Chapter 2
Enrollment Management Strategies for Online Learning Environments

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ABSTRACT

Enrollment management is a critical component of any institution or organization, whether that be a large-public university or small non-profit organization. Two systems, registration and enrollment, are driving forces behind any online learning environment. This chapter examines the enrollment management strategies of a small non-profit organization that utilized open-source methodology in its implementation of an online learning environment. The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate to administrators, course managers and educators the structure of an enrollment management system and to create a custom strategy in order to maintain to effective student records and to provide students with the appropriate access to instruction. Finally, the outcome of this chapter will be the development of policy guidelines, and a recount of strategies used to implement registration and enrollment systems.

INTRODUCTION

The world is generating information at a phenomenal rate. Schilling (2013) observed that in the 1940's content was doubling every 25 years whereas now "human knowledge is doubling every 13 months". Institutions need to manage the flow of content. Consequently, training, and instructional resources need to be quick and agile. Lonn and Teasley reported as early as 2009 that 90% of American universities and colleges are using learning management systems for student and faculty use. Allen and Seaman (2013) note that not only the explosion of online education but also its acceptance as a viable delivery environment. They report that the online growth rate for students taking online courses was 9.3 percent over the past 10 years. Even more interesting was that "The proportion of all students taking at least one

online course is at an all-time high of 32 percent." (Allen & Seaman, 2013, p. 4). Corporations are also showing a rapid expansion in the use of online learning technologies and many companies have adopted e-learning solutions for their corporate training. Wang, Wang and Shee (2007) observe that "Through the e-learning systems workers have access to various on-line databases and tools that help them find solutions for work-related problems" (2007, p. 1793). Finally, non-profits are also experiencing an exponential growth of the use of online learning resources. In one study they account for 10% of Pennsylvania's total workforce (Krase, Carroll, Zhang, Rosson, 2008). However, as Spencer notes nonprofits are typically a step behind for-profit and government organizations in capitalizing on new technology (2002). The key to managing this massive amount of information is making sure that each of these sectors provide the correct content at the correct time to the correct student. Consequently, regardless of the institutional size, from the large public university, to the training needs of a corporation or a small non-profit, enrollment management is essential. The field of enrollment management has transformed and many sectors have adopted strategic enrollment management methods in order to increase efficiency and assist with the governance of key business practices (Black, 2001, p. 16).

BACKGROUND

Enrollment management is an institutional response to understanding who is using the broader system. This critical process is typically divided into two systems: registration and enrollment. The registration system manages two pieces of functionality that include user creation and authorization. In order to effectively access online systems (and for that matter a brick and mortar school) students must register. Students need to have credentials to gain access to the system and ultimately are subjected to an account creation process. Each student will need to acquire discrete user identification in the form of a username and password in order to access the online environment. Moreover, the student can manage their profile where they can authorize the use of system and/or any custom preferences that are needed. The enrollment system is where the students are placed into individual courses. This is normally done in one of four (4) ways: manually, through a batch process, self-enrollment or as a guest. Essentially the enrollment system is subservient to the overall registration system. Each student must have an account to actively participate within the course and its activities. In the rare instance guest accounts allow the student to view a course without actively participating in the course. Regardless, the two systems are necessary in order for students to access and explicitly make use of an online learning environment.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

The main focus of this chapter is to provide educators, program and system administrators with clear strategies and tactics that will enable them to provide the best possible service to their constituents. Scholars have placed "an increasing emphasis on enrollment management" which has consequently caused a greater reliance on "sophisticated technology to deliver services and information and to provide better data for decision support (Black, p. 211)." It has been noted that "benefits of electronic management strategies are typically cost-effective and customizable" (Black, 2001, p. 266). The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate to administrators, course managers and educators the structure of an enrollment management system and to create a custom strategy in order to maintain to effective student records and

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