

# Providing easy access to a storehouse of knowledge



### A Learning Portal for Abu Dhabi Men's College, UAE

ADMC was the first college to be established by the Higher Colleges of Technology, a testimony to the vision of His Excellency Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Chancellor of the Higher Colleges. Over the last ten years, ADCM has gained a reputation for excellence and innovation in education.

#### THE NEED FOR E-LEARNING

ADMC commissioned Tata Interactive Systems to develop a Learning Portal system, which was required to address the following:

- Managing all aspects of academic administration
- Obtaining incisive reports of various aspects of the college
- Communicating and collaborating online
- Providing support to both on-campus and off-campus students
- Managing academic resources like meeting rooms, facilities and labs
- Eliminating duplication and inconsistency of information by accessing a single searchable database
- Generating statistics and analysis of trends
- Supporting Program Quality Assurance graduate outcomes
- Tracking students' academic portfolio and their achievement indicators, by giving assignments, reviewing them and giving feedback online
- Managing system assistance calls online, like a Help Desk

## HOW OUR SOLUTION HELPED

The solution is an application built on the .Net architecture using Microsoft Sharepoint Portal 2003 as the central software. The custom applications like “calendaring” were deployed as Webparts in the Sharepoint server. The database was SQL Server 2000 and the front end was created as .Net applications using ASP .Net. The following features were incorporated:



### Single Sign On

A single-sign-on feature was provided to the internal users of the system. This helped map the user-account details across various systems. Once the users logged onto the intranet, they had to submit the user ID and the password to access the following systems:

- Student Information System (SIS)
- WebCT System
- News Group
- IT Help Desk
- Pro Quest Online Database
- My Files and Team sites created for various departments with document and user management capabilities
- E-portfolio
- IT Help Desk
- Discussion Board

### Program Quality Assurance (PQA) system

The PQA system was used to store and archive all the documents related to the program quality assurance and was mirrored in the new Portal system. The PQA system was accessible to only those who were granted adequate permissions by the administrator.

### Scheduling and ‘calendaring’ system

The ‘calendaring’ feature was used to display the schedule to the user group. The sharing of the calendar was for the staff only and was shared in keeping with the user hierarchy. The calendar had the following features:

- Integration with Exam and Class schedule
- ‘Calendaring’ items
- Appointment
- Meetings
- Events

### Meeting venues

Location options for a meeting were selected from a database of free rooms at the time selected. A user was able to select a room and book it for a particular time period.

### E-tutoring

E-tutoring was provided using Microsoft NetMeeting. E-tutoring sessions involved a tutor who facilitated the learning of various students (participants) in a virtual classroom. The e-tutoring application had the following features:

- Create an e-tutoring session
- Meet in virtual rooms
- Share applications



**The learning portal stands as a testimony to the growing scope of e-learning, where it is no longer restricted to the purpose of teaching or learning only. It shows how e-learning tools can effectively lend an extra edge to administrative procedures**

- Save the contents of their communication for future reference
- Send files to others in the virtual room
- Accept or reject transferred files

### The tutor could also:

- Allow or prevent other participants from working in a program using the Sharing dialog box
- Approve participants' requests to work in their programs.
- Provide feedback to the students and vice versa using chat.

### IT Help Desk

The IT Help Desk module automated the process of managing the process of receiving problem calls, assigning them to relevant technicians, resolving the calls, maintaining histories of problems, and maintaining a knowledge base of problems and solutions.

### e-Portfolio

The system enabled the tracking and monitoring of the students' performance, assessing gaps, if any, and generating necessary feedback, as in a face-to-face interaction. It used graduate outcomes and Achievement Indicators (AIs), as parameters on which the student were monitored. The students' AI status was updated by the faculty on the basis of their performance in their assignments. The system captured faculty assignment inputs and allowed these to be shared among the faculty. The workflow between each functional role was incorporated where possible.

### TECHNOLOGY USED

The solution was developed using ASP .Net, Microsoft Sharepoint Portal 2003, and SQL Server 2000.