

## **Innovative Faculty Homepages That Provide Multiple Benefits to Students**

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As technology becomes increasingly common in the educational process, faculty homepages should provide creative, beneficial results. They can provide students and other interested parties with new means of achieving educational skills. This paper works through the creation of a multi-purpose homepage and some of the tools used to create it.

The time required to create and maintain an internet site is a major consideration. The tools that can be used to create such pages have grown significantly in recent years. The author began his homepage construction in 1996 using the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). HTML requires much time to master and was often frustrating. Naturally, the author kept looking for an easier and simpler method.

Microsoft Front Page, acquired early in 1999, was a major improvement. Front Page was advertised as being simple to use. Nevertheless, the author purchased several How to@ texts in order to better understand it. Front Page still required significant time and effort.

Early in the Fall 1999 semester, the Dean of the School of Business introduced the author to a marketing representative for a new educational tool called Egenda, which makes the delivery of class materials using the Internet easier, faster, and more user friendly. Egenda is an example of the new Internet products being introduced to ease a faculty member=s using a website.

Egenda=s primary advantage is ease of use. This product was introduced in 1999 to provide colleges and universities with a better means of communications between faculty and students. In May

2000, Egenda became associated with the aroundcampus.com organization, which provides a wealth of valuable services to both faculty and students. This Internet based software is provided free of charge to the university community. Students are able to combine classroom, club, and daily calendar information on a single site. Faculty are able to create an on-line class location within minutes easily adding Word, Excel, or PowerPoint documents daily.

The students= benefits include:

- X A free, web-based time management tool that aids organizing class, social, and personal events
- X A means to quickly link to all of their on-line class materials
- X An efficient communication tool for students to exchange information
- X The availability of Web-based email easily accessed from any computer
- X Career placement links to aid graduating students in securing a position
- X The integration of the Internet as a learning tool for any class

The faculty benefits from:

- X Easy use with no special training or software
- X A free, effective tool to utilize the Internet in the educational process
- X A simple Web publishing tool that publishes all class materials
- X The ability to create a AVirtual Classroom@ with little effort
- X A method to encourage students to utilize the wealth of information available to them on the Web
- X A host for discussion groups and chat rooms
- X An excellent time management tool including a personal

calendar

The author intends to use the Egenda page along with his original homepage remaining on the university's server. Links between the two locations allow students to easily move from one to the other. Special projects, with associated research links, can be posted to the Egenda site. Using both sites provides redundancy for important materials such as course syllabi. If one site is down, students can still visit the Abackup@ location. The URL's for Egenda and the author's original homepage are provided at the end of this article.

Combining the original homepage and the new Egenda page aids students in several ways. Students utilize an Internet site more frequently when they benefit from its use. The author has attempted to provide four distinct benefits for students. The first was to provide basic research projects for inexperienced students. This feature, while diminishing in importance, is still helpful to students with little Web experience. Projects on the author's homepage include an example of stock research and a global taxation review.

A second goal is to provide students with some of the very best research locations in each of the functional areas of business. These include accounting, auditing, and taxation, financing and investing, marketing, and management. Recruiters and alumni who had previously found them to be valuable in their business research recommended many of these sites. Students using this page can quickly locate some of the best research sites related to any of the functional areas of business.

Some of the sites currently found on the author's homepage in the accounting, auditing, and taxation area include the AICPA, the American Accounting Association, the Big 5 accounting firms, Tax Web, Audit Net, Rutgers's Accounting Web, and the Tax & Accounting Sites Directory. The finance and investing area contains links to NASDAQ, the American and New York stock exchanges, Edgar online, Chicago Board of Trade, and Stock Master. Current

marketing and management sites include the American Marketing Association, Advertising Age, Ad Week Online, the Institute for Management Studies, OSHA Online, and other management resources.

The third goal of the homepage is to provide class information to the students including daily lecture notes, projects, assignments, and PowerPoint slide shows that were presented in class. Students miss classes for a variety of legitimate reasons including illness and family problems. Retrieving lecture notes from a dorm room or the family residence is very much appreciated by the majority of students.

The fourth and final benefit of the author=s homepage was designed to aid the students in finding either an internship or a position following graduation. Therefore, a number of career links were included. For example, the WWW Employment Office, America=s Job Bank, and the Career Web all provide employment information for students. The author=s Eagenda page has a link to the University=s Career Development Center, which contains information on internships and full time positions.

In summary, a homepage provides multiple benefits for students, faculty, and even others including alumni. Internet sites created and maintained by faculty can provide valuable services for students including help with business research and current classroom materials. They can also aid students in locating and securing internships and permanent employment. Faculty homepages can be utilized to enrich the overall educational experience for the students.

**Darwin King=s homepage** - <http://web.sbu.edu/acct/dking/index.html>

**Egenda.com** - <http://www.egenda.net/home/welcome/welcome.htm>

**Aroundcampus.com** - <http://aroundcampus.com/functionality/home.taf>