Blackboard mobile™

Mobile in Northern Europe

The amount of students with mobile phones is multiplying fast. Top institutions are reacting just as quickly.

More than 77% of the world's population has a mobile phone[1]. That is over 5.3 billion people. In Europe, mobile phone penetration has surpassed the 100% mark with 741 million mobile phone subscriptions[2]. By 2013, mobile phones will overtake PCs as the most common Web access device worldwide[3]. Those statistics are impossible to ignore if you want to attract and keep more students. In fact, universities all over the globe are realizing the power that mobile devices can have on their bottom line.

Mobile Access as a Competitive Advantage

Delft University of Technology (TU Delft) was the first University in Europe to discover the opportunities a solid mobile strategy could open up for their campus community. They launched Blackboard Mobile™ Central in 2010.

"Over 80% of our students have a Smartphone. Within the next year, all of them likely will. It's the one item they all carry. They wake up and look at their phones to check their courses, check announcements, and see what's going on with their classes for the day. Within seconds, they're up to date with everything they need," says Willem van Valkenburg, e-Learning Consultant, Shared Service Centre ICT Education Technology for TU Delft.

As a very visionary University with over 16,000 full-time students, TU Delft collaborates with a large number of other educational and research institutes within the Netherlands and abroad, and has a reputation for high-quality teaching and research. Being the first University in Europe to launch Blackboard Mobile Central gave their students a valuable resource and gave their campus the competitive advantage.

"The most important reason we did this was student demand. We are an engineering school. Our students are very techy and expect this kind of thing. Their experience is a priority. Having these mobile apps makes us more competitive. That can help attract more students," continues Willem.

The implementation process for TU Delft was fairly straightforward and easy. They knew there was a lot of demand for the library search and the directory. They have a map of the campus and are looking to add the ability to search for exact rooms in the buildings on campus. "With all the engineering expertise we have on campus, we could have built this ourselves. But for us it was strategic not to do it in-house since mobile is moving so fast. That's why we chose Blackboard Mobile. They develop as quickly as mobile is changing. Our students are happy with it and I have the full support of the IT Director and the Board of Directors," concludes Willem.

Building a Better Education Experience For Students And Staff

The University of Gävle in Sweden is also finding an encouraging level of support and enthusiasm for their mobile plan—on campus and off. Of their 12,000 students, 46% are distance learners who are working and commuting. A mobile solution is a must for them, as it offers incredible flexibility and instant interaction.

"We have a strong profile in business learning (nearly half of our students study business) and we have 980 active courses on Blackboard. We have a lot of young students, and in Sweden most of them are using iPhones. So it was natural to offer access to their courses in a much faster way than computers," says Mats Brenner, Information Communication Technology Educator, Web Pedagogue for the University of Gävle. "Now, no matter where our students are, they can use the app to see announcements, course content, everything—within seconds. They don't have to carry around a computer all the time to stay on top of their courses and campus life."

The solutions offered by Blackboard such as the campus life app, Blackboard Mobile Central, and the teaching and learning app, Blackboard Mobile Learn, are both focused on one goal: building a better education experience for everyone. Institutions are discovering that these tools can add a whole new level of convenience to their students' experience.

"Our students are really positive. This is a great resource for them. Now if the educators begin to use blogs and discussions, mobile learning can BE something. It also helps our organization to think about e-learning in a mobile way. You can hand in assignments in a different way, upload pictures or video to make learning content more engaging, have mobile courses perhaps. For the faculty, we urge them to think about the advantages of mobility learning," Mats continues.

Being Ready For The Future

Going mobile isn't just a hot new trend. It's a way to reach more students. At the University of Southern Denmark (SDU), e-learning plays a big role. They're looking at mobile as a way to expand on that and help make everything even more convenient and accessible for their students. As a well-regarded partner in collaborative initiatives, this research-focused University has just recently implemented their mobile initiative through Blackboard.

"There are many possibilities of how mobile will affect teaching and learning. We want to use Blackboard Mobile to enhance our already high level of quality education and research by improving student access, collaboration, engagement, and convenience. This technology can also serve to strengthen our network of scholars, students

and educators—both nationally and internationally," says Christopher Kjær, E-learn Project Coordinator, E-learning, Department for Competence Development for the University of Southern Denmark. "Our students are very excited. They like the possibility of accessing Blackboard Learn from their mobile devices. You can see their enthusiasm in our video: http://youtu.be/UHqkATDDgNw."

Students, of course, are the quickest to adapt to new technology. Faculty, for the most part, has a little farther to go. However, institutions are finding that it's easier for their staff and educators to catch up than they thought.

"We want mobile learning to support the competence development of our educators. This is new for them. But once they see how easy it is for them, then they are able to see how much easier it can be for their students to interact and collaborate with their courses," says Christopher. "We see the statistics about how many students have smartphones today. It's only a matter of time before 100% have them. Our main focus is that we want to be ready for the future so that when that happens, we are prepared," continues Christopher.

Are You Ready?

Institutions all over the globe like TU Delft, University of Gävle, and Southern Denmark University, are proving that with efficient e-learning tools and a solid mobile strategy in place, every student can have easier access to learning and their campus community—anywhere, anytime. It helps blend learning into the way students live today. And that can open up powerful opportunities for education.

Can the amount of mobile phones on your campus determine the level of your institution's success? Visit us at blackboardmobile.com, email us at askus@blackboard.com, or call your Blackboard representative to find out.

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>
> Christopher Kjær
> University of Southern Denmark,

[1] 1 http://mobithinking.com/stats-corner/global-mobile-statistics-2011-all-quality-mobile-marketing-research-mobile-web-stats-su :

[2] http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/ict/index.html

[3] http://www.slideshare.net/TrendsSpotting/2010-mobile-influencers-trend-predictions-in-140-characters-by-trendsspotting

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