

ANIMATION EXPLANATION

Website explains things using 3D and motion

One of my favorite tasks in my job is creating information graphics that visually describe how complex systems, machines or structures work. I've always been drawn to exploded-view diagrams and 3D schematics. A picture truly is worth a thousand words.



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InSites

I recently came across a website, **Animagraffs.com**, that features infographics that combine 3D construction with animation. The graphics cover a wide variety of subjects, such as How Hard Disk Drives Work, How Electric Cars Work,

ISS: International Space Station, How Airbags Work and Cadillac One (Presidential State Car).

The artwork is all skillfully rendered in a way that shows how the objects work. Portions are transpar-

ent, separated or pulled apart for clarity. Many of the objects are 3D and can be rotated so you can view them from any angle. Labels and text help explain the images.

Motion helps clarify

Animation adds motion to the graphics. This is very helpful in explaining how some things work. The site has a graphic on how a .45 caliber handgun works. The animation clearly shows how the movements of different parts of the weapon control the process of loading rounds from the magazine into the chamber, firing the bullet and ejecting the spent shells. Seeing the movement of the mechanisms is much more effective than still images alone would be.

The About section of the site has photos, names and titles of the four people who run it. Three of them share the same last name and appear to be brothers, but I'm just guessing since there's no biographical information.

There's a section called Client Work that features a portfolio of graphics they've done for customers. There are some impressive names on their client list, such as General Electric, Google and Ford.

There are self-promotional links throughout the site encouraging viewers to contact the company if you want graphics created. It's obviously a commercial venture, but there's a surprising lack of information about who they are and what they do on the site. Of course, much of what they do is self-evident from the work displayed on the site, but most businesses would include more information and marketing copy.

Animagraffs is cleanly designed with simple red and white type on a black background and intuitive navigation. The graphics take center stage, as they should.

KEVIN O'NEILL is a staff artist for The Times-Tribune. Share your favorite websites and apps with him at koneill@times-shamrock.com.

