

Technology

Recruiting in 'Facebook Nation'

Now that business schools have used blogs and podcasts to recruit prospective students, some are taking the next steps to meet many students where they virtually live: the social networking site Facebook. On the popular networking site, individuals or organizations can create "groups" dedicated to a common interest, which users from around the world can join.

Last fall, the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management in Ontario, Canada, created its group, Rotman MBA Admissions, on Facebook. In November, Rotman attracted 73 participants to its Facebook MBA question-and-answer session, where Cheryl Millington, its director of MBA recruiting and admissions, chatted with prospective students. By January, the Rotman group had 158 members.

Joining Facebook to reach out to its community—particularly those interested in business education—promises to become a regular part of Rotman's recruiting, says Richard Powers, assistant dean and executive director of MBA programs. He notes that social networking does not replace face-to-face meetings with prospective students at MBA Fairs around the world. Even so, Facebook helps the school connect to many more students than it could otherwise.

"It enables us to talk to candidates whom we are unable to reach through traditional methods," Powers says. The school plans to hold another information session on Facebook this spring.

Teaching Students to Ace the Virtual Interview

Personalized assessment is as important in career development as it is in academia. And in a world of 24/7 access to information, business students want more than daytime on-campus access to career development tools. They want help at any time, from any location—which means b-school career services are providing more tools on the Web.

The MBA Career Services office at Drexel University's LeBow College of Business in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, recently added InterviewStream, an interactive online interview tool. InterviewStream provides students instant, anytime feedback on their interview skills. InterviewStream is now part of LeBow's MBA Career Services' online Career Gateway, a portal that includes a resume assistant and manager; a calendar, contact, and correspondence manager; and salary and relocation tools.

Before InterviewStream was put in place, students who sought help with interviewing had to be on campus and visit the office during business hours. "Career Gateway offered a great deal of information and tips about interviewing, but no practice," says Kay Ford, senior director of MBA Career Services. "Now, we can work with our students from a distance."

InterviewStream requires that students use a computer equipped with a Web camera, computer microphone, and Internet connection. The student sits in front of the camera to record an interview with a computer-simulated questioner,

who asks eight questions selected from a question database. Once the interview is completed, the student can upload the interview to share with a career counselor, as well as family and friends, for constructive criticism. When possible, the student can meet with a career counselor for a follow-up discussion.



A LeBow student practices her skills in a virtual interview.

For example, the program indicates when a student uses repetitive speech patterns, such as "like" and "um." Counselors can also work with students to eliminate distracting body language or to increase eye contact. "It's not uncommon, once they see themselves, for students to announce they wouldn't hire themselves for a job," says Marilyn Tietjen, associate director of MBA Career Services.

Through the use of online tools such as Career Gateway and InterviewStream, Ford and Tietjen note that their students' job searches have become, on average, about 40 percent shorter. They can keep track of their contacts, build their resumes, and refine their interviewing skills in a way that helps them see their progress and keep themselves on track.

PROGRAMS THAT TARGET THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY ARE SEEING PARTICULARLY LOW NUMBERS OF WOMEN ENROLLING.

In the future, Ford anticipates a time when the online interviewing assessment can use sets of questions specific to particular companies. The technology has become an integral part of students' business educations, she believes. It not only allows students to see and practice presenting themselves on camera, but also delivers the help in a way that is accessible and invites them to utilize that assistance more frequently.

"We now have more educated students coming through the door," says Tietjen. "They know what their needs are and they know how to talk about their skills and accomplishments, because they've been able to explore their career development on a 24/7 basis."

Mission: Attract More Women to IT

Most business programs are seeking ways to attract more women to their programs, but programs that target the technology industry are seeing particularly low numbers of women enrolling. A study from the Canadian Advanced Technology Alliance Women in Technology (CATA WIT) Forum and the University of Ottawa Telfer School of Management concludes that the gender discrepancy in the tech sector may be far worse than many realized. The study, "Gender Challenges for Women in the Canadian Advanced Technology Sector," was authored by Telfer professors Barbara Orser and Allan Rid-



ing, CATA WIT co-founder Joanne Stanley, and undergraduate student Michele Dathan.

In a survey, the authors asked CATA WIT members to rank the challenges they faced in their technology careers. More than 60 percent ranked "work-life balance" as their No. 1 challenge; "leadership skills"

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

New Web-Based Games for Business

HBSP launches the first in a series of online simulations

Harvard Business School Publishing recently released two new online simulations. The Universal Rental Car Pricing and the Everest Leadership and Team simulations are the first two of several new online simulations to be introduced over the next year.

The simulations were created in response to requests for more Web-based games that teach core business concepts, says Heide Abelli, director of product development for HSBP's Higher Education Group. Online simulations, in particular, appeal to today's business students who are particularly attuned to technology and eager to tap it for their educations.

The Universal Rental Car Pricing simulation, for instance, is designed for use in marketing, strategy, microeconomics, and operations management courses. In it, students play the role of a regional marketing manager responsible for pricing a fleet of rental cars in cities across

the state of Florida. It covers core pricing concepts such as consumer response to changes in price, pricing for specific customer segments and geographic markets, the role of pricing in managing product inventory, and the short-term and long-term impacts of pricing decisions on the business and on overall marketplace demand.

The Everest Leadership and Team simulation is designed for courses in organizational behavior, group dynamics, and leadership. Students play one of five roles on a team of hikers attempting to reach the summit of Mount Everest. Team members must cooperate, share information, and exhibit leadership for the group to reach its goal.

The simulations are designed for undergraduates or MBA students. Students typically take 60 to 90 minutes to run through a simulation, not including a debriefing session after the game is completed.

Forthcoming simulations from HBSP include Benihana Service Management and Strategic Innovation, both to be released this spring. Another, Global Supply Chain Management, is also in the works. For more information, visit simulations.hbsp.harvard.edu.



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and “shortage of women mentors” came in close behind, with more than 40 percent of respondents ranking them as obstacles for women in IT.

Respondents also indicated a number of gender-based barriers, including the perception that they were somehow less qualified or less educated for jobs in technology, as well as a lack of social capital, networking opportunities, and a sense of belonging.

“For many Canadian women, the high-tech sector is still a man’s world,” says Orser. “We analyzed hundreds of statements about the career challenges women face in the sector. Most concerns were associated with gender, including dismissive

attitudes about women’s career aspirations and feeling marginalized in an industry that honors technical and engineering roles—roles in which women are underrepresented.”

The study’s authors conclude that Canada’s competitiveness could depend on bringing more women into the IT fold. “The ongoing issue of women opting out of the tech sector is alarming,” says Stanley, who adds that companies are losing the potential and diversity that women bring to the industry. If Canada is to improve its global competitiveness and innovation, she says, it must “tap into the capabilities that women bring to the creation and management of knowledge-based companies.”



■ New Help for ‘Cybrarians’

As librarians grapple with the ongoing challenges of data storage and management, they’ve inspired a new term to describe their role in preserving digital content: “cybrarians.” To help the “cybrarian community” meet these challenges, Sun Microsystems has formed the Sun Preservation and Archiving Special Interest Group (Sun PASIG).

Sun PASIG will bring together leaders in government, broadcasting, education, and library services at semiannual meetings to share best practices for digital archiving. Discussions will cover topics such as services-oriented architecture and software code, access and security, and storage. The goal will be to provide common case studies and solutions for digital archiving.

Founding members of Sun PASIG include Johns Hopkins University, the University of Oxford, Stanford University, the Texas Digital Library, the Alberta Library, and the British Library. For more information, visit sun-pasig.org.

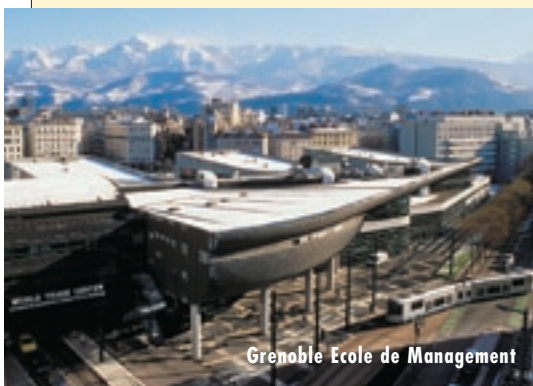
All-Access to E-Learning

Grenoble Ecole de Management in France recently announced that it would offer free access to all of its classes via its e-learning portal, Open Courseware in Management (OPENCIM). The portal follows in the footsteps of the Massachusetts Institute of Management (MIT), which introduced its own free online learning portal, OpenCourseWare, in 2002.

Grenoble’s launch of OPENCIM is in response to the growing global need for educational resources, say school representatives. Worldwide economic development will depend on the diffusion of knowledge. They point to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which has developed initiatives to explore the benefits of open access to online educational resources.

Grenoble delivers several free online classes in management, consumer behavior, and decision making. The classes are developed by its faculty members and delivered via PowerPoint presentations, videos, and assignments. In the future, the school plans gradually to increase the number of free learning modules.

More than 1,000 students have already subscribed to OPENCIM, which is available at opencim.grenoble-em.com. Of these students, most live in French-speaking countries in Africa.



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NEWSBYTES

PROGRAM TEACHES 'WEB INTELLIGENCE'

UC Irvine Extension, the continuing education arm of the University of California at Irvine, will offer a new certificate program in Web intelligence. The program is offered in conjunction with the University of British Columbia Continuing Studies and in partnership with the Web Analytics Association. Students will learn skills such as dimensional modeling, which helps them pinpoint the data that is most useful to their business decisions. Students in the program also will learn to take statistical measurements, such as how long visitors stay on a page or how many purchases they make online, to perform a wide range of business analyses.



IU AND SONY TO PARTNER

Indiana University in Indianapolis and Sony Electronics have partnered to conduct research in the use of high-definition broadcast and media production technologies in higher education. Research activities will include the exploration of virtual reality, three-dimensional video and animation, and new communications to engage teachers and students.

CERTIFICATE IN IT SECURITY

Graduate students at the University of Arizona's Eller College of Management in Tuscon can now earn certifications from the Committee on National Security Systems (CNSS) through their coursework. CNSS certificates are mandated by the U.S. Department of Defense; the certification is "becoming increasingly more

important to corporate leaders charged with protecting the security of their data," says Lance Hoopes, the school's IT director. Through the certificate program, students will take two CNSS-approved courses designed to help them identify IT threats and become more skilled at risk management and analysis.

NEW SITE FOR EDUCATION

Launched in October, EDUInsight.com offers higher education administrators a new source of information in four areas important to their student relations programs: recruitment, retention, communication, and online education. Other features include links to news, articles, presentations, book reviews, an event calendar, and interviews with leaders in student relations. The site aims to provide a forum where educators can exchange ideas, review trends, and set best practices. 