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Small school, big-time tech
Tidewater's tech chief explains his school's success



eCAMPUS NEWS

Technology News for Today's Higher-Ed Leader

Vol. 1 No. 2 November 2008

SPECIAL FEATURE

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eCAMPUS NEWS

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Higher-Ed Leader*

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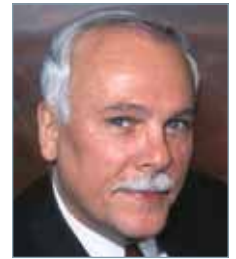
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Big-time technology at a community college



Richard F. Andersen

By **Dennis Carter, Assistant Editor**

Richard F. Andersen doesn't believe technology-laden campuses should be exclusive to the bigwigs of higher education.

For expansive universities with nine-digit budgets, lectures via webcast, state-of-the-art simulators, and wired classrooms have become the norm. But Andersen—vice president for information systems at Tidewater Community College in Virginia—has helped beef up his own campus's technology infrastructure to give students a major university education on a community college campus.

"We're aware that there probably aren't a lot of community colleges that are getting into these things in a big way," said Andersen, a former naval officer and 12-year veteran of the college.

Tidewater's technology prowess earned a top-five ranking in the Center for Digital Education's list of the most tech-savvy community colleges in the United States. Among its tech accomplishments is an online library system that lets students conduct internet chats with librarians, who help students navigate the college's vast book collection. Andersen said the system was ideal for adults returning to college who don't have time to drive to campus and spend hours researching for class projects and papers.

"It's just part of what students now expect," he said.

Tidewater also offers simulations for a host of professions. The college has a big rig simulator that puts students in the driver's seat of an 18-wheel truck and allows them to practice tight turns and hilly terrains before they ever get on the road. It also has a nursing simulator that allows students to virtually conduct surgical procedures.

As college tuition continues to rise—and the economic crisis has made it more difficult for students to secure private loans (story, page 16)—Andersen said two-year institutions should strive to bolster technology on affordable campuses.

"[Students] are looking for an academically rigorous environment, and also one that's as close to a four-year institution life they can get," he said. "We're not your ho-hum community college from 20 years ago."

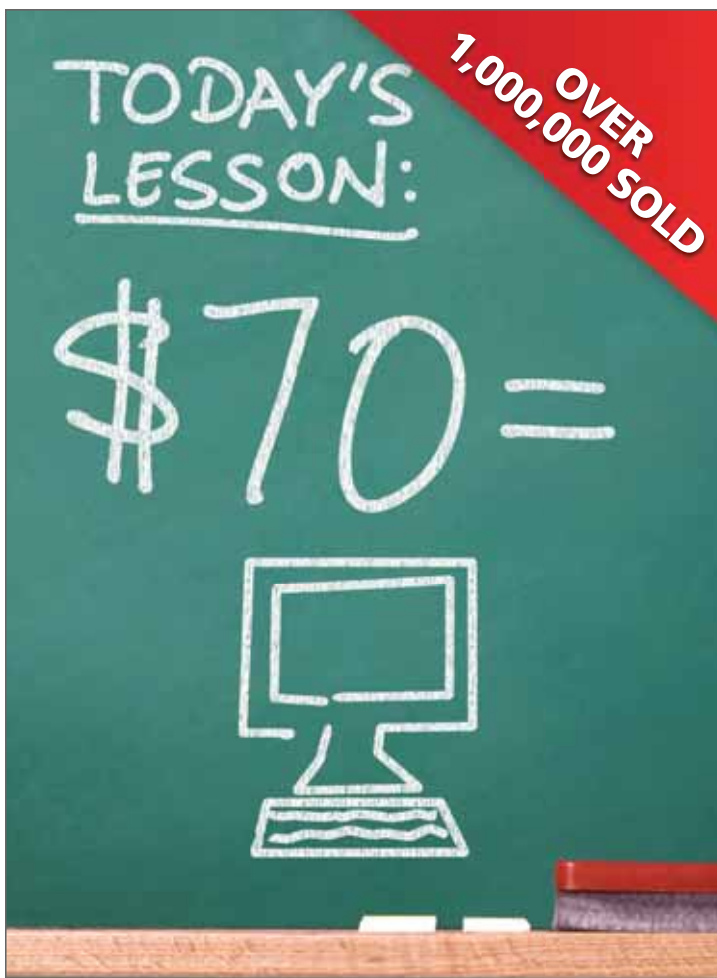
Michael Summers, vice president for academic and student affairs, said Tidewater's computer capabilities have convinced students—especially recent high school graduates—to stay at the college more than just one semester or one year.

"I don't think students come here based on how much technology we have," he said. "I think students stay here based on how much technology we have."

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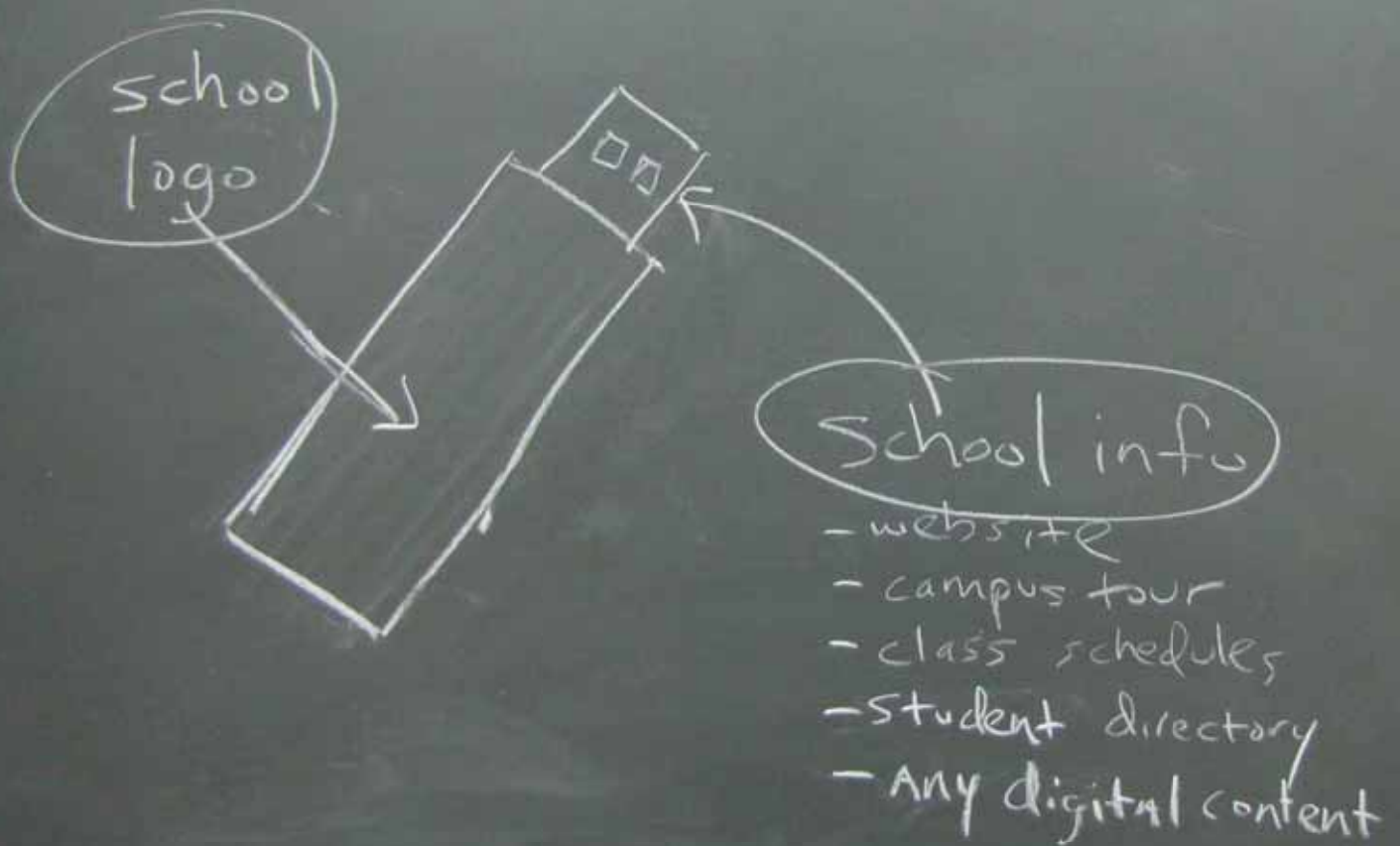
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Study: Bandwidth increasing on college campuses

Bandwidth and internet connection speeds on college campuses nationwide increased significantly from 2006 to 2007, while students and faculty at the largest universities still have huge advantages in accessing high-performance networks, according to a study released last month.

The Core Data Service Fiscal Year 2007 Report, conducted by the higher-education IT advocacy group EDUCAUSE, shows bandwidth gains at community colleges, four-year colleges, and universities with master's and doctoral programs.

Total bandwidth at the 994 colleges and universities surveyed by EDUCAUSE has "increased significantly" since the 2006 survey was conducted, according to the report. Doctoral institutions saw the biggest gains, showing 60 percent more bandwidth. Bandwidth at bachelor's institutions was up 51 per-

cent, and master's institutions increased by 32 percent. Two-year colleges had the smallest gains, with a 28-percent increase in bandwidth since 2006.

Despite across-the-board gains in internet bandwidth, doctoral institutions had an edge on access to the highest performing networks. Twenty-six percent of those universities said they had access to networks running at 1,000 megabits per second or faster. Ten percent of master's institutions had access to these networks—and less than 3 percent of two-year colleges and bachelor's programs had access to networks that fast.

There are still colleges using relatively slow-bandwidth internet connections, defined as speeds less than 4.5 megabits per second, the report said. Six percent of two-year schools have these slower connection speeds, along with 3 percent of bachelor's schools, according to the study. The most common bandwidth for universities with master's programs was between 45 and 89 Mbps.

Other data saw little change from 2006 to 2007. Shaping bandwidth—the common practice of adjusting and limiting internet usage to prevent network interference—remains a staple of higher education. Only 6 percent of all campuses surveyed in the report said they did not have bandwidth-shaping policies. Nearly 14 percent of two-year institutions did not shape or track bandwidth—by far the highest percentage in the report.

EDUCAUSE said IT funding in higher education followed expected patterns once again in 2007. Funding increased according to "institutional complexity," meaning two-year colleges had the least funding—while schools with doctoral programs had the most.

NC State, IBM join in cloud-computing project

IBM and North Carolina State University have teamed up to bring "cloud computing" to every student in the state, the two parties say—giving students free access to centralized computing power, data storage, sophisticated software, and other educational materials.

The new program could revolutionize how local school systems, community colleges, and universities provide computer access to students, say officials.

The program—called the Virtual Computing Initiative—would expand a concept that has been in use at NC State since 2004, when the university and IBM started the Virtual Computing Lab, which students can use from remote locations.

NC State also said it would make the programming code that underpins the system available to other universities around the world, so they can set up similar cloud-computing systems for schools in their regions. The university has received corporate help, including a \$2.4 million grant from Intel Corp. and a \$1.2 million grant from IBM, for the lab.

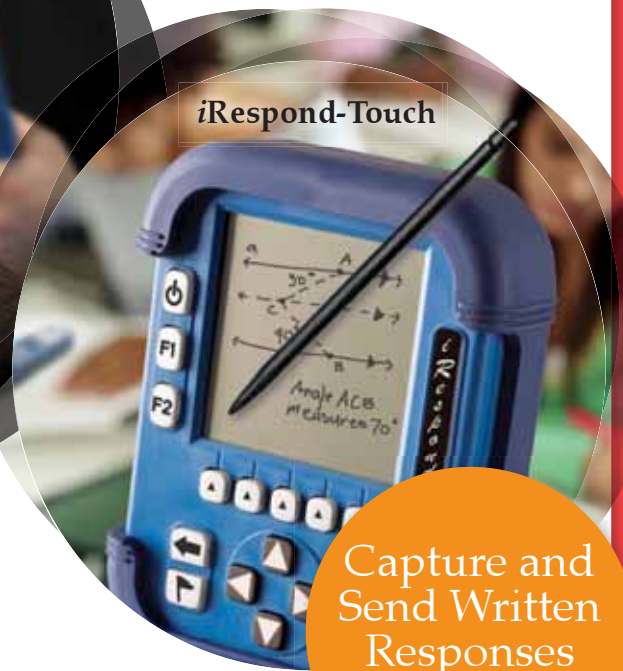
Local school systems often struggle to find enough money for computers, software, and tech support, campus officials say. But using the virtual computer lab could give them access to less costly—and in some cases, free—software that is frequently updated. They also could use less-expensive computers to access the system and would need less technical support, because the software would

remain on the virtual lab's servers, said Samuel F. Averitt, NC State's vice provost for information technology.

Programs available through the initiative range from educational tools for kindergartners to cutting-edge digital modeling and statistical analysis programs for university students. The only requirements to participate are broadband internet access and a computer or mobile device capable of accessing the internet.

Pilot projects have begun with some schools, Averitt said, but it's unclear when the system will be made fully functional for all North Carolina schools.

Schools can get information on how to join the project at its web site (<http://blade.org/vci.cfm>).



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Colleges spend billions to prepare freshmen

From staff and wire reports

A new study estimates that a third of American college students have to enroll in remedial classes before they are ready for college-level work—and the bill to colleges and taxpayers for trying to bring them up to speed on material they were supposed to learn in high school comes to between \$2.3 billion and \$2.9 billion annually.

“That is a very large cost, but there is an additional cost and that’s the cost to the students,” said former Colorado governor Roy Romer, chair of the group Strong American Schools, which issued the report “Diploma to Nowhere” in September. “These students come out of high school really misled. They think they’re prepared. They got a 3.0 and got through the curriculum they needed to get admitted, but they find what they learned wasn’t adequate.”

Christina Jeronimo was an “A” student in high school English but was placed in a remedial course when she arrived at Long Beach Community College in California. The course was valuable in some ways but frustrating and time-consuming. Now in her third year of community college, she’d hoped to transfer to UCLA by now.

Like many college students, she wishes she’d been worked a little harder in high school, saying: “The demands of the high school teachers aren’t as great as the demands for college. Sometimes they just baby us.”

The problem of colleges devoting huge amounts of time and money to remediation isn’t new, though its scale and cost has been difficult to measure. The latest report gives somewhat larger estimates than some previous studies, though it is not out of line with trends suggested in others, said Hunter Boylan, an expert at Appalachian State University in North Carolina, who was not connected with the report.

Analyzing federal data, the report estimates 43 percent of community college students require remediation, as do 29 percent of students at public four-year universities, with higher numbers in some places. For instance, four in five Oklahoma community college students need remedial coursework, and three in five in the giant California State university system need help in English, math, or both.

The cost per student runs to as much as \$2,000 in community colleges and \$2,500 in four-year universities.

Jeronimo was hardly alone at Long Beach Community College, where 95 percent of students need remedial coursework, according to President Eloy Oakley.

“It’s the No. 1 issue to Long Beach City College and the entire California community college system, easily,” Oakley said. “I don’t believe that the public in general really understands the magnitude of the problem.”

Simply dumping the remedial students into large classes isn’t necessarily expensive for colleges, although it’s also not very effective. But smaller classes typically require more attention and money. Some states have refused to fund remedial courses at the university level. In California, Oakley said, state funding for community colleges favors credit courses; remediation is typically noncredit.

Educators are working to improve remedial courses. Long Beach is developing “success areas” that give extra time and attention to students. Community colleges in Tennessee have completely redesigned giant introductory and remedial courses



where many students were struggling.

Boylan says colleges are learning that such courses also must teach study skills to be effective.

Indeed, students often report that the hardest aspect of the transition to college isn’t the material; it’s the new rhythm and structure of college-level work.

“One of the things they don’t teach in high school is time management,” Jeronimo said.

Eric Paris, who earned a 3.8 high school GPA but is finding his freshman year at Virginia Tech much more challenging, says the big difference is “it’s all on my own.” In class, “it’s up to me if I want to sit on Facebook or pay attention.” He, too, wishes he’d taken more challenging high school classes but thought a high GPA was more important.

Boylan says the gap between what high schools teach and what colleges expect isn’t the only problem. He says there’s often a mismatch, with high schools and colleges teaching material in different ways.

It’s true that only recently have K-12 and higher education begun talking seriously about aligning standards. But Romer, who also headed the Los Angeles Unified School District, doesn’t buy that it’s just a communication problem.

“We’re not expecting enough of our youngsters and the institutions that train them,” he said.

New low-cost college option emerges

Program allows for self-paced online learning that transfers credits to colleges

By Dennis Carter, Assistant Editor

Burck Smith wanted to give college students a way to earn course credits and kick-start their higher-education careers while slashing first-year college costs by more than half.

Smith, CEO of Smarthinking, an online tutoring provider, introduced StraighterLine last year, giving adults resuming their education or recent high school graduates a chance to complete online classes that will transfer to colleges and universities across the United States.

Smith said StraighterLine offers classes equivalent to those a college freshman or sophomore would have to complete before advancing to the final years of their undergraduate study.

Students can take a StraighterLine course for \$399 and face no minimum or maximum time to complete the class. But in a unique business model that could revolutionize the online-learning industry, students also can sign up for any of the eight classes—including economics, accounting, developmental writing, and English composition—offered by StraighterLine for a flat fee of \$99 a month. Enterprising students that work hard to complete the courses as quickly as possible can save money—or earn more college credit in a fixed amount of time.

Students receive up to 10 hours of one-on-one tutoring per course. The student can use these hours at his or her choosing.

The service “allows people to start college very affordably and very quickly,” said Smith, whose company is based in Washington, D.C. He added that education giant McGraw-Hill provides material for StraighterLine classes.

As the price of a college education has risen by 35 percent in the last six years, outpacing personal income and consumer

prices since the 1980s, Smith said people from varying backgrounds would welcome a lower-cost alternative.

“College is always expensive, but certainly this seems to be a trend that’ll favor [more affordable online learning],” he



A new pricing model for online learning?

said, adding that this year’s credit crunch has amplified the strain on college students trying to earn a degree. “In these tough economic times, when loans just aren’t available, this makes a lot of sense.”

Compared with traditional colleges, StraighterLine students could save hundreds, sometimes thousands, of dollars in their first year or two of college work. The average cost of a course at a four-year public institution is about \$700, and the cost of a private college course is about \$2,600—about six times more than StraighterLine’s per-course fee. The average cost of a course at an online university is \$1,482, according to 2007 statistics released by the College Board.

The downside is, not many schools accept StraighterLine courses for credit yet. As of press time, the institutions that do are Jones International University, Ellis University, Grand Canyon University,

Potomac College, and Fort Hays State University.

Smith said StraighterLine is in talks with other colleges about accepting credits earned through the program. The selling point is a logical one, he said: Students who earn freshman and sophomore credits through StraighterLine will need somewhere to finish their education. “That’s where colleges come in,” he added.

The service also could be seen as helping to solve a problem facing many colleges and universities today: Too many freshmen arrive on campus needing remedial instruction before they’re ready for college-level work (see previous page).

Officials at StraighterLine’s partner institutions said their faculty thoroughly evaluated the courses to ensure they met university standards.

“If it isn’t a good match, we don’t use that course,” said Terry Rawls, vice chancellor for academic programs at Denver-based Jones International University (JIU). “We judge these [courses] to be equivalent to ours ... and that’s something that’s been done in higher education for generations.”

As more students who use StraighterLine need a school where they can continue course work, Rawls said colleges—especially online colleges like JIU—should aggressively pursue these students.

“It’s kind of a recruiting tool,” said Rawls, who wasn’t sure how many JIU students had used StraighterLine. “To me, the StraighterLine project fills a gap for those who may not have the confidence to go back to school. It’s an opportunity for them to jump in and take a course. [StraighterLine] is probably going to be used mostly by adults who are anxious about returning ... and this is a way of dipping a toe in, and to do it in a relatively low-stress environment.”

Feds OK broadband over TV 'white spaces'

Plan could bring web access to more Americans—but some fear signal interference

From staff and wire reports

In a move that could advance the spread of broadband internet service to consumers nationwide, the Federal Communications Commission voted Nov. 4 to open up unused, unlicensed portions of the television airwaves known as “white spaces” to deliver wireless broadband service to more Americans.

The vote is a big victory for public-interest groups and technology companies such as Google Inc. and Microsoft Corp., which say white spaces could be used to bring broadband internet access to rural America and other underserved parts of the country.

“White spaces are the blank pages on which we will write our broadband future,” said Jonathan Adelstein, one of two Democrats on the five-member commission. Adelstein added that white spaces could become a “third channel” to reach consumers beyond the telephone and cable networks that represent the primary competition in today’s broadband market.

The vote came over the objections of the nation’s big TV broadcasters, which argue that using the fallow spectrum to deliver wireless internet access could disrupt their over-the-air signals. Manufacturers and users of wireless microphones—including sports leagues, church leaders, performers, and even some educators—have also raised concerns about interference.

The next step for the main opponent, the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), could be a lawsuit to stop the FCC’s plan from taking effect. NAB had no immediate comment.

Four commissioners voted to approve the plan, with one commissioner—Republican Deborah Tate—dissenting in part. Among her concerns, Tate raised



FCC Chairman Kevin Martin calls TV white spaces ‘a very valuable ... asset.’

questions about how potential interference problems would be handled.

Last month, a technical report by FCC engineers concluded that interference could be eliminated with the use of wireless transmitter devices that rely on spectrum-sensing and “geolocation” technologies to detect nearby broadcast signals.

The FCC’s plan will allow the use of white spaces to provide broadband following the transition from analog to digital TV broadcasting in February.

Supporters of the plan say the vacant spaces between TV channels—which would be available for free, unlicensed use, as Wi-Fi is now—are particularly well-suited to providing broadband service, because they can penetrate walls, carry a great deal of data, and reach a wide geographic area. FCC Chairman Kevin Martin, one of three Republicans on the commission, called white spaces “a very valuable national asset.”

Opening up this spectrum to high-speed wireless connections has been a high priority for internet companies, which stand to benefit as more Americans get online. Technology and equipment

makers, meanwhile, are counting on a multibillion-dollar market for advanced wireless devices to transmit and receive signals—including laptops, personal digital assistants, and TV set-top boxes.

Microsoft said the FCC’s vote “ushers in a new era of wireless broadband innovation.”

With partial dissents by the two Democrats on the five-member panel, the FCC also voted to approve Verizon Wireless’ planned \$28 billion purchase of Alltel Corp. in a deal that will create the nation’s largest wireless carrier.

Verizon Wireless, a joint venture between Verizon Communications Inc. and Vodafone Group PLC, plans to buy Alltel of Little Rock, Ark., for \$5.9 billion, plus the assumption of \$22.2 billion in debt.

The Justice Department approved the deal after Verizon agreed to sell assets in 22 states to address government concerns about reduced competition. The FCC is requiring the company to sell assets in five additional markets and to honor Alltel’s existing roaming agreements with other wireless carriers for four years.



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Will 'wisdom of crowds' improve software patents?

Online patent program could help reduce costly litigation, proponents say

From staff and wire reports

Some of the biggest players in the technology industry complain that the U.S. patent system is broken—putting too many patents of dubious merit in the hands of people who can use them to drag companies and other inventors to court. And that, in turn, raises software costs and adds uncertainty for schools and consumers.

Now, an experimental program launched last year with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and backed by the technology industry aims to give the public more of a voice in the system.

The goal is to produce better patents by reducing ones granted on applications that aren't novel or are overly broad. Supporters hope this will drive innovation by reducing the patent infringement lawsuits clogging the courts.

"A patent is a pretty significant monopoly, so we want to make sure we are giving it to the right people," said New York Law School professor Beth Noveck, who came up with the idea for Peer-to-Patent while teaching a patent law class.

Large technology companies have the highest hopes for Peer-to-Patent, because they are some of the most vocal critics of the existing system.

They warn that the Patent Office has been overwhelmed by a sharp increase in patent applications in recent years, particularly in computing. The agency has more than 5,800 examiners with specialized expertise in a range of areas, but they are sifting through a mountain of applications: 467,243 were submitted in fiscal 2007, up from 237,045 in fiscal 1997 and 137,173 in fiscal 1987.

As a result, said Dave Kappos, vice president of intellectual property law for IBM, it is taking big technology companies with huge patent portfolios longer and longer to get applications through the system. The Patent Office had a backlog of nearly 761,000 applications at the end of fiscal 2007, with applicants waiting an average of 32 months for a final decision.

That's tough for an industry built on rapid innovation, short product life cycles, and technology that can become quickly outdated, Noveck said. Indeed, a key ben-

efit of participating in the Peer-to-Patent program is the promise of an expedited review, with a preliminary Patent Office decision in as few as seven months.

Backlog is only part of the problem, however. Poor patent quality is just as big a concern.

Some of the most contentious patents have come out of the tech sector, because software and other cutting-edge technologies are relatively new to the Patent Office and are evolving quickly, explained Mark Webbink, director of New York Law School's Center for Patent Innovations. That means patent examiners don't have long-established databases of existing inventions to consult in reviewing these applications.

"With technology, the prior art often can't be found in existing patents or academic journal articles," Noveck said. "It could exist in a string of computer code posted online somewhere that isn't indexed."

The result of substandard patents, tech companies say, has been a sharp increase in costly infringement lawsuits that eat up valuable resources and threaten to keep innovative products off the market. According to James Bessen and Michael J. Meurer of Boston University School of Law, 2,830 patent lawsuits were filed in U.S. district courts in 2006, up from 1,840 in 1996 and 1,129 in 1986.

Schools and colleges are among those most deeply affected by recent patent infringement lawsuits. Learning management systems provider Blackboard Inc. has been embroiled in a lengthy legal battle with a chief rival, Desire2Learn, over what Blackboard called an infringement on its patent—but what outside observers believed was an example of an overly broad patent that never should have been awarded in the first place.



'Peer-to-Patent' aims to reform the patent process.

The concept behind the program, called Peer-to-Patent, is straightforward: Publish patent applications on the internet for all to see and let anyone with relevant expertise—academics, colleagues, even potential rivals—offer input to be passed along to the Patent Office.

By using the power of the web to tap the wisdom of the masses, Peer-to-Patent aims to dig up hard-to-find "prior art"—evidence that an invention already exists or is obvious and therefore doesn't deserve a patent.

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Experts say higher education will have to embrace new strategies if student financing is to hold up through the severe economic downturn

Student lending in **CRISIS**

By Dennis Carter, Assistant Editor

As the financial world waits for frozen credit markets to thaw, higher-education officials say college students will face unprecedented scrutiny from private lenders as the country reels from its sharp economic downturn.

Students with cosigners who attend the country's largest universities likely will have little trouble attaining loans, experts say—but community college students with little or checkered credit histories could have to depend on nontraditional payment policies.

The \$850 billion bailout package passed by Congress last month won't have an immediate impact on student loans, but it could be a first step in unclogging the credit market and making loans more widely available, campus officials said. Until then, many college students will have to rely on federal money flowing directly from the federal government.

"I just hope, for students' sake, that this bailout helps—and access doesn't become an issue for students to be able to ... fulfill whatever dream they have," said Tom Dalton, assistant vice president for enrollment management at Excelsior College in Albany, N.Y.

If loans become scarce, colleges might have to establish pay-over-time systems, in which students have an entire semester to pay for classes. Because that requires colleges to absorb the risk, instead of a third-party lender, some financial experts say many institutions would be reluctant to embrace such a model.

Students entering college will find their lending options have dwindled in just the past year. Thirty-six lenders have stopped



offering private student loans since 2007, according to Fin Aid.org, a web site that tracks student lending, scholarships, and other kinds of financial aid. And with world markets in an upheaval, the line extending from the student loan industry soon could be a long one.

"I've never seen anything like this in 25 years in higher education, and I don't think anyone else has either," said Excelsior College President John Ebersole, adding that an unusually high number of Excelsior students waited until tuition deadlines to pay

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for their fall classes. “We’re living in a very unique and unpleasant time in our history.”

Ebersole and other higher-education decision makers said a “pay-over-time” financing model could leave campuses short on projected earnings at the end of each semester. Taking on financial risk isn’t the most attractive option, Ebersole said, but at Excelsior—where the college allows students to pay throughout a semester—the default rate is less than 5 percent.

“But if someone can take a course and at the end of four months, you don’t

lenders. Nationally, 40 percent of students who receive student aid pay for college through federal loans, according to a 2007 study released by The College Board. Sixty-one percent of graduate students who use financial aid receive federal loans.

In a survey conducted in April by Student Lending Analytics, an organization that provides data for colleges’ financial aid offices, officials at 7 percent of two-year colleges said they were planning to switch to direct federal lending, while 28 percent said they were considering the move. Overall, 5.8 percent of college officials in the survey said they

much uncertainty and turmoil in that market to make the risk worth taking.”

At Penn State, the commitment to direct federal funding will provide more security for the 44,000 students who receive federal assistance for school. Penn State officials said depending on the U.S. Treasury, instead of banks that are susceptible to collapsing sectors of the economy, was a sound short-term strategy.

“Removing the uncertainty for our students and letting them know their loans will be funded is an assurance we need to provide,” said Anna Griswold, the university’s assistant vice president and executive director of student aid.

Dalton at Excelsior College said migration to direct lending could be costly for large universities, which might be forced to create a new department to manage direct lending on campus.

“It’s not easy to do that as money gets tighter and tighter,” said Dalton, who has worked in the financial aid industry for 27 years.

While campus decision makers and students seek alternatives to private funding, officials from one of the country’s largest student lenders, Sallie Mae, said they were confident that access to higher education wouldn’t be impeded by rollercoaster credit markets.

“The bottom line in student loans is this: Despite the pinch of the current credit crisis, federal student loans are available to students and parents regardless of financial need, income, or collateral,” said Martha Holler, a Sallie Mae spokeswoman. “While some lenders have stopped offering these loans or become more school-selective, Sallie Mae continues to fund every eligible federal student loan application received from every student at every school.”

Holler said Sallie Mae—which manages \$172 billion in student loans and serves 10 million students nationwide—will join other lenders in benefiting from the economic bailout bill passed by

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“I’ve never seen anything like this in 25 years in higher education, and I don’t think anyone else has, either.”

—Excelsior College President John Ebersole

have your money, you have no further leverage with them,” he said. “It’s a tough situation.”

Ebersole and other college officials said federal financial aid would largely be immune to the disruptions in the credit markets. He said direct federal lending has become commonplace at many community colleges—after major banks announced they would stop lending to students at traditionally high-risk two-year colleges—and soon could catch on at four-year universities. Congress calmed fears in higher education in September, when it voted to ensure that federal loans would be available until at least the end of the 2009-10 school year.

Over the past year, major universities such as Indiana, Penn State, and Michigan State have announced they will use the federal Direct Loan Program as the source for federally backed student loans. At Indiana’s Bloomington campus, nearly 40 percent of undergraduates—or about 12,000 students—use subsidized federal loans through private



were committed to the direct lending program.

Roger Thomas, vice provost for enrollment management at Indiana University, said officials would consider returning to private loans, but not while financial markets were in flux.

“Competition among lenders in the private sector served our students well for several years,” Thompson said in a statement released last spring. “However, at the present time there is just too

Cover Story

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Congress and signed by President Bush last month.

"We do not anticipate selling any assets to the government through the rescue program," she said. "We and other student loan providers will benefit indirectly from the program as other banks and financial institutions sell their troubled assets and subsequently resume lending in the capital markets."

Ebersole said there could be one bright spot in the gloomy economic outlook. During economic lulls, corporations often eliminate training sessions, leaving colleges as the logical alternative for professionals looking to propel themselves up the corporate ladder.

"When people are worried about their jobs, they typically try to bulk up on credentials," he said. "That's why there's a belief that when the economy goes in the tank, we're OK."

Despite the economic strain, higher education has seen an increase in enrollment this academic year. Enrollment at large universities has grown slightly this fall and community colleges have seen an influx of students since the summer, as students seek career-boosting degrees without the high costs of prestigious universities, according to several national reports and studies.

From 2000-2006, two-year community colleges saw a 10-percent annual increase in enrollment, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Early community college estimates show that 10-percent bump might be higher this year.

Eric D. Fingerhut, chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents, said workers who lose their jobs in economic slumps turn to colleges to improve their prospects. This trend, he said, should keep college enrollment steady in the coming years.

"I think we will see more students, both those seeking professional training and those who have lost their jobs," said Fingerhut, adding that colleges could sur-



Federal officials warn of a possible shortfall in Pell Grant funding next year.

vive the financial crisis by closely monitoring endowments and student loans. "In the long run, having the additional credentials will lead to better careers and better jobs for people."

The wave of Americans seeking on-campus training during this financial downturn could have consequences.

White House officials warned Congress in September that the ever-increasing dependency on direct federal student loans could lead to a shortfall of the country's most vital student aid program, Pell Grants. The \$14 billion grant program could fall \$6 billion short next year as applications pour in at an unprecedented pace. More than six million low-income college students reportedly will receive Pell Grant funds this year.

Federal officials said that despite the projected shortfall, students who qualify for Pell Grant aid will receive the tuition money. An increasing number of low-income students are applying for Pell

Grants—families making less than \$40,000 a year—putting more stress on the federal program. About 90 percent of applicants reportedly qualify as low-income.

While lawmakers propose long-term fixes for the problem, passage of a \$2.5 billion temporary spending bill has been deemed a temporary solution. Government officials expect this measure to prevent the shortfall from affecting college students until spring 2009.



Excelsior College
<https://www.excelsior.edu>

Direct Loan Program
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSFAP/DirectLoan/index.html>

Student Lending Analytics
<http://www.studentlendinganalytics.com>

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Students, publishers spar over potential of eTextbooks to reduce costs

By Meris Stansbury, Assistant Editor

Online textbooks have been touted in recent months as a way to bring relief to college students beleaguered by soaring textbook prices. Now, a study from the Student Public Interest Research Groups raises questions about whether online texts really are better than their printed counterparts—and publishers of online textbooks are firing back in turn.

According to the study, titled “Course Correction: How Digital Textbooks are Off Track and How to Set Them Straight,” eTextbooks sound great in theory, but they are still overpriced—and though open electronic textbooks have the cost right, currently there aren’t enough options to make them worth a student’s time.

The study surveyed more than 500 students from Oregon and Illinois, asking them to rate their criteria for what defined a good digital textbook solution. Students said affordability, printing options, and accessibility were the top three characteristics of a worthy solution.

Online textbooks: Hope or Hype?

To be more affordable than traditional books, digital textbooks must cost less than the net cost of buying a printed textbook—the purchase price minus the amount a student can expect to receive for selling it back to the bookstore.

The study found the offerings from CourseSmart—a major publisher of eTextbooks—were too expensive and hard to access.

According to the study, CourseSmart digital texts on average cost the same as a new hard copy of the same title bought and sold back to the bookstore—and they cost 39 percent more than a used hard copy of the same title bought and sold back online.

The study also found that CourseSmart’s printing options were limited to 10 pages per session for each of the eTextbooks available—and buying and printing just half an electronic text reportedly cost three times as much as buying a used hard copy and selling it back to the bookstore.

Finally, the study noted that CourseSmart’s eTextbooks expired after 180 days, so students did not have the ability to access their books in the future.

CourseSmart spokesman Garen Singer said digital textbooks have more strengths than the study reported.

For example, he said, even though prices for CourseSmart texts vary widely, most books have a 50-percent discount from the list price—and the average price for a CourseSmart book is \$50.

What’s more, CourseSmart is offering a discount to Ohio college students through a deal negotiated with OhioLink, Ohio’s library and information network. On top of CourseSmart’s lower prices, Ohio students will get an additional 10-percent discount, Singer said.

“We are talking with other states and institutions and also have programs in place with a number of companies that help college bookstores offer CourseSmart eTextbooks in the bookstore itself,” he added. “Nearly 100 stores are distributing CourseSmart eTextbooks this fall through our partnership with Nebraska Book Company and other partners. We expect that number to grow dramatically.”

Currently, CourseSmart offers more than 4,000 “front-list” titles, and this figure is expected to grow to more than 5,000 by December, Singer said.

There is a limit on printing—but Singer said any student who prefers to have an entire book in printed form “can, and should, purchase a print text.”

Though students can only print 10 pages per session—meaning every time they log on—students can quickly log on, then off, then on again to print up to 150 percent of the original textbook, or a copy and a half, Singer said, adding: “This is an effort to keep ... students honest and provide the printing flexibility students want, while not making it that easy to print the entire text and give it away to other students.”

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Singer also noted that not every student sells his or her textbooks back—and not every book is resold for 50 percent of its original value.

According to CourseSmart, which reportedly counts more than 2,000 schools and 300,000 faculty members as beta users, 80 percent of its student customers say they will buy some or all of their future titles from CourseSmart. Since August, students at more than 1,300 colleges and universities have purchased eTextbooks from CourseSmart, the company says.

Open textbooks

Because of the limits placed on printing electronic versions of traditional textbooks, and because the cost savings from buying electronic versions are unclear, the Student PIRG study says open eTextbooks are a much better alternative for students.

“Open textbooks are the right way to take advantage of the benefits of digital textbooks,” says the study, “so faculty and institutions should do everything they can to bring more open textbooks onto the market. For faculty, this means giving preference to open textbooks whenever pedagogically appropriate. For institutions, this means providing incentives to faculty authors and pooling resources to develop a viable infrastructure to support open textbooks.”

Open textbooks are distributed digitally, free of charge, under an open license. A key feature is that they permit users to make copies and translate the text into different formats. The key down side, according to the study, is that there are fewer open textbooks available for students to use.

Flat World Knowledge, an open textbook provider recognized by the Student PIRGs as a leader of the open textbook movement, aims to change that. Flat World says its service requires no registration or login, and there are no limitations on printing.

According to Flat World, the only drawback is in the formatting: Web-based books might not hold their format when printed. As a result, the company makes its money in part from shipping printed versions of open textbooks.

“If people want to have fully formatted ... print books, they can either purchase a complete book for \$29.95 from us, which we print on-demand and ship directly, or purchase printable PDF files for \$1.99 per chapter or \$19.95 for the whole book,”

According to a recent study, online textbooks sound great in theory, but they're still overpriced—and though open textbooks have the cost right, there aren't enough options yet.”

said Eric Frank, Flat World's co-founder.

Flat World's emergence has sparked a battle for market share in the digital textbook realm between publishers of electronic versions of traditional texts, such as CourseSmart, and publishers of open eTextbooks.

Singer believes CourseSmart texts offer an advantage over open textbooks because of their proven high quality and breadth of available content.

“If you consider the author and publisher investment that goes into making a textbook, it is hard to believe that an open-source, or free, textbook model will match the quality of that experience,” he said.

But Frank disagrees. At Flat World, he said, the company builds lists of people it thinks would be best suited to write a textbook on a particular topic, based on their scholarly reputation and/or previous textbook writing success.

“We reach out to those people, brainstorm ideas, and determine if there is a good fit. If so, they submit a full proposal and sample material, which we vet via peer reviewers. If we are satisfied that we will be able to develop a top textbook together, we proceed to a contract, and they begin writing,” he said.

But availability is still a challenge. As of press time, Flat World Knowledge had 17 titles under contract and in development. The first eight of these titles were scheduled to publish commercially between January 1 and March 1.

Flat World is signing new books at a rate of about 18 to 20 per year, Frank said. The company is involved in a private beta test at more than 20 institutions, including the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Lehigh University, the

University of Florida, and Spokane Falls Community College.

While Frank acknowledges that students use the books their professors select, he believes there are many advantages to using open textbooks.

For professors, each textbook is openly licensed for them to modify. Professors can move chapters and sections around, delete them, add their own materials to the book, and add annotations for their students. Coming next summer, they will be able to edit the books down to the sentence level, he said.

For students, open textbooks are “dramatically” more affordable, Frank said, and students can leave comments at the bottom of every page to engage in discussions with other students.

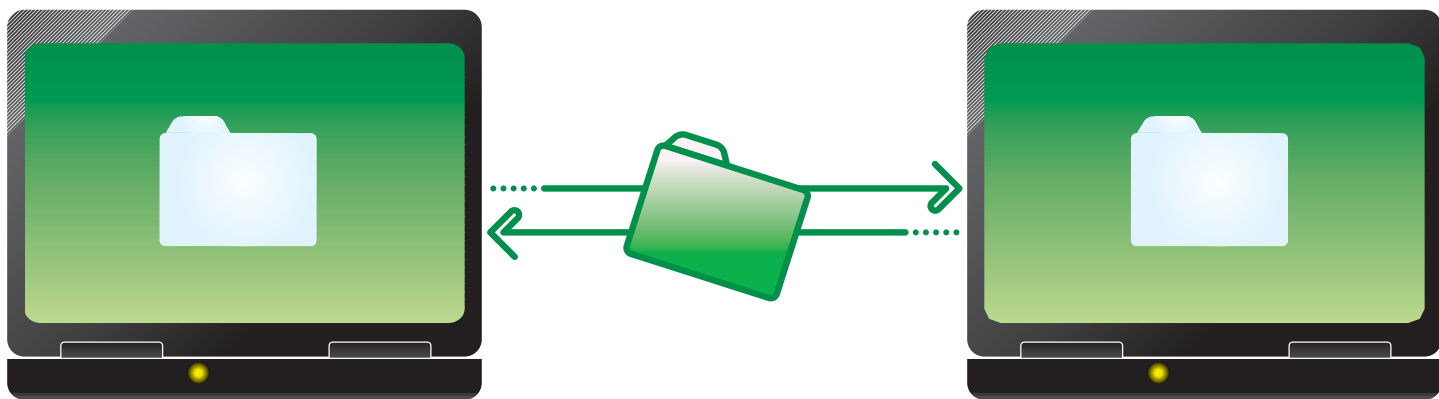


Student PIRG study
http://www.maketextbooksaffordable.org/course_correction.pdf

CourseSmart
<http://www.coursesmart.com/>

Flat World Knowledge
<http://www.flatworldknowledge.com/minisite/>

PEER-TO-PEER



PRESSURE

A new study examines what it will cost to police campus networks, thanks to recent federal legislation; some schools say these efforts are already siphoning too many valuable resources

By Maya T. Prabhu, Assistant Editor

Some colleges and universities might have to spend as much as half a million dollars to comply with new federal rules aimed at controlling illegal peer-to-peer file sharing on campuses, according to a study by the Campus Computing Project.

The regulations were included in the College Opportunity and Affordability Act of 2008 signed by President Bush in August. The law asks colleges and universities to implement network administration technologies that deter illegal P2P file sharing. These technologies can include bandwidth shaping, traffic monitoring to identify the largest bandwidth users, or products designed to reduce or block illegal file sharing. The law allows each institution to determine its own policy and use the corresponding technology.

"The costs [will] vary dramatically, depending on the college," said Kenneth

C. Green, founding director of the Campus Computing Project, a continuing study of the role of information technology at American colleges and universities.

He noted that the law applies to all of America's postsecondary institutions that participate in Title IV financial aid programs—about 4,400 public, private, and for-profit degree-granting institutions, as well as another 1,700 career colleges and other non-degree-granting institutions.

To meet the law's regulations, higher-education institutions will have to purchase hardware or software to stem illegal file sharing, if they don't already use such technologies. There are also other costs related to time spent by school administration, legal counsel, IT personnel, and student affairs personnel, Green said.

As of last fall, about 90 percent of the nation's four-year colleges and universities, and nearly two-thirds of its community colleges, had some type of policy to

address illegal P2P file sharing. But fewer than 40 percent of institutions had installed a technology-based solution to stem P2P piracy as of that time.

Green's organization says colleges and universities incurred a wide range of costs in combating P2P file sharing last year. These costs ranged from just under \$6,000 in average software licensing fees by public bachelor's institutions to more than \$158,000 for special hardware by private universities.

Colleges and universities also have established mandatory user education programs or penalized students for sharing files illegally, such as by taking away their network access.

For example, Green said, Cornell University requires students to complete a mandatory online tutorial before they gain access to the school's network.

"There's nothing like that in [place] for

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consumer networks. They turn it on and say, 'Go ahead and have fun,' he said, noting that colleges and universities have been very proactive in trying to stem online piracy.

The stipulations come after years of lobbying by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and the Motion Picture Association of America, which originally stated that college students account for nearly half of all pirated music and movies.

"In 2005, the RIAA said 44 percent of their [financial] losses were due to college students in the U.S.," Green said. However, earlier this year the RIAA issued a news release acknowledging that students only accounted for about 15 percent of losses.

While there was a lot of illegal file sharing in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Green said, the vast majority of schools now have policies to address illegal or inappropriate file sharing.

"The industry's swiftboating efforts are asking higher education to pay" to control a small percentage of illegal file sharing, he said.

Colleges pushing back

Administrators and IT chiefs at universities nationwide say the recording industry's search for students accused of online piracy is already cutting into their faculty's work day. In recent months, some universities have refused to forward "pre-litigation" letters to students offering them a settlement to avoid further legal action from the RIAA.

Forwarding these documents is not a legal responsibility of the college, administrators say, and tracking down students who might have downloaded music or movies illegally is time-consuming, forcing IT specialists to comb through an enormous network, pinpoint specific illegal actions, and find students.

"This is between the recording industry and the people who may be violating their copyrights," said Brian Rust, marketing manager of the University of

Wisconsin at Madison's Department of Information Technology, which has seen a steady increase subpoenas and "cease-and-desist" notices forwarded from the RIAA in recent years. "But public institutions are an easy target. We're very transparent about access to our network."

Higher education has been a primary ally in the recording industry's fight against online piracy, but over the last year, university officials say tension has mounted.

Filtering or monitoring technologies designed to spot incidents of illegal downloads have forced many colleges to assign full-time employees the job of tracking down the IP addresses of network users who might have violated copyright laws, find out if those users are still enrolled in the university, and make sure the alleged violators receive notice that the RIAA is looking for them.

Denise Stephens, vice provost for information services and chief information officer at the University of Kansas, said the school decided to stop forwarding pre-litigation papers to students because the practice did not fit its mission.

"We really had to make a decision ... about what our role was in this whole issue," said Stephens, who also has seen a rise in "cease-and-desist" notices. "We'd be acting as a go-between for an external party seeking to get information about our students. ... We decided that was not our role."

Stephens insisted that Kansas' new policy was not intended to pick a fight with the RIAA. She stressed that the university maintains "a zero-tolerance [file-sharing] policy," stripping students and faculty of their network access privileges in they are found guilty of internet piracy.

"This is not an effort to thumb our nose at anyone," she said.

In courtroom arguments and media reports over the last year, the RIAA has argued that compliance with subpoenas has not been a burden to universities in the past, so it should not be considered a burden now. But higher-education officials insist that compliance is requiring too much

of their time as the RIAA's anti-piracy campaign has become more rigorous.

Receiving and forwarding pre-litigation documents, Stephens said, was eating into staff members' work schedules and regularly overwhelming some employees.

"We had a person for whom this was becoming a full-time job," she said. "The overhead costs for us were not an acceptable burden."

Unlike at the University of Kansas, Wisconsin students found to have downloaded music illegally are not booted off the school's network automatically, but could face other disciplinary measures. Rust, the university's IT marketing manager, said its actions are administered on a case-by-case basis.

While the rising numbers of cease-and-desist notices and pre-litigation letters would suggest a rise in the frequency of illegal downloads on Wisconsin's campus, Rust said that is not the case.

"[The RIAA] would lead you to believe that is because our institution has an increase in copyright violations," he said. "We feel that it's due to their increasing efforts to scan the networks and send out notices."

Rust added that students who receive a letter forwarded from a university office might be misled into believing the school is recommending a settlement.

"They assume ... that we're basically recommending that they settle, when in fact, that might not be true," he said.



Campus Computing Project
<http://www.campuscomputing.net>

Recording Industry
Association of America
<http://www.riaa.org>

University of Wisconsin-Madison
<http://www.wisc.edu>

University of Kansas
<http://www.kansas.edu>



ASSOCIATED PRESS

ID GUARDS

A new law forces colleges and universities to validate the identity of online test-takers

By Dennis Carter, Assistant Editor

The higher-education law signed by President Bush in August demands that colleges authenticate test takers in online courses through the use of sophisticated identification technology or with exam proctors. While some higher-ed officials believe the law will help lend greater credibility to online learning, others say the new mandate is largely unnecessary.

The legislation promotes use of the latest monitoring methods, such as web cameras and keystroke recording, to ensure that online test takers are, indeed, the students enrolled in an online course. Some campus officials and experts in online learning say distance educators have always taken precautions during exams, and they say the law questions the validity of distance learning itself—implying that online students cheat, while failing to impose strict anti-cheating policies on students in a traditional classroom.

“Having this law imposed on the online school to me is redundant and insulting,” said Michael Lambert, executive director of the Distance Education and Training Council (DETC), a

Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit organization that promotes standards for schools that offer online courses. “There are [law-makers] who do not believe that you can really learn in [online classes]. ... The law presumes people cheat and that people aren’t honest. It’s always been a question raised by people who do not understand how we teach.”

Observers expect the federal Education Department to release guidelines for implementing the new law later this year, and they expect it will take effect in the next school year.

Accredited distance-education programs have always carefully monitored students’ test taking, mostly using proctors who watch students take exams and confirm their honesty with the college.

Lambert said the DETC, in its 400-page book of standards, outlines specific procedures for how proctors can ensure academic honesty. Students should recommend potential proctors—they cannot be family members, and DETC suggests librarians and local community leaders—and provide their contact information. DETC or university officials confirm the

proctor and mail the person an exam and directions on how to administer the test. Then, the student takes the exam at a specified location.

In recent years, some online learning programs have adopted technological alternatives to proctors, allowing students to take exams from their own computer.

This fall, Alabama’s Troy University is watching about 500 online graduate students with small web cameras, or “remote proctors.” The university first piloted the devices last year.

The technology also requires students to submit to a fingerprint scan, and it locks down a student’s computer and disables internet and database searches. The camera is pointed into a small, reflective ball, so a professor can have a 360-degree view of the test taker’s surroundings, making sure he or she isn’t taking a peak into a notebook or textbook.

The remote proctors cost \$150, and Troy officials said students can sell them to their peers once they no longer need the device. Officials said the university might help facilitate sell-backs in the coming years.

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Troy University, along with other schools that specialize in online degree programs, has been in talks with remote proctor vendors for several years, well before the College Opportunity and Affordability Act was passed this summer, said Deb Gearhart, Troy's eCampus director.

"Distance education has always had to jump to higher standards than they do in the regular classroom," Gearhart said.

Ronnie Creel, Troy's eCampus director of educational technology, said the web cameras have proven overwhelmingly popular with students. In a survey conducted this year, 88 percent of respondents said they preferred the remote proctor over a human proctor, Creel said.

"It gives them the ability to have proctors and do all of their work from home," he said.

The camera used at Troy, made by Massachusetts-based Software Secure, eventually could monitor all of Troy University's distance learners, campus officials said. And while some might see this kind of test monitoring as intrusive, the new higher-ed law could make such devices commonplace in online learning programs nationwide.

John F. Ebersole, president of Excelsior College in Albany, N.Y., a school that specializes in online classes, said legislation requiring greater accountability for distance-education programs has been in lawmakers' sights for several years. College officials, he said, shouldn't have been surprised when the legislation was unveiled.

"No one should be unduly alarmed about this requirement," said Ebersole, who has been near the forefront of internet-based classes since the 1980s. He added that while online programs should solidify their test-verification policies, cutting-edge technology could face fierce opposition among students and university faculty.

"There are a lot of concerns that come along with [monitoring technology]," he

said. "People feel like these systems are rather intrusive, and they raise questions of privacy. ... But different institutions are going to have different ways of dealing with this."

Gearhart said such concerns are unfounded, at least in Troy's experience. "We have not had one issue with anybody concerned about privacy," she said.

Lambert said officials at DETC—which is affiliated with 110 colleges nationwide—were confident the organization already was meeting the new law's requirements.

"Everybody looked around and said, 'We're already doing this,'" he said. "Our students pay their own tuition to go to school. Since you're paying your own money to get this training, it would be somewhat ludicrous for someone to cheat for you. It's counterproductive to why you're enrolling."

Officials at Western Governors University (WGU), an online university based in Salt Lake City, Utah, also said their current proctoring and monitoring policies satisfy the law's requirements. Diane Johnson, performance evaluation manager at the university—which has 11,000 students, all taking online classes—said strict monitoring of exams was the only way students could prove their college education was equivalent to that of their on-campus peers.

"We were already there," Johnson said. "We have quite a bit in place to protect integrity, because for us, it's critical. We have to be sure the individual who is taking the test is who they say they are. ... And our university is under incredible scrutiny anyway."

Johnson said WGU has 220 evaluators charged with detecting plagiarism or other forms of cheating. One evaluator, known as the "cheater chaser," was trained how to find students who have violated school policies—such as buying an essay or term paper from unscrupulous web sites.

WGU officials, Johnson said, are considering purchasing keystroke technology and web cameras that will allow students

to take exams from home. But currently, the university has more than 3,000 proctor sites nationwide, usually within 30 miles of a student's house, she said.

More stringent validation requirements laid out in the new federal legislation could make online degrees more valuable in the workforce, officials from several universities said. If employers know that the government is enforcing stricter measures that prevent cheating among distance learners, they might begin to view online degrees as equivalent to traditional degrees, said Gearhart, Troy University's eCampus director.

"I think it'll help make the degrees more acceptable," she said.

Michael A. Jortberg, an executive for Axiom, an information management company based in Arkansas, said requiring students to have web cameras with them when they do their online coursework introduces a burden that undermines the attraction of distance education for adults who do their work when they find time in a busy daily schedule.

"We believe equipment introduces extra costs, processes, and administration, which curbs distance learning's flexibility," Jortberg said. "This seems counter to the beauty of online flexibility."

Asked if test proctors were as reliable as expensive monitoring equipment that could raise the cost of education, Jortberg said college officials and technology vendors would watch closely as schools adjusted to new requirements.

"Only time will tell," he said.



Excelsior College
<http://www.excelsior.edu/>

DETC
<http://www.detc.org/>

Western Governors University
<http://www.wgu.edu/>

Troy University
<http://www.troy.edu/>

Major agreement gives students and other library users full-text access to many works

Google settles book-scanning lawsuit



From staff and wire reports

Internet search giant Google Inc., the Authors Guild, and the Association of American Publishers have settled a class-action lawsuit over Google's ambitious book-scanning project in a deal that represents a huge win for libraries and their users.

Under the deal, Google will pay \$125 million to resolve copyright claims by authors and publishers and to pay legal fees. Authors and publishers will have new opportunities to make money from the sale of out-of-print books online, and public and academic libraries will be able to expand their reach by offering full-text views of books in some cases.

The settlement ends a three-year legal challenge of Google's plan to make many of the world's books searchable online. The lawsuit charged that Google's efforts to scan books without permission from the copyright holders infringed on copyright protections. The settlement is subject to federal court approval.

"We're trying to create a new structure where there will be more access to out-of-print books, with benefits both to readers and researchers and to the rights holders of those books—authors and publishers,"

Richard Sarnoff, chairman of the publishers association, said in an interview.

"This is an extraordinary accomplishment," Paul N. Courant, university librarian for the University of Michigan, said in a statement. "It will now be possible, even easy, for anyone to access these great collections from anywhere in the United States."

Under the Google Print Library Project, snippets from millions of out-of-print, but copyright-protected, books have been indexed online by Michigan and other participating libraries. Google has called the project, which also scans the full text of public-domain works, an invaluable chance for books to receive increased exposure.

But in a class-action suit filed in 2005,

the Authors Guild alleged that Google was "engaging in massive copyright infringement." A year later, publishers also sued, citing the "continuing, irreparable, and imminent harm publishers are suffering ... due to Google's willful [copyright] infringement to further its own commercial purposes."

The settlement expands the amount of text to be scanned, makes it available for free online at "designated" library terminals, makes it available for subscription by colleges and universities, and allows readers to pay for full online access of copyrighted works.

Google's \$125 million contribution includes about \$34.5 million for a non-profit Book Rights Registry that will store

...continued on page 27

...continued from page 26

copyright information and coordinate payments. Google also will pay for the millions of copyrighted books already scanned—\$60 per complete work to the rights holder—and for the legal fees of the Authors Guild and publishing association. Any sales, subscription, and advertisement revenue that occur through the search program will be divided 63 percent and 37 percent, respectively, between the copyright holders and Google.

“This may be the biggest book deal in publishing history,” guild executive director Paul Aiken said.

If approved by the U.S. District Court in Manhattan, the settlement will end a conflict that had been closely followed by the publishing industry as it examines how copyright law should work on the internet and whether sales are hurt or harmed by access to digital text.

Authors and publishers once strongly resisted free online books, but over the past year, they have softened. During the year, entire works have been made viewable and even downloadable for free, including Charles Bock’s novel *Beautiful Children* and works by Paulo Coelho and Neil Gaiman.

The court is expected to rule on the agreement by next summer.

Since emerging as the internet’s most influential and profitable company, Google has fended off a variety of claims alleging that some of its success has been on built the legally protected work of others.

News organizations have either filed lawsuits or threatened legal action against Google for including snippets of copyrighted stories on its site. Companies also have sued Google for selling the right to show advertisements tied to a trademarked term entered into its search engine. In 2005, The Associated Press and Google disagreed on intellectual property issues, but were able to reach an amicable business solution in January 2006.

Google still faces an even bigger copyright battle over its popular video-sharing

site, YouTube. Viacom Inc. is seeking at least \$1 billion in damages in a lawsuit alleging that YouTube has illegally profited by tens of thousands of pirated clips from copyrighted shows such as *South Park* and *The Daily Show with John Stewart*.

Google, which bought YouTube for \$1.76 billion two years ago, has adamantly denied the allegations and blasted Viacom for threatening to stifle free expression on the internet. A trial date in that New York federal court case still hasn’t been scheduled.

Publishers are increasingly counting

“This may be the biggest book deal in publishing history.”

— Authors Guild Executive Director Paul Aiken

on the internet to help increase sales, and the Oct. 28 book-scanning settlement comes as the industry wonders, and worries, how badly it will be hurt by the shrinking economy.

Opening up a new market for out-of-print books might help.

“With this agreement, in-copyright, out-of-print books will now be available for readers in the U.S. to search, preview, and buy online—something that was simply unavailable to date,” Google said in a blog posting about the settlement. “Most of these books are difficult, if not impossible, to find. They are not sold through bookstores or held on most library shelves, yet they make up the vast majority of books in existence. Today, Google only shows snippets of text from the books where we don’t have copyright holder permission. This agreement enables people to preview up to 20 percent of these books.”

The company added: “What makes

this settlement so powerful is that in addition to being able to find and preview books more easily, users will also be able to read them. And when people read them, authors and publishers of in-copyright works will be compensated. If a reader in the U.S. finds an in-copyright book through Google Book Search, he or she will be able to pay to see the entire book online. Also, academic, library, corporate, and government organizations will be able to purchase institutional subscriptions to make these books available to their members. For out-of-print books that in most cases do not have a commercial market, this opens a new revenue opportunity that didn’t exist before.”

Google said it would continue to scan in-print books through its Library Project and make the full texts searchable, “but we won’t show any portion of the book,” it said. “As for books in the public domain, this agreement doesn’t change how we display them: We’ll make out-of-copyright works freely available on Google Book Search for people to read and download.”

To make sure the agreement advances libraries’ efforts to preserve, maintain, and provide access to books for students and researchers, Google said it will “give public and university libraries across the U.S. free, full-text viewing of books at a designated computer in each of their facilities. That means local libraries across the U.S. will be able to offer their patrons access to the incredible collections of our library partners—a huge benefit to the public.”



Google Library Project
<http://books.google.com/googlebooks/library.html>

Authors Guild
<http://www.authorsguild.org>

Association of American Publishers
<http://www.publishers.org>



U.K. classrooms test 'smart desks'

Interactive desktops could become a critical learning tool in classrooms worldwide, advocates say

**By Dennis Carter,
Assistant Editor**

Classroom desks soon could serve as interactive computer screens sensitive to the touch of several students simultaneously, if a pilot project in Britain's classrooms is an indication of things to come.

Researchers at Durham University in England are working with software company SynergyNet to develop the next-generation desktops, dubbed "Star Trek desks" by a university spokesman and commonly referred to as "smart desks." The desks allow students to use touch-screen capabilities to complete exercises, while a teacher monitors students' progress from a central screen near the front of the classroom. The screen reacts like a small interactive whiteboard and also can be used as a keyboard.

The interactive desks were first unveiled in a classroom Sept. 16, and researchers will continue to test the technology at all grade levels over the next four years.

Liz Burd, leader of Durham University's Technology-Enhanced Learning Research Group, said developers aimed to create a product that would allow for widespread use in any classroom.

"We are interested in the [way] it can support collaborative learning and also in the way in which integrating a computer into a desk and allowing any number of touches ensures that everyone has equal access to it," Burd said. "Part of our design and testing will be to ensure that the user interface is very intuitive, so teachers ... do not need to spend a lot of time learning how to use it."

Durham researchers last year announced the desk would "act like a large version of an Apple iPhone."

Burd did not specify how much the smart desks will cost, but she said software designed for them will be free for schools that purchase the desks themselves.

"We hope that soon the price will come down, [making them] more affordable for schools," Burd said, adding that the initial price could be similar to that of an interactive whiteboard, or between \$1,200 and \$2,500 apiece.

A key advantage to using the desks instead of an interactive whiteboard, however, would be that students don't have to move to the front of the classroom to use the technology; they could stay right in their seats. That could help level the playing field for students with disabilities, Burd said.

The smart-desk technology is similar in concept to a multi-touch tabletop computing interface unveiled by Microsoft last year. The Microsoft interface, called Surface, reportedly can process more than one finger touch at a time, and users can rotate images like they can on the iPhone. Company officials said the technology would work with existing touch screens.

Burd said Durham's smart desks are "platform independent" and stressed that developers are writing software that will "network multi-touch devices together and enable school applications to work on multi-touch hardware." She said Durham researchers would like to test the smart-desk software on Microsoft Surface devices when they are available commercially.

Researchers say the smart desks resemble 'a large version of an Apple iPhone.'"



Durham University
<http://www.dur.ac.uk>

SynergyNet
<http://tel.dur.ac.uk>

Blackboard, Iowa State work on Moodle integration

Project follows efforts to integrate Blackboard's software with other open systems

From staff and wire reports

Blackboard Inc. has partnered with Iowa State University to develop software that will allow colleges and universities to connect their Blackboard Learning Environment with the open-source Moodle course management system, the company announced Oct. 28.

In July, Blackboard announced a similar partnership with Syracuse University to develop an integration for the open-source Sakai course management system. Both efforts—which will be made available at no cost to Blackboard users—are part of Project NG, Blackboard's multi-year project to deliver a next-generation teaching and learning solution that can be more easily customized.

With support from Blackboard, Iowa State will develop a Learning Environment Connector for Moodle that will seamlessly integrate the two systems, giving faculty and students access to the full range of opportunities and materials offered by both systems in one place. The Connector will allow students and faculty who primarily access their courses through the Blackboard platform—but are part of a program, department, or class that also uses Moodle—to access all of their courses in one place, with a single login.

The Connector also will allow institutions to share information, data, learning tools, and resources between the Blackboard learning environment and Moodle, creating a greater level of interoperability and flexibility for faculty and course designers, Blackboard said.

"This effort will create new levels of freedom and control for faculty and students," said Michael L. Chasen, president and CEO of Blackboard. "A more open learning platform is something that we have made a priority, and are

excited to be delivering, in collaboration with active members of Blackboard's global community."

"We are pleased to partner with Blackboard in this effort that will bring new flexibility and ease of use, not just to our own campus, but to our peers in the Blackboard community," said Randal Dalhoff, assistant director of academic technologies for Iowa State University's Information Technology Services division.

The Connector will be released as open-source software, joining more than 150 free or open-source "Blackboard Building Blocks" currently available to the Blackboard community. Iowa State will lead development of the Connector, with design guidance and support from Blackboard.

Blackboard's announcement follows a similar move the company made in July, when—no doubt sensing the threat that open courseware systems pose to its business—it said it would team with Syracuse University to create software that would allow schools and universities to connect Blackboard's online environment with the Sakai Foundation's open-source course management system.

Like Moodle, Sakai is a free, online learning environment used by teachers internationally to manage their courses. Teachers can maintain assignments, grade books, and syllabi, among other functions.

"Students should not have to worry about whether different technology is powering their online learning environments for different classes," Chasen said in July. "With a single login, users should have access to all of their courses and course material. There should be one place they can go to get all of their course information."



Blackboard says it is committed to developing 'a more open learning platform.'"



HOT LINKS

Blackboard Inc.
<http://www.blackboard.com>

Iowa State University
<http://www.iastate.edu>

Moodle
<http://moodle.org>

Syracuse University
<http://www.syracuse.edu>

Sakai Project
<http://www.sakaiproject.org/portal>



Federal law could spur use of campus alert systems

**By Dennis Carter,
Assistant Editor**

In the wake of the April 2007 shootings at Virginia Tech University, colleges and universities from coast to

coast have adopted rapid-alert systems that can send phone calls, eMail, and text messages to students and staff members automatically in case of an emergency. But thanks to new federal rules, schools that haven't implemented these systems have yet another incentive to do so.

The federal College Opportunity and Affordability Act, which was signed into law Aug. 14, includes a provision that requires U.S. colleges and universities to upgrade their policies on emergency notification, response, and evacuation.

The legislation follows a rash of recent school shootings, most tragically including the April 2007 massacre at Virginia Tech, where 32 people were killed. But except in terms of volume, Virginia Tech's tragedy wasn't unique.

That reality was driven home yet again last month when two students were killed and a third person was wounded in a campus shooting at the University of Central Arkansas, which used an emergency-alert system to keep students indoors as police responded to the shootings.

University spokesman Warrick Sabin said it was the first incident to prompt use of the university's new emergency eMail and phone call system, purchased last year after the Virginia Tech massacre.

In September 2007, two Delaware State University (DSU) students were shot in a campus dining hall, and authorities scrambled to keep students in their dorms and tell the campus community what had transpired. Updates were posted on the school's web site, but only a sliver of the student body got the message.

This year, officials are more confident in

their ability to inform students quickly, as DSU now also uses emergency notification technology. During the school's next emergency, the campus's 3,700 students and 600 faculty and staff will be alerted within minutes.

"It will definitely help us notify students quicker than we have in the past," said James Overton, DSU's police chief, recalling last year's double shooting.

Students and faculty must sign up for the service by logging on to the school's web site and plugging in their eMail address and cell phone number. If they decline either or both options, the emergency message will be sent to the student's university-issued eMail in-box.

DSU is using Instant Alert for Schools, from Honeywell International. More than 2,600 K-12 schools use Honeywell's alert system, and about 230 college campuses have adopted the company's higher-education model, said company spokeswoman Karla Lemmon. The system reportedly can send out 125,000 text messages and 175,000 30-second automated phone calls in about 15 minutes.

Emergency-alert systems vary widely in cost: Lemmon said small campuses can spend as little as \$10,000 for installation, while larger universities typically spend upwards of \$100,000.

DSU students remember the confusion after last year's shootings, and many said they were relieved knowing they would be alerted quickly if tragedy strikes again. Senior Brittany Pace said it's crucial for universities to communicate with students through text messaging, because so many college students consider texting a primary form of correspondence.

Giving the university her personal eMail address and cell phone number was not a problem for Pace. "It doesn't make me uncomfortable," she said. "What would make me more uncomfortable is not knowing what's going on on campus. I think this can be very effective."

It will definitely help us notify students quicker than we have in the past."

— Delaware State University
Police Chief James Overton



HOT LINKS

University of Central Arkansas
<http://www.uca.edu>

Delaware State University
<http://www.desu.edu>

Honeywell International
<http://www.honeywell.com/instantalert>

New online venture rewards student note-takers

By Dennis Carter, Assistant Editor

Good grades aren't the only benefits college students can reap for faithful note taking. They can get a paycheck, too—thanks to a new web venture that has raised concerns among some educators.

Knetwit.com, created by two Babson College students, invites users to upload their class lecture notes, making them available to anyone with a Knetwit account.

Every time a student's notes are downloaded, he or she receives "Koins," or Knetwit currency. Every "Koin" is equivalent to four cents. When students reach the \$10 mark, they can cash in or buy a product—such as a water bottle or Frisbee—from the Knetwit store. Students can search by keyword, subject area, course, or school. If they can't find a specific set of notes, they can post a request for the material on Knetwit.

While students appreciate converting classroom diligence into spending money, some professors are concerned the site could allow students to take shortcuts, offering little incentive to attend class if they know a classmate will take notes and provide these online.

"What concerns us is that students might ... circumvent important processes [that] teachers might want them to go through," said Teresa Fishman, director of the Center for Academic Integrity at Clemson University. "The reason we have lectures in person is because you get something out of it."

Knetwit officials insist the site is legal and ethical.

"When you're starting something new and different, there's bound to be some misunderstandings about what you're trying to achieve and how you plan to go about it," company spokesman Phil Van Peborgh wrote in a recent blog post, noting that Knetwit's designers worked closely with academic advisers and attorneys and that the site has a "report

abuse" link that allows users to report copyright violations.

"We will not tolerate theft of intellectual property," he wrote, adding that every posting that violates copyright law will be removed from Knetwit.

Fishman acknowledged that many universities offer payment for students who take notes that are later shared with special-needs students who cannot jot down notes during a lecture. Sharing academic resources is always encouraged by higher-education officials, Fishman said—but having an outside, for-profit entity compensating students for their class notes adds a wrinkle that makes some professors uncomfortable.

"If [students] are posting their own notes that they took, that's one thing," she said. "If they're posting the professor's work, that's a violation of not only copyright laws, but the trust between the professor and the student. ... If students take that information and make a profit from it, that's a whole other consideration."

Despite the controversy stirred by Knetwit over the last year, site creators Benjamin Wald and Tyler Jenks, both 21, recently were included in *BusinessWeek's* list of the 25 Best Young Entrepreneurs of 2008.

Tricia Bertram Gallant, coordinator of the Academic Integrity Office at the University of California San Diego, said posting notes without a professor's permission is "dishonest and further undermines the educational environment by commercializing the classroom experience." She added that colleges and universities will struggle with these issues for many years.

"If we think we can legislate or moralize our way out of these issues, we are mistaken," Bertram Gallant said.



“If we think we can legislate or moralize our way out of these issues, we are mistaken.”

— Tricia Bertram Gallant,
coordinator for UC San Diego's
Academic Integrity Office



WEB HOT LINKS

Knetwit
<http://www.knetwit.com>

Center for Academic Integrity
<http://www.academicintegrity.org>



Wall Street turmoil roils education

Colleges seek alternative financing as investment funds are frozen

By Dennis Carter, Assistant Editor

The financial crisis that rocked Wall Street is taking a toll on education, too: As students find it harder to secure loans for college (see cover story, page 16), at least two states have asked the federal government for help in paying their bills—and some colleges were left scrambling to find other sources of money after an investment fund that serves about 1,000 colleges and private schools partially froze withdrawals.

Wachovia Bank, trustee for the \$9.3 billion Short Term Fund offered by Commonfund, a Wilton, Conn.-based nonprofit that advises colleges and schools on money management, on Sept. 30 said it was terminating the fund and establishing a process to ensure the orderly liquidation and distribution of the fund's assets. Wachovia initially told investors they could only withdraw 10 percent of their money, but that figure was increased to 37 percent by Oct. 2.

Partially freezing the fund as officials prepare for liquidation prevents a run on money and protects investors, said Laura Fay, a Wachovia spokeswoman.

"It was not something we took lightly," Fay said. "In this environment, we felt this was the best way to proceed."

Some colleges were forced to secure lines of credit because of the restriction, according to Matthew Hamill, senior vice president of the National Association of College and University Business Officers. That results in borrowing costs that effectively reduce their rate of return in the original investment, he said.

Assumption College in Worcester, Mass., had about \$20 million in the fund but was able to get back nearly a third of that, said Christian McCarthy, the school's executive vice president and treasurer. The redemption and other funds enabled the college to pay all its bills, he said.

"It's been a tremendous inconvenience," McCarthy said. "It really did come as quite a shock. It is disconcerting."

The \$850 billion rescue package approved

by Congress last month will let the government spend billions of dollars to buy bad mortgage-related securities and other devalued assets held by troubled financial institutions. If successful, advocates say, that would allow frozen credit to begin flowing again and prevent a serious recession.

By the end of the year, Commonfund investors will be able to withdraw at least 57 percent of their money, said Keith Luke, the fund's managing director. Asked if investors ultimately will get all their money back, he said, "We certainly expect that."

In the meantime, Commonfund is working with the colleges and schools to help them find alternative sources of financing, said Luke, adding: "We feel terrible for them. We want to help them. We're working very hard to do so."

In another development with important implications for higher education, California and other states have urged federal officials for help in paying their bills, the *New York Times* reported.

White House officials said they were talking with state officials about the possibility of aid. But despite the urgency of the problem, there are complex legal hurdles in the way. Though the federal government has taken steps to lend money to banks and corporations, officials aren't sure how to help local governments because of their status as issuers of tax-exempt bonds, the *Times* reports. A tax-code provision bars the federal government from guaranteeing tax-exempt bonds. Officials are concerned that if the federal government helps states without Congressional action, it could put their tax exemption at risk.

While officials seek a solution to the problem, many local governments are facing serious cash constraints. California has the largest problem; the state reportedly told the Treasury Department it might need an emergency loan of up to \$7 billion to pay its day-to-day bills in the coming weeks—including those to schools.

// *Some schools have had to secure new lines of credit because of Commonfund's restriction.*



Commonfund
<http://www.commonfund.org>

Officials huddle on use of athletes' images

Video games, fantasy leagues raise huge questions for college athletics

By Maya T. Prabhu, Assistant Editor

Should video-game makers and organizers of fantasy sports leagues be allowed to profit from the use or likeness of college athletes? And if so, should the athletes themselves stand to benefit?

These questions were the subject of an Oct. 27 forum by the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, whose members warned of the importance of protecting student athletes from commercial exploitation—especially as technology allows for the proliferation of new forms of media.

Some former college athletes who attended the forum argued that students should be free to decide how their name and likeness would be used—mostly because of the “coolness factor.”

“I would be excited to see my likeness and playing abilities in an EA Sports game,” said Marvin Lewis, associate athletics director at Georgia State University and former basketball player at Georgia Tech. He said many of his former teammates would feel the same way.

But commission members, as well as a panel of lawyers and media experts, said colleges could have a case to prevent media companies from creating fantasy leagues using their athletes' names and likenesses.

“College athletes in fantasy games and video games may seem trivial to some, but these and other forms of new media pose new challenges to the long-held distinction between commercial activity featuring teams and that which focuses on individual athletes,” said R. Gerald Turner, Knight Commission co-chairman and president of Southern Methodist University.

“We continue to believe that universities need to treat athletes fairly and equitably,” Turner said, “and for third parties to use them in commercial products and advertisements violates that principle.”

Panelist Jeffrey Mishkin, former executive vice president and chief legal officer for the National Basketball Association, said a recent

court case found that while the use of a professional athlete's name and likeness was a violation of the player's privacy rights, it didn't outweigh the First Amendment rights of publishers to free speech.

But Mishkin said he thinks student athletes should be examined differently. He explained that a fantasy league can pay a publicity licensing fee to professional athletes, but student athletes are not allowed to accept such a fee.

Legal experts and former college athletes agreed that while students should not be paid for playing a college sport, there could be other ways to support student athletes.

“The No. 1 monopoly in the United States is the NCAA,” said Jeremy Bloom, a former football player for the University of Colorado and a world champion and Olympic snow skier. “College athletics is not amateur anymore.” He said the money that could be raised through the licensing of college athletes' likenesses could help pay for scholarships, year-round medical insurance, or even graduate school tuition.

Commission member Len Elmore, who is an analyst for ESPN and a partner at Dreier LLP, said the link between commercialism and intercollegiate athletics might be inevitable, “given new technologies that are intersecting with consumer demand for interactivity and reality-based gaming.”

“If college athletes' names and likenesses are to be used in commercial products ... or fantasy sports games, there must be a way to balance the inequities by providing some sort of benefit to athletes through mechanisms other than ‘pay for play,’” Elmore said.

Wallace Renfro, vice president and senior advisor to the president of the NCAA, acknowledged that with technology constantly changing, it's hard to create guidelines for the NCAA.



“The No. 1 monopoly in the United States is the NCAA. College athletics is not amateur anymore.”

— Former college football player Jeremy Bloom



HOT LINK

Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics
<http://www.knightcommission.org>

Partners Index

CFGear.com..... 7
<http://www.cfgear.com/ads/higher-education.html>
800.371.1984

Cisco..... 13
<http://www.cisco.com/web/offer/campusafety/pdf/index.html>

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<http://www.intelecomonline.net>
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<http://www.mitsubishi-presentations.com>
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