

Wheaton College Career Services reaches more students, alumni at less cost, with IBM Express Portfolio solution.

Overview

■ Challenge

Career services department at a top private college wanted a reliable, scalable, low cost solution to reach more students with job listings and share listings with its alumni and in near real time

■ Why Become an On Demand Business?

An open system was needed to integrate a disparate mix of college systems and databases

■ Solution

An automated, integrated Web solution based on IBM Express Portfolio of solutions. Designed and implemented by Mesa Technology, an IBM Business Partner

■ Key Benefits

- Greatly increases weekly job postings
- Extends department's reach to alumni worldwide
- Reduces employee recruitment time from weeks to hours
- Achieves ROI in the first six months

» On Demand Business defined

An enterprise whose business processes—integrated end-to-end across the company and with key partners, suppliers and customers—can respond with speed to any customer demand, market opportunity or external threat.



'On demand' generation expects information now

Founded in 1860, Wheaton College is a private interdenominational liberal arts college located in Wheaton, Illinois. Ranked 51st out of 217 Best National Liberal Arts Colleges by "U.S. News and World Report" magazine, approximately 2,900 students attend the college and another 35,000 alumni live around the globe.

"We're a higher educational institution, not an IT institution, so we needed a reliable solution that could grow with low maintenance. The IBM Express Portfolio of solutions had it all."

Ita Fischer, Career Services Director, Wheaton College Career Services Department, Wheaton, Illinois

**On Demand Business
Potential Benefits**

- Cost savings of \$15,000 to \$20,000 in annual administrative resources, including labor and paper costs, and improved productivity.
- More responsive, near real-time solution attracts more job postings, from 5-10 per week to an average of 10-15 per day.
- Improves reach to job prospects by at least 250 visits per day—including visits from alumni around the world.
- Open platform easily integrates with other platforms, enabling greater interaction between alumni organizations and the college computing systems.
- More students find jobs worldwide at less cost than before the Express solution.
- Alumni seeking Wheaton students for jobs can now hire easier and faster; recruitment time cut from weeks to days.
- Pays for itself in approximately six months.



Despite its impressive ranking, the school's College Career Service Department was out of step with what today's Web-savvy college students expect—information on demand, 24 by 7, over the Internet. The department manually posted job openings, notices for career fairs and interview schedules on a bulletin board. "The whole system was outdated, inconvenient for students and alumni, and difficult to manage," recalls Ita Fischer, career services director at Wheaton College.

Near real-time job postings

To more easily reach students and alumni, Fischer decided to seek out the services of IBM to help Wheaton College replace its arcane bulletin board system with an easy-to-access, Web-based solution that would ensure timely job postings. The new Web system also needed to include a dynamic calendar to post all career-related campus activities, including company recruitment schedules and career fairs. "Our goal was to post jobs and career events in near real time—within four hours of receiving them—on a Web site that wouldn't go down and could grow," says Fischer. "With IBM's reputation for adaptable, scalable and reliable solutions, they were our first choice."

Open Express solution 'talks' to any platform

Fischer teamed with Bernie Leung, of Mesa Technology (www.mesatechnology.com), a Web solutions provider and IBM Business Partner, to design and build a platform based on IBM Express Portfolio technology—specifically, IBM WebSphere® Application Server-Express middleware and IBM DB2 Universal Database™ Express software.

Built on Java Server Pages and Java technologies, the Express Portfolio of solutions run on an IBM @server xSeries® 330 server featuring the open Red Hat Linux V9.1 operating platform. The openness of the solution was vital. "The college and alumni association have a disparate mix of applications and databases that need to talk with the department's new system," Leung says. "The Express Portfolio of solutions gave them the ability to communicate with any other platform."

Reliable and self managing

Fischer doesn't worry about the Web-based bulletin board experiencing downtime either. The DB2 Express software, which allows Wheaton personnel to quickly update job opportunities and remove out-of-date postings, features self-managing capabilities. "This Express Portfolio solution takes care of itself and is easy to use. Anything that makes life simpler is always better."

Paid for itself in six months

One year after the project launched, Fischer reports job postings have soared from 5 to 10 per week to 10 to 15 new postings per day, on average. "Before, employers had to fill out a lot of paperwork and send in a listing; now it's much easier online. Our database is experiencing incredible growth."

Student and alumni interest in the college's job postings has increased significantly with the Web-based interface as well. Without advertising, traffic to the Web site averages 1,000 visitors per day; 25 percent of those visits are Wheaton College's alumni from around the world looking to hire Wheaton students.

The Express Portfolio of solutions is saving the college \$15,000 to \$20,000 in annual administrative resources, including labor and paper costs. Fischer says the six-month return on investment has been so impressive, the college plans to expand the Web site to include chat rooms, classified ads and Study Abroad program. "WebSphere Application Server-Express has the development tools that make it easy for us to build and manage the Web site," Leung notes.

Adds Fischer, "The Express Portfolio solution is helping more students and alumni find and fill jobs faster and easier — at less cost to the college, and that's the best bottom line we could ask for."

For more information

To learn more about IBM Express portfolio of solutions for the On Demand Business, contact your local IBM representative or visit:

ibm.com/businesscenter/expressportfolio



Key Components

Software

- IBM WebSphere Application Server Express V3.0
- IBM DB2 Universal Database Express V8.1
- Red Hat Linux V9.1
- IBM @server xSeries 330 server

Services

- Mesa Technology for Web design and implementation



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White Plains, NY 10604
U.S.A.

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10-05
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