

Title:

If A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words, Than An Animation Is Worth A Settlement!

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Summary:

Courtroom re-enactment though forensic animation can be a very effective tool in persuading a jury to decide in your client's favor. Technology is enhancing civil and criminal litigation, mediations, arbitrations and case depositions in a rapid manner. One study by the National Center for State Courts has determined that 82 percent of trials using 3D modeling as demonstrative evidence have led to victory.

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

Courtroom re-enactment though forensic animation can be a very effective tool in persuading a jury to decide in your client's favor. Technology is enhancing civil and criminal litigation, mediations, arbitrations and case depositions in a rapid manner. One study by the National Center for State Courts has determined that 82 percent of trials using 3D modeling as demonstrative evidence have led to victory.

How jurors perceive a witness, speaks directly to their opinion of the witness's character. One study by the ACTA Press stated, "A well designed animation can influence a jurors' interpretation of the participant's activities in terms of perceived aggression, curiosity, jealousy, fear, provocation, relationships, roles and responsibilities, and guilt and innocence." Jurors will become more emotionally connected in the animation as motion, texture, and lighting are rendered in more sophisticated ways.

How Animation can be used:

The development of computer forensic animation prior to deposition will highlight where information and collaboration is required, helping focus questions while eliciting complete information. By displaying 3D modeling during question and answer sessions by asking, "Is this what happened?" Animation will make the facts clearer to the jury. Computer animation helps juries understand

in tangible terms what might otherwise remain an abstract concept. Computer forensics and 3D modeling has been proven to be better than any other type of demonstrative evidence according to a United States District Court Judge.

"I have noticed repeatedly that when a document is displayed on the monitors, the jurors sit up and pay attention. Such attention is far greater than that given to a document or situation which they cannot see as it is being discussed by the attorney and the witness."

"As long as technology is beneficial in helping jurors understand the facts and, more importantly, in expediting the trial, few judges will oppose it."

United States District Judge Carl Rubin

Examples of use:

Imagine for a moment a lawyer asking a witness, "If the truck was traveling at 50 miles per hour, and hit the side of the building in this spot, what would happen to the truck?" Working with the right 3D animator, the incident can be re-enacted with the true physics of force, surface texture and speed applied to get an enhanced image of the circumstances.

Demonstrating the intricate details of an accident scene, whether portraying a medical procedure or forensic mechanism of injury, there are virtually no limitations to what can be visualized using computer animation coupled with scientific and statistical evidence.

- A vehicle traveling at X miles per hour vs. Y miles per hour
- If a truck had veered ten feet sooner
- If a vat of chemicals had been placed here vs. there
- If the train operator had really seen or heard the signal
- If the substance was indeed harmless

Recently there was a trial where the plaintiff charged an architect with improperly designing a bridge. The defendant hired a graphic animation designer who took the blueprints, created a sketch drawing and built the bridge with the computer. Then, with the assistance of an engineer, the animator found that the bridge was designed properly. In fact, there had been an accident concerning a car colliding with a support column, which was not reported to the authorities until after the suit began. The animator then re-created the truck accident to show the damage to the bridge and its lingering effects.

Why Use Forensic Animation:

3D computer animations and images remain imbedded in the mind of the viewer long after they are offered as demonstrative evidence. Accidents, models, science or medial scenes, etc. are recreated to scale, through the use of computer animation, from expert or police reports. These animations are both visually presented to the jury. Statistics have shown people in general are much more likely to retain visual information than auditory information such as witness testimony.

A cardinal rule of persuasion or debate is to always show, rather than tell someone what happened. By showing the jury your client's perspective, while the opposing side tells their client's perspective, the jury is much more likely to identify and believe the visual presentation, all things being equal. As the old adage goes: a picture is worth a thousand words, and I would submit if a picture is worth a thousand words, than an animation is worth a settlement!