UPTIME

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REAL TIME

IBM AND PEOPLESOFT PROVIDE THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE WITH A BEST-IN-CLASS WEB-BASED SOLUTION

A metropolitan university with a global outlook

Located in Kentucky's largest city, the University of Louisville (UofL) awards associate, baccalaureate, graduate and professional degrees and certifications in more than 170 fields of study through 12 schools and colleges. Although its roots extend back more than 200 years, this state-run university is known for its progressive outlook. Today, UofL's goal is to expand its standing as a first-class metropolitan university to become, as the UofL mission states, "a premier, nationally recognized metropolitan research university."

Ending the paper chase

UofL knew that achieving this mission would require more than respected academic and research programs. It would require cutting-edge technology. Yet in the late 1990s, UofL, like many universities, was still using decades-old, homegrown legacy systems, perpetuating its dependence on a fragmented administrative structure as well as highly manual and paper-intensive activities. UofL began to explore how it could leverage the Internet to reduce university-wide inefficiencies, facilitate better communications, and strategically position the university to take advantage of new advances in technology.

Challenge

Connect 30,000 users through a browser-based solution that seamlessly integrates administrative support and e-mail systems university-wide

Solution

PeopleSoft 8.0 HRSA, including PeopleSoft Human Resources (HR) and PeopleSoft Student Administration (SA), PeopleSoft Financials, IBM @server pSeries™, IBM AIX® and IBM Enterprise Storage Server™

Benefit

Reduced costs through increased operational efficiencies; simplified IT system management and training; and greater ability to rapidly integrate new, emerging technologies

IBM | *e* business solutions | PeopleSoft®

Streamlining operations at UofL

UofL began by using PeopleSoft 7.6 enterprise resource planning (ERP) client-server software to build a Web-based student information and enrollment system and to update its human resources, payroll and financial systems. It consolidated the applications on an IBM @server pSeries (formerly RS/6000®) server platform, and centralized storage on an IBM Enterprise Storage Server (ESS). UofL realized a fast return on investment (ROI) through increased efficiency in the enrollment process, reduced information technology (IT) costs and maintenance, and increased system availability. Also, since UofL no longer needed to develop and maintain its own student information applications, more time was available to spend on business issues.

When the time came to revitalize the administrative systems, UofL decided it would become the nation's first university to adopt a purely Web-based environment by migrating to PeopleSoft 8.0 Web-based enterprise software. "We needed to give employees the tools that would allow them to do things the way the world works today," says Tom Sawyer, Assistant Vice President for Information Technology at UofL. "We knew that browser-based applications would simplify our training, our support requirements and our hardware requirements."

The success of UofL's earlier ERP project, as well as UofL's long-standing relationship with IBM, made it clear that a PeopleSoft and IBM solution was the best choice. "We picked a few partners to go on this journey with us," says Sawyer. "PeopleSoft has been our application and data-warehouse vendor. We like the company philosophy and believe that its software is best-of-breed. From a hardware perspective, we wanted a company that was services oriented, kept on the leading edge of technology and understood our vision for UofL. So we brought in IBM."

Quick implementation, quick ROI

IBM and PeopleSoft helped UofL build a cutting-edge e-mail and groupware environment that seamlessly connects the university's 30,000 students, faculty, staff and suppliers to key systems made accessible through a user-friendly portal. PeopleSoft's Pure Internet Architecture™, which uses open standards to deliver integrated software over the Internet, helped minimize implementation time and costs. Requiring little customization, the software also enabled UofL to use its own data-conversion programs to smoothly migrate more than 500 gigabytes of data, further facilitating a rapid ROI.

"Right now many universities are watching what we are doing, because we are the first in the country to implement the PeopleSoft 8.0 Web-based architecture."

—Tom Sawyer, Assistant Vice President for Information Technology, University of Louisville, Kentucky

UofL turned to IBM for a reliable, scalable, security-rich infrastructure to support the PeopleSoft applications. A loyal IBM customer for 30 years, UofL uses IBM servers almost exclusively and is migrating its legacy systems to the AIX environment. The university was able to integrate its existing pSeries and ESS systems into the solution, and added a new pSeries 680 to handle its database and application server needs, as well as another ESS for backup. Local IBM marketing and technical support personnel worked with UofL's technical staff and PeopleSoft to benchmark processor and storage capacity requirements for the PeopleSoft 8.0 environment. "IBM has been involved in this project since day one," says Sawyer. "It has the best price and performance, as well as the best services. They came in and worked with us to plan our server strategy, and have done a great job in sticking with us."

Other solution components include an Oracle database, Novell NetWare for the university's local area network and—in another first for an institution of higher education—Novell eProvisioning for automated security management across the new environment. UofL also expanded its physical infrastructure, upgrading the campus backbone network to gigabit speeds to help ensure adequate bandwidth. Despite the magnitude of the solution, when the time came to take the portal live, Sawyer was thrilled. "Basically, we swapped out the majority of our mission-critical systems in one weekend," he says.

Shifting into real time
Not all of UofL's challenges were technical. Early on, the university realized that one of the greatest challenges would be cultural. "People, by and large, are used to doing their job a certain way and don't see a need to change," says Sawyer. "So when you come along with new technology that forces them to change, it's not always readily accepted." Rather than legislate the changes, Sawyer worked to build consensus among the university's administrators, staff and IT team.

Sawyer anticipates that their efforts will pay off in a variety of ways, including greater efficiency in procurement, payroll and other university-wide processes; improved user access to information; better communications; and simplified training and support. Overall, Sawyer says, he expects that the IBM and PeopleSoft solution will enhance UofL's organizational performance and reduce administrative costs by not only linking people and processes that were never connected before, but linking them in real time. It will also promote global visibility; free administration and staff to focus on business issues; and—most important—allow UofL to rapidly implement new technologies to support e-learning services, including distance learning and virtual labs.

Pulling it off
Hundreds of universities across the nation watched carefully as UofL took the steps no other university had taken before to become a Web-based enterprise. Confidence in the expertise of the people at IBM and PeopleSoft, and the ease with which they conducted business, helped Sawyer sleep at night. In fact, he attributes much of UofL's success to its vendors. "I would not trade any one of our partners right now," Sawyer emphasizes. "I just would not do it."

The IBM and PeopleSoft alliance

IBM provides the technological inno-
vation, e-business infrastructure and
industry expertise you need to succeed
in today's competitive market. PeopleSoft
offers a full range of Web-based enter-
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collaboration with customers, suppliers
and employees. Together, IBM and
PeopleSoft help ensure that you get a
best-in-class solution.

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