

E-learning: E-Campus University enhances its services with SMART Solutions

E-Campus University, Italia



The SMART Board interactive whiteboard installed in the auditorium to support class lectures and conferences.

E-Campus University is an online university that began offering course in January 2006 under the education sanction of the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research. The campus has about 270 classrooms and learning spaces available to students, professors, Italian and foreign guests for exams and activities, such as lectures, intensive courses, workshops and academic conferences. The University has over 8,500 students and 224 teachers (between full professors and associates) and five faculties (Economics, Engineering, Law, Psychology and Humanities). There are two additional campuses, one in Rome for the Central area of Italy and one in Messina for the Southern area.

In order to document student progress, e-Campus University adopted an online Learning Management System (LMS) platform with a series of educational/administrative applications, the portal is available to professors, researchers, students and administrative staff to benefit from a range of integrated services (online registration, secretarial services to students, content delivery, housing reservations, learning content management, office hours, etc.). In addition, the platform offers a range of tools to support students in sharing interim and final evaluation tests that are then evaluated by the teachers. The integrated service for e-learning has made it possible to share audio, video and text online. There is also a recording mechanism for students to record lessons and synchronize them with the slides projected in the classroom. By its very nature as an e-learning institution, the university is always looking for new ways to embrace technology so they may offer students and teachers a highly interactive, multimedia environment to ensure up-to-the-minute access and concrete learning.

The desire to continue to develop an extended learning environments where teachers and students can interact simultaneously and share content, has led the university to closely review the introduction of interactive whiteboard technology and the video-conferencing systems. The University contacted SMART Technologies, which proved to be the only company able to offer these resources in an integrated manner - combining its SMART Board® interactive whiteboards and SMART Bridgit™ conferencing software for remote collaboration. In early 2010 the University decided to purchase 12 SMART Board 600i interactive whiteboards. The university also purchased 30 licenses for SMART Bridgit conferencing software.

Challenge

To continue to develop a comprehensive learning environment where teachers and students can interact remotely and share content easily.

Solution

The University purchased 12 SMART Board® 600i interactive whiteboards, equipped with SMART Notebook™ collaborative learning software. In addition, the institution purchased 30 licenses for SMART Bridgit™ conferencing software. The SMART Boards have been installed in a variety of locations throughout the university.

Results

Today students can interact virtually with professors, wherever they are. By adopting these technology tools, students and teachers are afforded stronger communication and information sharing opportunities. SMART education solutions have enhanced the exchange of information and quality of student-teacher relationships.

The interactive whiteboards have been installed in all the campuses: five in Novedrate, three in Rome, two in Messina and an addition two in Cerbara, in the offices of the company that manage the IT services for the University. Interactive whiteboards have been installed in the auditoriums and classrooms of each campus and are for a variety of subjects allowing teachers to record the lessons and upload them on the university intranet. The interactive whiteboards are also used during academic conferences and meetings, held from time to time by teachers of different degree courses. Carlo Maria Bartolini, Headmaster of The Engineering Faculty and new Dean of E-Campus University, says: "One of the new learning and multimedia education frontiers is moves the traditional classroom into virtual environments, which is the main e-Campus mission and that led us to specifically purchase SMART Board interactive whiteboards."

Thanks to the SMART Bridgit™ conferencing software, it is possible to share and interact in real time with content shown on the interactive whiteboard in different classrooms and locations. As teachers are located all over the country, they can choose where to hold a workshops and students have the opportunity to follow the workshop anywhere, including the ability to interact with the teacher. In addition, SMART Notebook™ collaborative learning software allows teachers to share, organize and save lessons in one convenient file format. "SMART Bridgit conferencing software allows us to share a workshop regardless of where you live," explained Riccardo Botteri, Director of the University IT systems. "Let's say for example that a workshop is held in Novedrate. A student who lives in central Italy could go to the Rome campus to follow the workshop and still having the opportunity to interact with the teacher in Novedrate."

SMART Technologies products have been successfully installed in the e-Campus University environment and have been well received by teachers and students alike. The use of the interactive whiteboards and video conferencing system has paved the way for activities in other campus. Prior to the introduction of the SMART® Board interactive whiteboard, professors could only upload lessons for students to review remotely, now it's possible to interact in real time with the professors, even sharing the desktop of the portal (through which you can exchange files and materials), upload notes, home work and tests, all these can then be evaluated by the teacher and given back to the students. E-Campus is not only a unique virtual remote learning environment: with online communications integrated with face to face activities, which provide an opportunity for interaction between teachers and students. Both in class setting and remote learning have offered teachers the opportunity to better understand what students are enjoying the features offered by the SMART Board interactive Whiteboards, SMART Notebook software and SMART Bridgit conferencing. All of these products from SMART have proven to be extremely valuable for students – including those with disabilities who will often need to log on from remote locations in order to participate in lessons. "Teachers used the interactive whiteboards especially during their class lectures, using the interactive whiteboard, making presentations, using different files (documents, images, videos), searching for content on the web," explained Silvio Colombo, Administrative Director. "Unlike normal projectors that we used previously, because of the integrated software, the lectures are much more effective and engaging for students."

Thanks to the features of the software, the content of the lessons (comments, notes, etc.) can easily be saved and used by the professors for the creation and the developments of additional materials. Professors also have the opportunity to link subject material from one lesson – or topic – to another. For example a Psycoeconomy course, with content that refers both to Psychology and Economics, can be taught using content from lessons that are normally part of two different faculties and in genera students gain a broader understanding using multimedia materials which overcome the limitations of traditional teaching methodologies. "The e-learning platform of the university has mandated us to realize an educational environment in which, although remote, the aspect of interpersonal relationships is more important than the simple transfer of information," continues the Bartolini, Dean of the University. "That's why we felt the need to include new technology tools that could bring students and teachers closer, not only in terms of content but in terms of the quality of the relationship. SMART solutions have enabled us to achieve all this. " More information on e-Campus University is available at: www.uniecampus.it



SMART Board interactive whiteboards installed in some classrooms for exams and evaluation tests.

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Professor Carlo Maria Bartolini
Dean of the University

About SMART

SMART Technologies Inc. is a leading provider of collaboration solutions that change the way the world works and learns. As the global leader in interactive whiteboards, our focus is on developing a variety of easy-to-use, integrated solutions that free people from their desks and computer screens, making collaboration and learning with digital resources more natural. Our products have transformed teaching and learning in more than two million classrooms worldwide, reaching over 40 million students and their teachers. In business, our Freestorm™ visual collaboration solutions improve the way that people work and collaborate, enabling them to be more productive and reduce costs.

SMART Technologies

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