

Desire2Learn Client Success Story

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM

With a broad range of more than 260 undergraduate programs, along with numerous master's and doctoral programs, the University of Wisconsin System provides tremendous academic flexibility for all students and offers more than 40,000 courses each semester. Of the approximately 170,000 students enrolled in the UW System, 91% of students take at least one online, blended or hybrid course that uses Learn@UW (via Desire2Learn Learning Environment) each year.

The University of Wisconsin System, comprised of 13 four-year universities, 13 freshman-sophomore UW Colleges, and Statewide UW-Extension, is one of the largest systems of public higher education in the US, serving more than 170,000 students each year and employing more than 32,000 faculty and staff statewide.

The Challenge

To transition the more than 26 institutions belonging to the University of Wisconsin System (UW System) onto one course management system that met the needs and budget of the 170,000 students and 32,000 faculty. Additionally, UW System also needed to create a centralized hosting service, to be located in a facility in Madison, WI, which would support all UW institutions.



Desire2Learn Impact

- More than 1,190% increase in the number of courses from fall 2003 to fall 2007
- Increased collaboration between campuses
- Reduced redundancies in service
- UW System was ranked among the five most productive state systems and public sectors of higher education relative to their resources in a 2005 national study
- UW institutions are leveraging technology to make college classes more flexible and accessible

In Search of Answers

In 2002, as one of the largest systems of public higher education in the United States, UW System realized the need for a consolidated eLearning platform and established a Learning Management System (LMS) task force to address this requirement. Previously UW System had been using two competitor products; however, these were no longer affordable, and were inefficient for maintaining such a large system. The task force, comprised of diverse stakeholders including faculty, staff, and students, sought to procure a single product, or set of integrated products, to meet the web-based learning requirements of the System; including blended and hybrid courses that combine online with traditional learning, and fully web-based asynchronous courses.

The Solution

After a 15-month comprehensive review process the task force came to a unanimous decision, and awarded the Desire2Learn system with the most points based on functionality, technical merits, and cost. The task force concluded that Desire2Learn Learning Environment was highly functional, easy to use, and a favorite among UW System faculty and instructional staff. The School System also required that their LMS could provide a centralized hosting service that would support all UW institutions from a facility in Madison. Desire2Learn was able to facilitate this request and transition the system with ease, which enabled UW System to reduce redundancies in services across the entire system and gave the faculty, staff, and students a more efficient and effective eLearning experience environment.

The Results

With the creation of the Desire2Learn/Learn@UW project, UW System has seen tremendous growth. The Desire2Learn community within UW System has increased 25-50% each year since implementation, and the number of enrollments that use Learning Environment has grown exponentially. System Administrators anticipate continued vertical growth with the number of courses and enrollments using Desire2Learn Learning Environment, as well as horizontal growth as instructors expand the use of modules within courses.

“Standardizing on a single Learning Management System allows us to concentrate our collective energies in a collaborative effort to support our faculty and students without the distractions of multiple, competing systems that too often seem to divide rather than unite efforts.”

Andy Speth | Learning Technology Center
Manager, UW Green Bay

Another exciting development of the Learn@UW project is the increased collaboration between different campuses' Learning Technology Center staff made possible with the Desire2Learn implementation. The Learning Technology Center staff across UW System's campuses regularly collaborate on projects and share innovations and solutions.

An early and ongoing success in collaboration and solution sharing is the Desire2Learn Learning Objects Project which is a collection of training and resource materials developed collaboratively around the UW System and shared system-wide, providing a shared vision on how to improve the quality of online education. Furthermore, the adoption of the Desire2Learn solution has provided UW System with a common language across the system. The result has enabled the System to design common course shells or templates and provide a more open and collaborative approach to eLearning by saving the time and resources that multiple systems would require.

“We’ve brought the academic community into technology in a way that we couldn’t have done without a really robust learning system.”

Ed Meachen | Chief Information Officer, UWS

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About Us

Desire2Learn includes Desire2Learn Incorporated and its subsidiaries.

Desire2Learn is a global provider of enterprise eLearning solutions enabling leading institutions and organizations to create teaching and learning environments that support them in realizing their vision.

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