down in price," adds Damude. This year he plans on using a group of students as a test group for the technology. If results are favourable, then portable hard drives could be as common as floppy disks. "I think it's a very exciting idea," says Damude.

The Rogers Communications Centre has assisted Brian with his work while on sabbatical. It provided technical expertise, links to partners and some production space during his time away from his role as Image Arts chair. •



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