

It takes a «village» to select a learning management system – or – How you can benefit from a collaborative statewide LMS selection process

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Abstract. The *purpose* – presentations benefit from a Collaborative Statewide LMS Selection Process, the main *task* – selection of a new «Cloud Based» Learning Management System (LMS), the *object* – «Cloud Based» LMS, the *subject* – a new «Cloud Based» LMS at Eastern Washington University (EWU) in Washington State in the USA, the main *research methods* – analysis and experiment.

General description of the project, including examples or evidence that shows success, and the cost effectiveness of the initiative:

Keywords: «Cloud Based» LMS.

Г. Л. Пратт^{*}, Д. Е. Дін^{*}. Потрібне все «село» для вибору системи управління навчанням, або Як отримати переваги від вибору спільної регіональної системи управління навчанням

Анотація. Мета дослідження – обґрунтування переваг вибору спільної регіональної системи управління навчанням, основним завданням є вибір нової хмаро орієнтованої системи управління навчанням, об'єкт дослідження – хмаро орієнтована система управління навчанням, предмет – нова хмаро орієнтована система управління навчанням у Східно-вашингтонському університеті у штаті Вашингтон, США, основні методи дослідження – аналіз та експеримент.

Ключові слова: хмаро орієнтована система управління навчанням.

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The Office of Information Technology at EWU (Fig. 1), spent 15 months evaluating and involving faculty and students in looking at the university's next LMS choice. In September 2011 Eastern joined a statewide LMS RFP process, led by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and including representation from each of the six four-year universities. The design, execution, scoring and usability testing aspects of this RFP involved well over 800 faculty members and staff across the state. The result of the RFP was the

selection of Canvas [1; 2] by Instructure [3] as the successful vendor (Fig. 2).

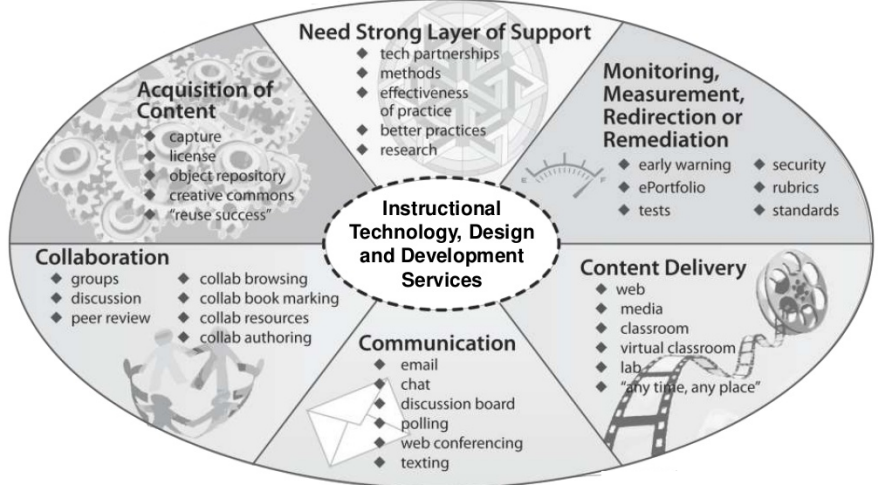


Fig. 1. IT & Instructional Technology @ EWU

		CANVAS	BLACKBOARD	DESIRE2LEARN	MOODLE (MoodleRooms)	SAKAI (rSmart)
ARCHITECTURE	Native Cloud Service	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
	Automated Peak Load Management	✓	Manual (hosted)	Manual (hosted)	Manual (hosted)	Manual (hosted)
	Development Technology	Ruby on Rails	Java J2EE	Microsoft .NET	PHP	Java
OPENNESS	Software Licensing	✓ Open Source Commercial / AGPL	✗ Closed Source Proprietary	✗ Closed Source Proprietary	Community Backed GPL	Community Backed ECL
	Open API	✓	✗ Fee Based	✓	✓	✓
	Annual Open Security Audit	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
FEATURES	Standard LMS Functionality	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Integrated Learning Outcomes	✓	Fee Based	✓	✓	✗
	Mobile Applications	✓	Fee Based	Fee Based	Version 2.1 Only	✗
USABILITY	Ease of Use ¹	✓ 4.12	3.27	3.02	✗ 2.47	3.05
	Accessibility (NFB Certified)	✓ Gold Level	✓ Gold Level	✓ Gold Level	✗ Not Certified	✗ Not Certified

Fig. 2. Compare Canvas

Eastern’s specific goals for this project were to:

- replace Eastern’s current LMS (Blackboard version 8) with a more modern and feature rich system;
- integrate this LMS with our ERP (creation and population of course shells was automated);
- integrate the LMS with the university’s common authentication system.

A desired result was that Eastern’s LMS would be more closely compatible and/or interoperable with other higher education institutions within Washington State.

The result of this collaborative process is that all 34 community colleges and 4 of the six four-year universities have moved to a common LMS in less than two years following this LMS partnership effort (Fig. 3, Fig. 4).

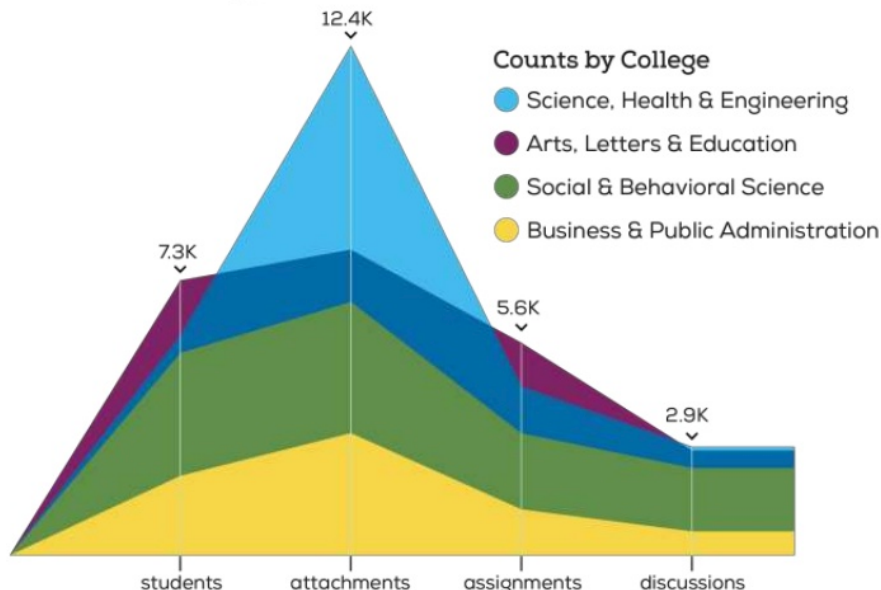


Fig. 3. First Year Canvas Usage (Fall 2012, Winter 2013, Spring 2013)

The benefit to students is consistency in learning platform as they move within educational institutions within the state and a very collaborative learning platform [4]. The benefit to each institution is both fiscal (including a substantial discounted entry cost and a multiple year no-cost-increase contract).

Description of the technology or technologies used. The evaluation and review phase of this project involved use of Blackboard, Canvas, Moodlerooms, Desire2Learn and other LMS systems.

The project tracking and RFP evaluation phase included spreadsheets and project planning documents. The faculty involvement phase involved the top three LMS systems based on initial RFP scoring and also involved web surveys

and rubrics. Promotional and materials included FAQs, press releases and other documents. Explain how project results or accomplishments can help the audience members.

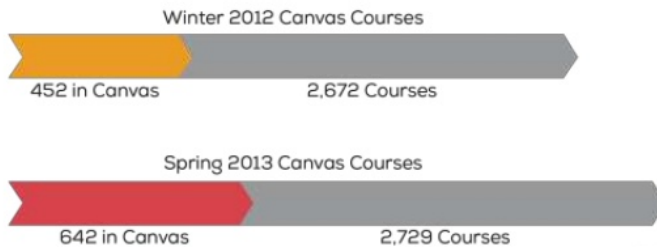


Fig. 4. EWU Adoption of Canvas

This project showcases how our institution promotes quality in the online environment – with an emphasis on collaboration – both within the institution, within the LMS system and within the State of Washington. All educational institutions can benefit from this study of collaboration in the selection of a system which underpins the online environment.

Discuss why this project should be considered a «best practice» and replicable, because the project has already been replicated within the State of Washington in terms of the contracting for other instructional systems (lecture capture; web conferencing). The project was extremely cost effective and collaborative. Perhaps the best measure of its success is the lack of «push back» from faculty at EWU in the move from one LMS to another.

Conclusions and recommendations. Take your time and involve ALL stakeholders early and frequently in the discussion, review and evaluation process and collect broad input regarding the final decision.

If possible, run in parallel for a full school year. This allows faculty to pick the timing that works for them to move from the old system to the new system. An alliance brings increased brain power and increase pricing power. An

alliance lowers the individual / institutional resource requirements for those involved.

References

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