CAGE

OKC-created Cage eliminates 'pain points' for project collaborators

My friend Jay is videographer for a local advertising firm who works collaboratively with colleagues and clients on advertisements and promotional videos.

I call him a member of the creative class. But he's a "creative" who encounters workflow challenges daily.

The problem arises when Jay is expected to share his work-in-progress with collaborators so they can view it, make edits and ultimately sign off on the project.

How does he share a huge video file in a way that colleagues can easily mark it up and send it back to him? How do they communicate their edits with him?

It's a common thread among creatives like Jay who need to share calendars, text, photos and whole projects such as videos or websites with multiple collaborators or clients.

Oklahoma City-based Cage was created for just such a challenge, says founder and CEO Sandip Patel.

Cage – cageapp.com – is a sophisticated, web-based collaboration and project management software for teams who may be working down the hall or 1,000 miles from one another.

"For those of us that are in client services or in the business of managing a creative team that produces artifacts of some kind, you understand the pain points really well," Patel said. "The current process is broken and often involves trying to get everybody's schedule synced up, coordinating meetings, leaving post-it notes on things for feedback and getting people to initial things."

Launched in 2011, Cage has become a go-to software application for ad firms, design teams and technology companies tackling large, complicated projects.

"Cage facilitates one place where you can do all of those things," Patel said. "You can communicate about projects, you can organize schedules and tasks and to-do list. You can upload artifacts you are working on so there is transparency and accountability there. Then there is integration with other products you already use."

Cage has been embraced by creative teams that range from the smallest two-man shops to large agencies and corporations. Clients include Best Buy Canada, Sinclair Broadcast Group, University of Chicago, Country Music Television and Foundry, among others.

"Cage has helped us tremendously," said Mariana Acuna, Media & Production head of Creatives for Foundry, a software firm for the entertainment industry. "Being able to record different work-in-progress versions of videos seamlessly and the ability to have team members in different time zones review and leave notes on the exact frame where changes are needed has been a lifesaver in terms of time and productivity."

While there are other collaboration software applications on the market, the status quo may be the chief competitor to Cage, Patel said. That could be the back-and-forth of a 20-person email chain, phone calls or face-to-face meetings.

Cage has undergone several iterations to make it more useful and play well with other popular applications such as Slack or Adobe products. Cage was re-launched in 2017 with a completely new design and collaboration features.

"It's been staggering to see the types of development our team can do to the product now because we rebuilt it from scratch," Patel said. "We built it with scalability in mind and expansion of feature sets but also for speed."

Patel, 37, is a native Oklahoman who grew up in El Reno, the son of motel operators who still own and operate the same property.

Before launching Cage in 2011, Patel graduated from Oklahoma State University and worked as chief operating officer at Digital-Tutors, which was founded by his brother, Piyush, and later acquired by Pluralsight.

As Patel looks around at the state's support system for tech-based startups that includes the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST), i2E Inc., and numerous accelerators and business incubators, he sees a flourishing ecosystem.

"I've been heads-down in building Cage for so long that I've not come up for air to see a lot of things," he said. "But from my peripheral view, I think the Oklahoma City landscape for startups and tech businesses in general is way better than in the past."

Patel's focus has been on building and improving Cage so that it meshes seamlessly with the software that creatives like my friend, Jay, are already using.

"This is a super hot space right now, because there's no shortage of people who want to maximize the productivity of their team and help them ultimately do their best work – and that's exactly what Cage does," Patel said. "It helps teams buy back their time and do their best work."

Read the article in the 4-27-18 Oklahoman

Watch the video

Go to the Cage website