

Meet a Technologist: Sonya Hassan-Carey

Meet Sonya Hassan-Carey! She is an **animation technology specialist**. What does this mean? It means that Sonya is an expert in using using technology to create animations - sometimes called cartoons!

Sonya runs her own studio called the Animation Lounge. Here she oversees the creation of new animations - from short stories to films.

Animators design new characters and make them talk, walk, sing, dance, and more! They must create backgrounds and scenery. Sonya does this using complex computer software. It is essential for her to stay up-to-date in all the latest animation technology.

Sonya has over 25 years of experience as an animator. She has worked for many different studios and now leads her own! You might be excited to learn that Sonya helped animate Disney's *The Princess and the Frog*. She led the team that brought Princess Tiana to life. Tiana is the first African-American Disney Princess.

We interviewed Sonya to learn more about her!

What was your childhood like? Did you like science?

I lived in many countries as a child including the United Kingdom, Jamaica, and Canada (I live in Canada now). I loved cats. When I was very little I had a cat named Fluff that looked like a striped tiger. My next cat was named Benjamin Sydney Armstrong. We called him Benji and he was black with lovely yellow eyes.

I loved all things technical. Remember that when I was young technology was much different than it is now! I wanted to fix broken electronics. I also worked in the audio visual clubs (or AV clubs) in all of my schools. Students in these clubs work behind the scenes at school events like assemblies or plays and control things like the lighting or sound. I liked to hold the camera and do the filming of small movies.



Meet a Technologist: Sonya Hassan-Carey

Describe a typical day at your job.

I'm always on the computer. I organize everyone in the studio and keep the communication going. I write lots of reports and keep an eye on our project budget (a budget is a plan of how money will be spent).

Describe a time in your career when something did not go as planned.

We have days at the studio when our data gets damaged or goes missing. All of our animation work is done and stored on computers and sometimes files can get damaged. When this happens we find ways to work around it. We make sure not to panic; we find solutions and keep the staff calm.

If someone wants to make an animated video, but doesn't have the equipment or skill set to do it themselves they come to our studio. These people are called clients. Sometimes we can't deliver our shows on time to a client. When this happens we make sure our clients know we have problems and it gives them time to come up with solutions.

What advice do you have for students today?

Do not be afraid to fail, take risks, and be confident. It is a good thing to learn from mistakes. Always have goals, even if they are small goals. Love what you do for a living.



To the left is a picture of Sonya when she was little looking like a Princess Tiana figurine! Above is an image of Tiana from the movie.