



Development of Odyssey Writer, a software tool, at Compass Learning

Leveraging technology to facilitate learning, assessment, and evaluation

Compass Learning is a research-based educational technology corporation with more than 30 years of experience in serving approximately 10.6 million students in the US. Specializing in Web-based solutions for improving the performance of all Pre K-12 students, Compass Learning is a member of the well-known WRC Media family whose products are found in ninety percent of school districts nationwide.

THE NEED FOR E-LEARNING

To foster the writing abilities of students in Grade 3 to 8, Compass Learning required a Web-based application that could be used to inculcate and improve narrative, persuasive, informative, fiction, and nonfiction writing skills. A comprehensive tool that could, at the same time, enable teachers to evaluate and assess the students' performance and provide correction at different levels. The application had to be a technically flawless and a streamlined product allowing students to learn to organize the input, and to give them freedom to experiment with the structuring of their work.

Compass Learning approached Tata Interactive Systems to develop a solution that met their needs.

HOW OUR SOLUTION HELPED

Tata Interactive Systems identified the following key requirements of the tool, which was dubbed Odyssey Writer:

- Since the onus of the project's success was on the design, the application was made graphically and visually stimulating, wherein all phases of OOAD was used.
- The tool had to be technically very advanced to allow the smooth running of the entire range of applications like writing, organizing, assessing, generating assignments, and evaluating results, with all the features meeting state and national standards.
- The project followed the software development spiral model and later combined the Web-based application software engineering model with the implementation of Use cases, analysis classes and design classes using Enterprise Architect.



Odyssey Writer was a comprehensive tool that proved invaluable to teachers and students alike.

- The tool also needed to be integrated with Compass Learning's Learning Management System.

The following components were built into the Compass Learning Odyssey Writer:

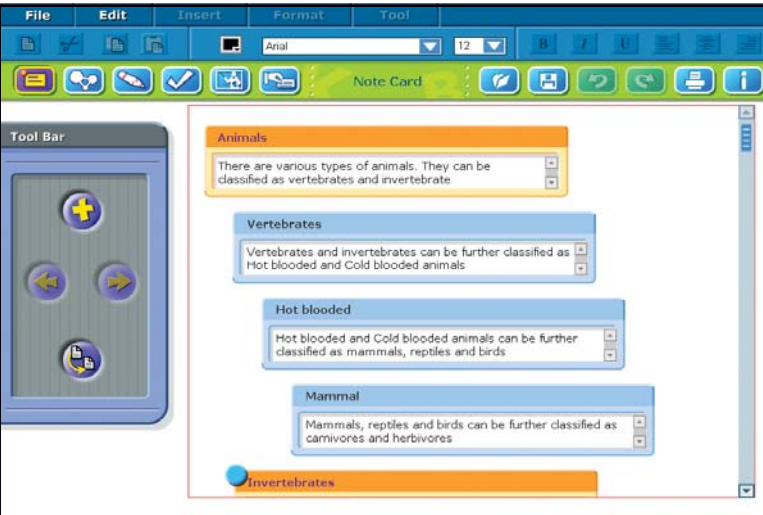
- **Drafting:** Enabled students to format the text (bold, italics, underline, alignment, and font settings); insert pictures and hyperlinks; and offered convenient features like 'print preview', 'spell check', and templates.
- **Note card:** Allowed students to represent their plans in the form of Note cards, which allowed addition, deletion, and modification of the tree structure.
- **Graphic Organizer:** Offered students the option to represent their plans in the form of flowcharts, which could be interlinked in order to convey the relation between the components.
- **Self-Assessment:** Permitted students to assess their own work by selecting the rubrics defined for the assignment.
- **Teacher-Assessment:** Facilitated error tracking and incorporation of suggestions that could be sent back to the student for revision.
- **Teacher-Evaluation:** Simplified evaluation of the students' work by pointing common errors made by the student, allotting grades, and suggesting overall comments.

TECHNOLOGY USED

This product was developed using Flash MX, XML, and .NET. The communication between Flash and .NET was done using SOAP.

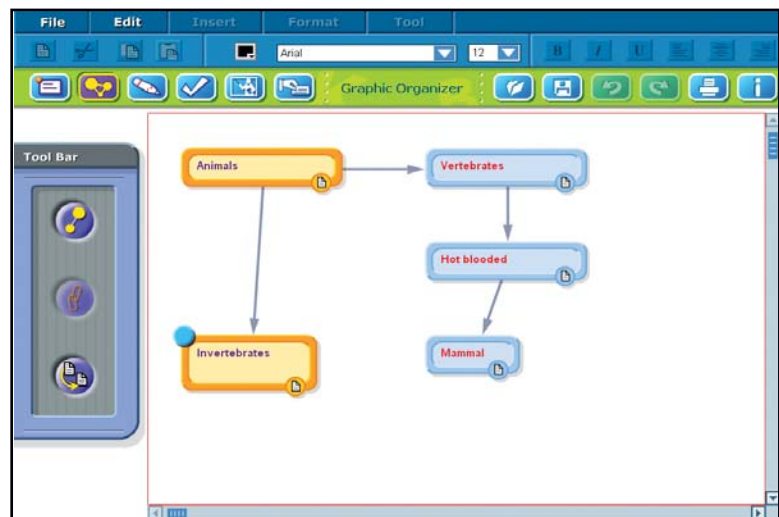
SOME SAMPLE SCREENSHOTS

The screenshots offer a brief glimpse of the Odyssey Writer, a software tool developed for Compass Learning. To experience our products at work, you may view our demos by registering online at www.tatainteractive.com.



Screenshot showing the Graphic Organizer functionality.

Screenshot showing the Notepad functionality.



Screenshot showing the Self-assessment functionality.

