

# Technology

## ■ Signs of the Times

Wireless networks, top-shelf software, and real-time data feeds are essential to the technological initiatives of many business schools. But while a strong IT infrastructure is crucial, it's largely invisible to campus visitors. To get more bang for their technological buck, some schools are turning to electronic signage. As learning tools, news sources, and brand communicators, electronic displays make the visual impact that wireless networks can't.

This was the case at the University of Connecticut's School of Business in Storrs, Connecticut. The school wanted its new Hartford-based \$20 million financial accelerator to be equivalent to any Wall Street financial center, explains Richard Dino, associate dean for graduate programs. That meant that the accelerator not only had to function at a high level to give students true-to-life learning experiences—it also had to look the part. Consequently, the school partnered with TransLux ([www.trans-lux.com](http://www.trans-lux.com)), a provider of electronic information display systems based in Norwalk, Connecticut, to equip the accelerator from the inside out.

Inside the accelerator, its 30-foot-high wall is decked with a 45-foot-wide, 17-foot-tall display board, positioned ten feet off the ground. There also are four 8' x 7' chart walls displaying the activities of stocks that students are monitoring. Outside, a 210-foot-long, two-foot-high ticker stretches around the building displaying financial news and stock mar-



The 210-foot-wide Jumbotron outside UConn's financial accelerator in Hartford.



The view of the 45' x 17' electronic board and trading room floor from the observation deck in UConn's financial accelerator.

ket information; two 16' x 12' rainbow walls present national and international news, as well as information about what's going on at the school and in downtown Hartford. The goal, says Dino, is to make a statement to the 50,000 people who pass through Hartford's financial district each day.

"We used Wall Street as our example," says Dino. "The outdoor signage is a way of indicating to everyone the experiential learning environment that we have inside."

As business schools strive to extend their reach off campus, it will become imperative that they make their offerings as visible as possible, says Dino. As the University of Connecticut has found, signage can play a large role in communicating a

school's ideological and technological brand to the marketplace.

The McCallum Graduate School of Business at Bentley College in Waltham, Massachusetts, also is working with TransLux to bring electronic signage to its campus. Their partnership began when TransLux contacted professor Perry Lowe to design a two-phase student research project that looked into the market for electronic displays in higher education. TransLux already had penetrated the higher education market when it came to trading room and student center signage. However, the company wanted to know more about best practices in on-campus sign placement and content.

In phase one of the project, students took a semester to conduct their research. At the end, the class presented its idea for "The Model Campus," offering their recommendations for the best use of campus displays. "Students recommended not only locations, types, and content of signage, but also a plan the company could use to market the product to all colleges and universities," explains Lowe.

Phase two, in which Bentley Col-

lege will itself become a “Model Campus,” is now in progress. TransLux will provide the real-time electronic displays, aiming to make them an integral part of the school’s administrative function and brand identity. Once the project is complete, administrators from other schools can visit Bentley to see how the signs work on a campus. For those who cannot visit, TransLux and the students worked with a Boston-based design firm, Neoscape, to develop a CD-ROM that will serve as a marketing tool to show The Model Campus in a virtual environment.

“We want to enhance signage at our campus entrance, in our student centers, and in our public areas to make our school more visible,” says Sandra King, vice president of marketing, communications, and public affairs. The boards, she adds, will display information from external sources such as Bloomberg News and CNN, as well as internal information on speakers, events, and school promotions. “Such signage is less interactive than the Web,” says King, “but will afford us the opportunity to reach people who are not sitting in front of their computers.”

## Higher Ed Increases Wireless Reach

The **EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research** (ECAR) recently released its survey, “Information Technology Networking in Higher Education: Campus Commodity and Competitive Differentiator.” Written by Judith Pirani, Gail Salaway, Richard Katz, and John Voloudakis, the study found college and university campuses have gone beyond equipping themselves with the basic technological requirements. They are now looking at technology as a way to

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

### **WebSurveyor Helps Students Learn Market Research**

Customer attitudes and behaviors change quickly in today’s marketplace, which makes online market research an increasingly important tool for companies. Online surveys are easier to conduct than printed or face-to-face surveys and can be completed and tabulated in a matter of hours, not weeks.

With more companies turning to online market research, it’s also important that business students know the ins and outs of conducting and interpreting surveys effectively. As a result, WebSurveyor, a provider of online survey software and hosting services based in Herndon, Virginia, has invited business school programs to apply to its 2005 academic grant program. Through the grant program, schools receive a free, two-year license to use WebSurveyor to teach business students the art of online market research. To be eligible, schools must have a faculty member who will conduct surveys and use

WebSurveyor in the classroom.

So far, 68 schools are taking part in the program. Although now used primarily in the corporate sector, the software also can be used as a teaching tool designed to help students learn about the surveying process and increase response rates over and above what traditionally mailed print surveys produce.

Angela Stanton, assistant professor of marketing at Radford University in Radford, Virginia, has been using WebSurveyor in her classes for the last five years. Her students have created surveys measuring customer satisfaction, behavior, and product usage for a number of organizations and even for the university itself. Using the survey software helps students learn all the methodologies for collecting data online, from selecting a target sample to knowing the right questions to ask, she says.

“Companies are really using online market surveying, so students should

be armed with that knowledge,” says Stanton. “Even students who are not going into marketing would be lacking something in their skill sets if they were not exposed to this kind of market research.”

The license allows unlimited users to conduct an unlimited number of customized surveys during the grant period. To guide survey novices, the software comes loaded with survey templates and sample questions geared to a variety of purposes. In addition, it includes features such as conditional branching, data piping, response randomization, and quota controls. Schools host the software on their own servers, so students and faculty can access the software and conduct surveys through intranet environments.

After the two-year grant period, schools can renew their licenses to WebSurveyor free of charge. For information about applying to the WebSurveyor Academic Grant program for a free two-year license, visit [www.websurveyor.com/grant.asp](http://www.websurveyor.com/grant.asp).

position themselves in the market.

The survey is based on responses from 517 CIOs and network directors in higher education, as well as qualitative telephone interviews with 19 higher education IT managers and 12 higher education leaders. When asked about the extent to which their campus networks met the needs of their communities, 91 percent of respondents noted that their network met their staff's needs. However, only 78 percent agreed that their current networks met faculty needs; and only 67 percent said that their current networks met student needs.

One trend highlighted by the survey is that campuses are beginning to expand their networks. Ten percent noted that they provided at least some outdoor access points to their wireless networks. In addition, 20 percent plan to expand their wireless networks. Student mobility, respondents said, has become an essential part of the academic experience.

Some respondents said they also were joining education networks that cover state, regional, and national areas. Two-fifths of responding institutions connect to a universitywide network. Forty-three percent connect to a state educational and research network, while 25 percent connect to a regional network. The survey also found that doctoral institutions are more likely to connect to all types of higher education networks. Institutions granting master's, bachelor's, and associate's degrees, on the other hand, are more likely to join state research and educational networks. In addition, 34 research and educational networks are now in place or

in progress, as the market begins to adopt a model of regional facility-based networking, or regional optical networks (RONs). Their goal, according to the survey, is to provide their regions with access to the larger higher education community.

The survey also covered such topics as technological infrastructure, adoption of emerging technologies, and network management. To read a summary of the study's findings, visit [www.educause.edu/ers0502](http://www.educause.edu/ers0502). The full study is free to ECAR subscribers and available for purchase for nonsubscribers at the same Web address.

## Partnership Targets Intellectual Property

With technology comes innovation, with innovation comes invention—and with invention comes the need for business students to understand intellectual property. To that end, the Entrepreneurial Management Center at San Diego State University's College of Business Administration has partnered with the University of California-San Diego's Technology Transfer & Intellectual Property Services (TechTIPS) office. The partnership allows SDSU's MBA students to intern at TechTIPS and work with licensing officers on strategic analysis projects.

In return, TechTIPS—which is responsible for all new inventions, tangible research materials, and selected copyrightable materials developed at UCSD—will receive feedback on business development activities associated with its patented and patent-pending technologies.

### DATABIT

According to a survey conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, **53 million** people, or **44 percent** of Internet users, now use online banking. This represents a **47 percent** increase since late 2002. The survey cites increased use of broadband Internet service as one possible catalyst for the trend.


## SMU Wins \$200K HP Grant

Singapore Management University recently won a Hewlett-Packard Mobile Technology for Teaching grant of almost \$200,000, which it has used to launch a tablet PC initiative on its campus. The pilot program known as "Virtual Canvas," in which tablet PCs were distributed to SMU's second-year accountancy students, began in October 2003.

The grant includes \$10,000 in cash; the rest comes in the form of equipment, such as tablet PCs and a wireless Internet projector. The pilot program will continue to be assessed for a year, before being considered for campuswide deployment next year.

TechTIPS will also work with UCSD's Rady School of Management to establish a similar internship program in 2005-2006 for its first full-time MBA class.

The program increases awareness of TechTIPS technologies and could increase regional investment in related licensing deals. Another primary beneficiary of the partnership will be the San Diego region, says Alan Paa, director of TechTIPS. "This partnership serves a common goal of promoting San Diego's technology-based economy," he says.

In its inaugural semester, participating students have worked in biotechnology and wireless technologies, performing target market analyses and evaluating potential licensees. Eventually, program organizers expect to incorporate TechTIPS projects into the SDSU MBA curriculum, giving its entrepreneurship students the chance to evaluate UCSD technology for commercial viability. 



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