

A Tidebreak Case Study: The University of Michigan

PREPARING A “LEARNING COMMUNITY OF THE FUTURE”

“*Business education has undergone a fundamental change from lecture-style classes to interactive methods that integrate individual preparation, teamwork and in-class discussion, while effectively utilizing advanced technology. This is particularly true at the Ross School, internationally recognized for its distinct team-based learning curriculum.*”

- From the Ross School's "Community Creation" website

Leaders at the University of Michigan's Stephen M. Ross School of Business know that business education's transformation reflects the changing realities of the 21st Century workplace. Competitive pressures call for rapid innovation across diverse, globally distributed teams, and students need to prepare to succeed in this new environment. The school has responded in a dramatic way by demolishing 100,000 square feet of existing structures to make way for a new 270,000 square feet state-of-the-art facility that will, “...create an optimal environment for the school's team-based learning that bridges theory and practice and encourages greater collaboration.”

Ross School of Business University of Michigan

Students: 3,018

Faculty: 183

Customer Since: 2005

TeamSpot Introduces State-of-the-Art Collaboration Capabilities

Tidebreak's TeamSpot software has transformed how student teams can work together before the walls of the school's new building were even in place. Installed in several rooms set aside for group work, TeamSpot helped pattern new work practices that will be enabled in the new facility.

Mr. Edward Adams, CTO and Director, Computing Services for the Ross School of Business, realized early on the potential TeamSpot had for helping student teams collaborate. “Our academic model of action-based learning regularly engages faculty, students and corporate partners in highly interactive team situations to solve real business problems. It is often the case that team members work on different sections of a proposal or split into sub-teams to brainstorm different approaches. Before TeamSpot, team dynamics and idea generation was reduced, and project time increased, by ineffective tools and methods, like the use of email and standing around a single laptop, to share information and collaborate. We selected TeamSpot because, like Ross, it is a leader in transforming the way teams work collaboratively and share information.”

Adams and his staff first installed TeamSpot in the business school library in the Fall 2005, and found that students took to the technology quickly. Daniel Green, Manager of Student Technology Services for Ross, personally promoted TeamSpot to students with the belief that “if I can get a few teams to try this exceptional tool, I know it will easily promote itself.” As expected, after a few different groups tried out TeamSpot “the numbers have grown rapidly with increased use every year.” Dan reports that some students were so excited that they offered to help evangelize and train the incoming class of first-year MBA students on how to use TeamSpot.

“TeamSpot is a great tool that takes hours off of our projects. It is as easy to use as it is to learn. TeamSpot lets us present our ideas and contribute content into a single project document.”

ROSS MBA STUDENTS

Real-World Problem Solving

In Spring 2007, the school expanded its deployment, installing TeamSpot in five newly renovated group study rooms. These spaces were outfitted in time to support the school’s MAP team projects, in which MBA students work with sponsoring companies to solve real business problems. An initial group of 20 MBA students participated in TeamSpot orientation sessions; these students went on to help their peers in the 400-member MBA class to adopt TeamSpot for their own team projects.

The response has been very positive. One group of students said, “This is a great tool. It took hours off of our project. I wish we could use TeamSpot at home.” Another team commented on how “TeamSpot was really effective because it was as easy to use as it was to learn. Who has time to attend training classes?” And another: “A year ago my team and I would have crowded behind a student who controlled a single laptop, all talking over each other to make sure our points were heard and included in the paper. It is so much easier to use our personal laptops, taking turns presenting our ideas on the front screen, and sharing content into a document.”

Students use TeamSpot rooms daily and usually the rooms are reserved from open to close.

Adams notes that even the Associate Dean has put in some ‘face-time’ with TeamSpot. “We gave a demo to the Associate Dean and some faculty, putting them in front of the system and giving them just some basic instructions before we had them working with the software. By the end of the session, it was all intuitive.” As a result of this experience, the faculty are now considering Tidebreak’s ClassSpot to provide advanced interaction capabilities for classrooms in the new building.

“Ross School graduates will be prepared for the workplace changes they will see in the next decade because their campus is embracing trends that are shaping the future of the corporate workplace,” says Dr. Andrew Milne, Tidebreak’s CEO. “The Ross School’s forward-looking

approach to technology, work practice, and learning spaces will no doubt solidify its leadership position among the top graduate business schools.”

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Tidebreak, Inc.
958 San Leandro Ave, #500
Mountain View, CA 94043
USA

+1 650 289 9869 Voice
+1 650 472 8940 FAX