



What Penn State achieved with Elluminate *Live!* Academic Edition

Real-time collaboration

Elluminate *Live!* enables instructors to keep virtual office hours and interact with students in real time. Students can easily hold virtual small group discussions, anywhere, anytime.

Multi-platform, affordable technology

With Elluminate *Live!*, all students need is an Internet connection to their Mac or PC. No second phone line or high-speed connection required.

Maintenance-free ASP delivery

As a hosted service, Elluminate *Live!* is easy to set up, easy to use, and easy to customize. Elluminate handles all the maintenance—automatically and transparently

Elluminate *Live!* Delivers Real-time Collaboration to Penn State's Online MBA Program

One of America's ten largest universities, The Pennsylvania State University, is a pioneer of online education. From its humble beginnings with the first correspondence study program for farmers in 1892, Penn State has demonstrated more than a century of innovation and commitment to distance education. Today, the university's World Campus provides distance education programs for more than 23,000 enrollments from all 50 states and 44 countries.

The Challenge: Support Delivery of Online Curriculum, Enable Real-time Communication

Rick Shearer is the assistant director for instructional design and development for Penn State's World Campus. His challenge in 2001 was to find a synchronous tool to support the university's asynchronous, Web-based courses—one that enabled students to hold virtual discussions in small groups and allowed faculty to conduct tutoring sessions and keep synchronous office hours.

"The ideal collaborative environment had to support both PC and Mac platforms," explained Shearer. "In addition, the product had to have integrated, high-quality voice over IP technology, so our students won't need two phone lines or a high-speed connection."

The Solution: Multi-platform eLearning Technology that Works

According to Shearer, he spent six to eight months talking to vendors, attending trade shows, and looking at products. While initial price points appeared low, the cost dramatically increased when a phone bridge was required. Then he heard about Elluminate *Live!*, the live eLearning and Web conferencing solution for the real-time organization.

"After reviewing several collaboration software tools, we felt that Elluminate *Live!* Academic Edition™ was the most appropriate solution for the support of synchronous events in online distance education environments," said Shearer. "In addition, it was the only product at the time that had a well-developed voice over IP component."

However, the real selling point was that the product worked the first time. "The company was very responsive to our request to set up a demo with both PCs and Macs," said Shearer. "Elluminate *Live!* worked seamlessly with both computer platforms, so we followed up with a review of the specific tools the product offered." That was all it took to select the product for a pilot project to support the delivery of the iMBA, Penn State's online MBA program.

Implementing the solution was easy and painless, according to Shearer. "We didn't want the responsibility of maintenance," he explained, "so we opted for a hosted service. It's convenient to have Elluminate act as our application service provider."



What makes Elluminate Live! the clear choice for live eLearning?

- Crystal-clear audio over the Internet
- User-friendly, intuitive interface that's easy to use and customize
- In-sync communications, regardless of connection speed and quality
- Universal operation in Windows, Mac, and Solaris environments
- ESP Moderator Tool Set ensures best user experience
- Greatly reduced travel budgets
- No more costly, inconvenient conference calls
- Best-in-class return on investment, with no per-minute charges
- Accessible, responsive customer service

The Result: Real-time Collaboration and Training for Students, Faculty, and Administration

According to Shearer, the World Campus is continuing to add interaction via Elluminate *Live!* to courses in its iMBA program and is in the process of integrating the tool into two of its Spanish language distance learning courses. "We conducted an Elluminate *Live!* pilot for the Spanish Department, who were quite impressed. The product enables instructors to listen to remote students speak the language and carry on conversations online with them."

With Elluminate *Live!*, faculty can hold virtual office hours, interact in real-time with students on assignments, and present just-in-time course material to groups of students concurrently. In addition, students from all parts of the country, and even worldwide, can schedule ad hoc discussion sessions for group project work without an instructor present.

Dr. Iris Striedieck, assistant professor and lead faculty member for the World Campus Masters in Education (MED) program, is responsible for transforming the existing MED program into an online offering. "One of my concerns with online learning has been the depersonalization of interaction when using threaded discussions and message boarding," she said. "With Elluminate *Live!*, I can create a sense of community for remote students who go through the entire program together."

"When I first demonstrated the product, I could feel the participants' excitement about their ability to do the human things that draw us together, like sharing the whiteboard and raising hands," Striedieck continued. "My graduate students are enamored with the potential of Elluminate *Live!* to shape the process by which we learn."

"A key capability that we find very valuable is the record and playback feature", said Dr. Bob Crum, who uses Elluminate *Live!* for an accounting course within the iMBA program. "It allows students who can't attend the original session to watch the recording asynchronously. It has been a real benefit for students, many of whom work full-time and require some flexibility to keep current with their studies."

World Campus tech support also uses the tool for training for new instructors who are not close to any of the campus locations. "Elluminate *Live!* is a great product for our needs," said Jason Gilham, training and support specialist for the World Campus Help Desk. "It's easy to use and offers a lot of opportunities for long-distance learning, such as application training and real-time review of online course materials."

"In the future, we'll continue to expose additional faculty to Elluminate *Live!*," concluded Shearer. "The instructors already using the product have become good spokespeople, promoting its pedagogical uses to support Web-based courses." You could say that Elluminate *Live!* was just what Penn State needed to help continue its history of innovation and commitment to distance education.

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