

Technology



■ Online Game Teaches Freshmen Survival Skills

Michael Savoie, professor at the School of Management at the University of Texas, Dallas, is tapping a medium that most new college freshmen know well—the video game—to help teach them the skills they’ll need to succeed in college.

With the help of a \$250,000 grant, Savoie and a team are designing an interactive online game intended to help acclimate students—and their parents—to the culture of a college campus. The game, says Savoie, could mean the difference between success and struggle for many students.

Savoie points to the seemingly innocuous issue of a rainy day. Many students who wake up to pouring rain may choose to stay in bed and miss their classes, simply because they don’t have an

umbrella. Others come anyway, wet and dripping. Savoie envisions the online game asking the right questions: Do you have an umbrella? Can you borrow one? Do you know where to buy one?

Savoie is creating his game, scheduled to debut in the fall of 2010, with the help of friends from a University of Texas system program initiative, Transforming Undergraduate Education.

Initially, the game will target freshmen, transfer students, and

their parents, focusing on time- and money-management issues. It will take students beyond the school’s Web page and student blogs to what Savoie calls the “three-dimensional” aspects of college. It will cover everything from what students need for their

classes to where they can do their laundry—that is, the day-to-day choices they’ll have to make once they begin their college careers.

“We want to reach students through a platform they understand, and gaming has been shown to be almost universally understood and used by people age 25 and younger,” says Savoie. Whether the issue is money management, time management, or social interaction, he adds, “the game will show them the consequences of the decisions they make.”

NEWSBYTES

■ TECH ADDICTS

In a survey of 11- to 18-year-olds recently conducted by the United Kingdom’s Cranfield School of Management, more than 60 percent of respondents admitted being “very” or “quite” addicted to the Internet; more than 50 percent admitted an addiction to mobile phone use. In addition, 39.3 percent admitted that their use of abbreviations while texting has caused the quality of their spelling to deteriorate, and 59.2 percent admitted to inserting information from Web sites directly into their homework. Although they recog-

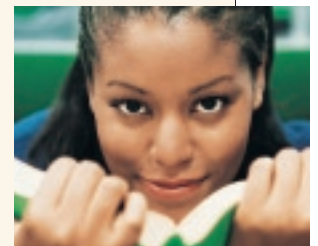
nized this act as plagiarism, more than 28 percent saw nothing wrong with the practice.

■ LBS AND GOOGLE TEAM UP

The London Business School in the United Kingdom, Google, and the U.K. newspaper *Daily Telegraph* have teamed up to launch a YouTube channel called “Survival of the Fastest.” The channel will offer three streams that cover topics in marketing, e-commerce, and finance. Contributors include academics from LBS and executives from companies such as Dell, Virgin Media, and OfficeMax. The channel can be found at www.youtube.com/user/survivalofthefastest.

■ SITE FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

The Consortium for Graduate Study in Management, a national non-profit dedicated to diversity in business, has launched a Web site to highlight the benefits of business school to prospective minority students. The site, www.makeyourcareermove.com, includes information about merit-based fellowships and networking opportunities, student and alumni testimonials, as well as a list of member schools and links to applications.





Drama at the Door

Earlier this year, the Temple University Fox School of Business in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, installed this 177-foot eight-color LED ticker from Rise Display in the student lounge of its new facility, Alter Hall. The large ticker—which can be viewed from the school’s classrooms, Capital Markets trading room, and from the street—displays business headlines, stock quotes, university messages, and updates on the university-managed investment fund. A Web-based interface allows administrators to update ticker information from any Internet-connected device.

“The ticker has garnered tremendous excitement from everyone who enters the building,” says John DeAngelo, who recently retired as the school’s associate dean for information technology business and management. “It really knocks everyone’s socks off, and the students are very proud of it.”

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Interactive Team Rooms Boost Student Collaboration

Many of today’s technology-infused classrooms allow multiple users to send information to a central computer screen for all to see. But what if technology allowed everyone to use a common screen as an extension of their own laptops?

That is the concept behind TeamSpot, a collaborative technology developed by Tidebreak, a software company in Palo Alto, California. Each TeamSpot room becomes an interactive wireless environment with a central common screen to which users can jump from their laptops, by moving their mouse arrows beyond the top of their own screens. In this way, participants can move files instantaneously to the common screen; all members of the group can notate and revise the common documents.

The technology is also secure. Equipped with what the company

calls “room awareness,” the site allows only those present in the TeamSpot room to participate in a session. The software keeps a real-time record of the information exchanged during each session, which participants can access at a later time.

Since January, the College of Business Administration at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville has been using TeamSpot as part of its Investment Learning Center (ILC). For instance, students in the Bloomberg Certification course use TeamSpot to view data and conduct analyses



on the Bloomberg terminal, explains Laura Wallis, a lecturer at the ILC.

Other ILC students use TeamSpot to manage UTK’s Haslam Torch Fund and LaPorte Torch Fund, two portfolios of securities. The interactive environment has increased their efficiency at producing quarterly reports of portfolio performance, says Wallis.

Wallis has found that an interactive room doesn’t just make the learning environment more dynamic and flexible. It also removes traditional barriers to classroom participation, she adds. “Students no longer need to point at a screen and ask, ‘What if the input period for the stock price was changed to weekly?’ I no longer have to ask a student to ‘go to the chalkboard’ to work on a problem,” she says. “Now, a student can control the main screen with his own laptop and mouse and show the rest of the class himself.”

Tidebreak also offers ClassSpot, a similar collaborative technology for instructional use. For more information about either product, visit www.tidebreak.com. 