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INTERNET BASED ORACLE FINANCIAL TRAINING: A SUCCESS STORY

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ABSTRACT

Most academic institutions wish to provide current, up to date and real world software applications to their students and this causes a number of common difficulties. This is especially true as those applications become far larger and more complex, such as Enterprise Systems. The authors' institution has a degree program in accounting information systems, and the authors believed that it was critical that ERP skills and applications be included in order to maintain the stature of the program. Although difficulties were expected, the authors nonetheless pursued various classroom ERP alternatives. This paper reports on those efforts particularly the adoption of internet based training rather than the traditional computer lab in the creation and offering of an ERP financial applications class. It was quickly determined that avoiding a dedicated computer lab option will result in substantial saving in additional hardware expenditure. Creating an online classroom forum for sharing of ideas and information is another component of internet based training course. "Caucus" a proprietary online software developed by our university allows faculty and students share their comments, questions, comments and suggestions with one another on broad basis. It is believed that such information will provide encouragement and useful information to other institutions that are considering such implementations.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Most academic institutions that wish to provide current, up to date and real world software applications to their students face a number of common difficulties. These frequently involve resource issues for hardware, software, training and ongoing administration. This is especially true as those applications become far larger and more complex, such as in Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems, more recently referred to as Enterprise Systems (ES) (Davenport, 1998). These are the packages of computer applications that support many, even most, aspects of a company's (or non-profit organization's, university's or government agency's) information needs (Davenport, 2000). They are known to be information systems that help companies integrate their operations for better speed, efficiency and agility.

The authors' institution has a degree program in accounting information systems, and the authors believed that it was critical that ERP skills and applications be included in order to maintain the stature of the program. This is especially

true as the ERP market is also rapidly growing in sales even to companies in the \$50 to \$250 million sales range (Pituro, 1999). Moreover, convergence of internationalization, E-business, Ecommerce and web-enabling has caused a need for many more businesses to consider enterprise solutions (Honig 1999), and that will create a demand for knowledgeable graduates.

CONCLUSION

Although significant effort has been involved in developing an internet based ERP financial applications class using Oracle, very little cost has been incurred other than purchase of a server. The course was relatively easy to start and implement given that neither of the authors is an expert at server or database installation, but does require continuous time and learning involvement by one or more interested faculty.

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