CASE STUDY

Southern Utah University

Southern Utah University (SUU) used Macromedia® Breeze™ to extend its reach beyond the campus. Integrating web conferencing software into existing infrastructures helped the small rural institution reach out to new and underserved populations.

The Organization

SUU is a comprehensive state institution offering degree programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels as well as associate degree and applied technology programs. Located in Cedar City, Utah and contiguous to counties in Nevada and Arizona, the university serves 6,000 students with 223 faculty.

The Challenge

Students of all ages are fueling the growth for flexible learning alternatives—from employed professionals juggling work and family responsibilities, to recent high school graduates. In Utah alone the influx of entering college students in 2007 is projected at over 150,000 beyond the current system enrollment. Arizona and Nevada—two high-growth states that border on Utah—are already struggling to keep up with the demand. Recognizing that learning technologies must play a major role in future growth and services strategies, SUU leadership wanted a compelling and cost effective way to deliver classes over the Internet in a virtual-campus context.

The Solution

In 2004, SUU began its integration of Breeze Live (now called Breeze Meeting) and Breeze Presentation (now called Breeze Presenter) components into the campus learning technology infrastructure. “Breeze will carry us across state borders,” says Carl O. Ellis, dean of the School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS).

Prior to adopting Breeze, SCPS relied exclusively on Utah EdNet (UEN), the state’s interactive TV network, to transmit distance-learning programs. Unlike the closed circuit broadcast TV system needed to distribute UEN courses, the conferencing capabilities that come as part of the Web-based Breeze platform use the Internet for distribution. Since 98 percent of all computers connected to the Internet already have the Macromedia Flash Player installed, learners do not have to download large clients or purchase additional software to access the learning experiences being distributed via Breeze.

Based on the multiple ways in which users can interact in a real-time, media-rich Breeze Meeting, SUU is building collaboration components into several of its blended and online learning programs. These include audio conferencing, video conferencing, files sharing, white boarding and chat. Sessions can be recorded and archived at the instructor’s request.

Customer Profile

Name: Southern Utah University
Industry: Higher Education
Location: Cedar City, UT
Size: Approximately 6,000 students and 223 faculty members
URL: www.suu.edu
Technology Solution: Macromedia Breeze
The Breeze Presenter module allows non-technical content experts to add audio narrations, animation features and Flash animations to Microsoft PowerPoint presentations, easily producing multimedia programs that can be saved and exchanged as Flash files. Using Breeze Presenter, instructors can produce SCORM conformant content files called learning objects that can interoperate with a SCORM conformant learning management system (LMS). Results of student quizzes completed in Breeze can also be exchanged with a SCORM conforming LMS. Alternatively, Breeze may be used without an LMS, since results of quizzes can all be tracked and managed within Breeze using the Training module. “Since you can create exams and quizzes in Presenter, it’s a cost effective solution for smaller institutions,” says Ean J. Harker, instructional designer at the SCPS Instructional Media Integration Centre (IMIC).

The Results
SUU recently launched a distributed Masters degree in Education that uses Macromedia Breeze as the development and delivery platform. As SUU positions itself to bridge the education gap in neighboring communities, it is also actively responding to opportunities that bridge the diversity gap at home. SUU is aggressively recruiting students from other nations as well as other U.S. regions while promoting faculty exchanges and study-abroad programs, forging partnerships with universities across the nation and across the world, and training its international partners to use technology.

Faculty members in SUU’s partner schools in Austria, France and Switzerland are currently training on Breeze software to implement joint broadcasting relationships. Conversations are underway with an institute of technology in Mexico to develop a blended-learning Spanish course for SUU students. Spanish-speaking professors based in Mexico will provide some of the conversational, online content.

Benefits Summary
- Improves access to education for students of all ages in academically underserved communities.
- Links students in small rural environment to global learning opportunities and international
- Cost-effective transition from video delivery to anytime anywhere web enabled learning
- Supplements brick-and-mortar classroom facilities at a time of expanding demand for education

Ean J. Harker
Instructional Designer, School of Continuing and Professional Studies (SCPS), Instructional Media Integration Centre (IMIC), Southern Utah University

“Video costs have soared, which was part of our rationale for switching to Breeze. As a result, instructors and students can participate in distance learning without depending upon complicated broadcast technologies.”

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