



Chapter XII

The Next Generation of E-Learning: Strategies for Media Rich Online Teaching and Engaged Learning

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Abstract

In a short span of three years, the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore witnessed significant growth in the adoption of e-learning. With the use of professors-friendly e-learning applications, NTU has been able to achieve critical mass buy-in by the academic staff when the e-learning take-up rate achieved 85% of the existing NTU course curriculum. As NTU moves on to celebrate the third year of e-learning, measures were taken with the careful design considerations that aimed to “humanize” e-learning, (i.e., make e-learning interactive and engaging with active collaborations and student learning involvement). This includes the

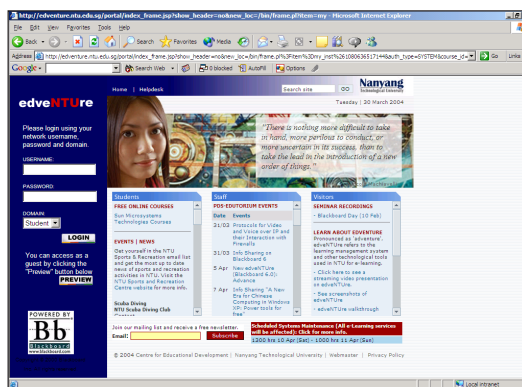
proliferation in the use of the video talking head format synchronized with the lecture presentation, live audio-video delivery, text chat and document annotations of a lecture presentation and delivery. This chapter reviews the processes NTU adopted in adding the human touch to traditional e-learning projects and serves as a good case study for other institutions with a similar aim to achieve interactive and engaged online learning.

Introduction

Nanyang Technological University was established in 1970. It is one of two publicly funded universities in Singapore. Courses offered includes engineering, biological sciences, business, education, accountancy and communication studies. In NTU, the service unit Centre for Educational Development (CED) is responsible for spearheading and facilitating e-learning.

The innovative brand name edveNTure was created for her e-learning initiative in 2000: “e” represents everything electronic for the knowledge economy, and “ed” stands for education — the purpose of the platform for life-long learning. “Adventure” in a modified form depicts the concept of learning as an experience and journey to explore new frontiers of knowledge, much like a team collaborating synergistically together in new learning environments to discover new frontiers. With the university’s name “NTU” embedded, “edveNTure” symbolizes the e-learning initiative and aspiration for the university. Professors and students feel a sense of identity and affiliation as stakeholders in an environment where they share experiences, knowledge, and experimentations in a new learning paradigm and environment. edveNTure is accessible at <http://edventure.ntu.edu.sg> and the current home page is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. edveNTure home page



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