

2008 Conference Report

Tropical Pacific breezes welcomed delegates to the AIMBI 2008 Conference, held in Coolangatta, The Gold Coast, Queensland. Known for its beautiful beaches, the resort town proved to be an ideal conference venue, providing a relaxed atmosphere for the weekend's proceedings.

The conference began on Friday afternoon, with a full afternoon of presentations. John Baird, of the RNS Hospital, began with a historical look at the marketing of tobacco smoking, and then presented a video aimed at smokers reluctant to quit. The video utilized live action as well as 3D animations to create a complete picture of the smoker's medical risks. The video can be customized on an individual patient basis, starring the patient and his family, creating a stronger psychological impact and thus further motivating the patient to quit.

The next presentation was an introduction of the gradient mesh tool in Adobe Illustrator by Madeleine Kersting. A step-by-step demonstration of how to easily create and manipulate illustrations was given, from the beginning drawing to the finished fully rendered result.

John Yeats then took delegates on an exploration of the software program Capture One, as applied to RAW image processing. He demonstrated the ease by which images could be edited in a consistent manner, and how such editing was compliant with the demands of medical photography.

The first day of the conference closed with an in-depth look at a multimedia unit's challenges in working with an institution's IT restrictions. Neil Fainges shared his solutions, including work-around scripting and seeking out software solutions to deal with the common road blocks of working within an institution.

The sun rose early the next day, with some of the delegates rising at 6:00am for a refreshing swim in the Pacific.

The professional activities of the morning commenced with a talk by Amanda Rebechhi, who described her methods in breast cancer photography. Especially interesting was her focus on the psychological end of the process, and how she helped her subjects to feel at ease while obtaining quality medical images.

Next on the agenda was Robert Krause who outlined in the first half of his talk the history of photography and radiography, accompanied by some very interesting images of radiography from the turn of the century. The second half of the talk concentrated on the role of these two technologies in today's medical world, and future of medical photography.

Robert Lamberts then presented a day in the life as a photographer for Crop and Food Research in New Zealand. Beautiful photographic images of his biological subjects and a broad range of food photography was displayed in his accompanying slideshow. After a light lunch, the conference continued, with Heather Matthews giving her evaluation of the latest in graphics software packages, the Adobe CS4 suite. New

features were discussed and evaluated, and she advised delegates on how to decide if the new suite was an economic and practical investment.

John Baird presented next, with a fascinating look at time-lapse documentation. He based his presentation on the demolition and construction of a building on the site of his workplace, the RNS Hospital in Sydney. The pitfalls and obstacles of the process of time-lapse documentation were revealed, culminating in the successful outcome of the project.

Following a break period in which many delegates headed off to enjoy the beach, the conference moved into the evening presentations.

The marvels of medical 3D modelling and animation were showcased by Madeleine Kersting, as well as the many outlets for purchasing ready-made medical and scientific models. Heather Matthews gave a very short presentation on the authoring and designing of her new Indian cookbook and website, "Savour the Flavour"; publishing pros and cons were discussed by the delegates. The evening closed with a live shakuhachi (Japanese flute) performance by Carl Rathus, followed by drinks and dinner.

Sunday, the last day of the conference, opened with Dr. Ian Johnson and Cathy Williams, who discussed the effectiveness of digital imaging in the management of skin cancer. They reported on their practices at their clinic, and showed examples of how the new imaging equipment and software could be used to improve detection of skin cancer.

Heather Matthews then presented, with a demonstration of how to create digital forms using Acrobat Forms Designer. The practical step-by-step presentation showed how live forms could be easily produced, replacing traditional paper media while improving the flow of communication.

Albert Sim next highlighted the increased awareness of macular degeneration at the Alexandra Hospital in Singapore. His work included the production of multimedia materials promoting patient education and early detection of this increasingly widespread affliction.

Following was a lively discussion over the future of the medical photography/illustration industry, led by Peter Merry. It was a broad topic, but delegates managed to cover quite a few issues, and many left with firm resolutions towards the promotion and improvement of the industry for the future. Awards were also presented at this time – Robert Krause, Best Academic Paper, Albert Sim, Best 'Beautiful' Photographic image, and Madeleine Kersting, Best Professional Image.

The conference closed with a lunch, leaving the delegates to enjoy the beautiful sunny afternoon on the beach. Congratulations to all participants for a stimulating and enjoyable weekend of quality presentations and relaxed camaraderie.

By Heather Matthews
Conference Convener