



Replacing Video Conferencing Hardware Saves Cleveland State Community College Time, Money, and Bandwidth

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-Dr. Ronald Paige, Director of Instructional Technology at Cleveland State Community College

"When I began at Cleveland State Community College I quickly found out that we had a decade-old ITV system that was no longer supported even though we had a maintenance agreement. I also discovered it was consuming 350-500 kbs of bandwidth and this was consuming a full third of our satellite campuses' bandwidth," says Dr. Ronald Paige, the Director of Instructional Technology at Cleveland State Community College. He quickly sought an online alternative to replace ITV.

By using Wimba Classroom, CSCC would succeed in practically replicating the ITV experience so that remote online students could see and hear everything happening in a face-to-face classroom from the convenience of their own computers. As a result, thanks in large part to Wimba Classroom, CSCC is saving money while its students save time, now that CSCC has transitioned its teleconference courses to the web.

Thirty miles northeast of Chattanooga in Cleveland, TN, situated in the scenic corridor of hills and valleys of Southeast Tennessee, Cleveland State Community College (CSCC) and its nearly 70 full-

time faculty are committed to delivering quality education and open access to its approximately 3,500 credit students and 1,500 non-credit students. The credit student population is split about evenly in the choice of transfer or career-technical programs, with the average student being 28-years old.

The 105-acre campus has 10 major buildings housing modern classrooms, laboratories, and student activity centers. But its perhaps the modernization that sets CSCC apart. In addition to its state-of-the-art library, multi-media center, computer laboratories, and theater, the college boasts a large reflector telescope and a satellite downlink receiver which enables the college to serve as a site for many teleconferences – teleconferences that created the foundation of the college's distance education courses.

CSCC implemented its ITV teleconferencing system in the 1990's in order to enable students beyond the school's immediate service area to take classes. However, this meant that CSCC had to invest heavily in the necessary hardware



Cleveland State Community College
Cleveland, TN
www.clsc.ccc.tn.us/

WIMBA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- Wimba Classroom

KEY BENEFITS

- School saves money by not buying expensive videoconferencing hardware
- Students save time by meeting live online from their homes or offices instead of traveling to campus
- Reduce bandwidth on campus

Dr. Ronald Paige,
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WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

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ABOUT WIMBA

Wimba develops web-based collaboration software designed for online education, language learning and live interactive communications. Our collaborative applications enable learning professionals to fully embrace the new wave of teaching and learning opportunities afforded by the Internet; regardless of geographic location, bandwidth or operating system. Our classroom collaboration solutions enable educators to conduct live, online classes, meetings, office hours and other collaborations, and our language learning tools add oral interaction directly into course content, webpages, study groups and assessments. With simplicity and power, Wimba adds new dimensions to online, accessible education, enhancing the learning experience for both students and instructors.

infrastructure, and it also meant that students had to travel up to an hour to get to videoconference sites at CSCC's regional campuses in Athens and Vonore, TN.

This is where Wimba Classroom came into the picture.

Upon conducting an audit of CSCC's teleconferencing infrastructure, Dr. Paige came to several troubling conclusions. He found that his school's 11-year old ITV system had:

- Limited dedicated bandwidth
- Single video tape back-up
- Mounting dedicated expenses

Further, he noted that the school had a growing demand for dual enrollment.

Paige and his team needed a more flexible solution.

After reading several research reports about web conferencing and web-based live class software, CSCC purchased Wimba Classroom in 2007 with the intention of taking a year to learn the ins-and-outs of the software so that the school could begin to transition completely off of its ITV system. However, the process evolved more slowly than planned, so CSCC had to wait until 2009 to fully remove its dependency on ITV.

Before switching, the faculty who had long used ITV were quite skeptical. "They said, 'So we're switching? That's ok. Just make it work like what we have now,'" Paige says with a laugh.

But his team, working with faculty from the business, technology, and humanities departments, succeeded, and didn't stop there.

Paige's instructional technology team knew that many of CSCC's students had limited bandwidth because they live in rural areas of Tennessee. But Paige conducted a campus-wide survey and found that less than 1% of their students didn't have access to broadband connections whether it was at their offices, local libraries, or campus computer labs. Paige concluded that they should no longer cater to "the least common access" and should therefore offer classes online with audio and video. Hello Wimba.

Using the numerous video inputs that Wimba Classroom supports, CSCC hooks up webcams, DVD players, camcorders, document cameras, and sometimes even writing tablets in order for visuals to be seen by remote students. And because CSCC faced tight budgets in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009, Paige's team re-uses room microphones and cameras from its ITV system and is able to use them in classrooms in which live instructors use Wimba Classroom. This made it possible for instructors and students to teach and learn in several on-campus classrooms while other students participate virtually from their homes, offices, or local libraries.

"We now have three state-of-the-art learning communities, one at each campus. Not bad!" says Paige excitedly. "The bonus is that students can log in from anywhere in the world if they cannot show up for class at the assigned distance learning room. With Wimba, we are more flexible than we were with ITV and give up nothing in terms of content presentation."

And just like that, Wimba successfully replaced ITV at Cleveland State Community College.