Faculty Use and Perceptions of the Internet in Marketing Education

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ABSTRACT

While there is an increasing amount of research on exactly *how* the Internet can be used to enhance the educational experience (e.g., Atwong and Hustad 1997, Canzer 1997), there is little research on the physical and psychological resources available to marketing faculty at Universities. This paper discusses the potential uses of the Internet for marketing education and presents results of a survey on faculty perceptions and uses of the Internet among WMEA members.

BACKGROUND

Because of the versatility of the Internet, its use by marketing educators is clearly on the rise (Atwong and Hugstad 1997). There are many examples of the innovative use of the Internet (and specifically the WWW) by marketing educators (e.g., Siegel 1996). The WWW is one of the fastest growing segments of the Internet. Very simply, the WWW is a standardized, global, Internet-based information access and retrieval system.

One of the simplest ways of using the Web for teaching is to provide course information, homework and reading assignments on it for instant access for both current and potential students (e.g., see the collection of marketing syllabi available online at http://nsns.com/Syllabits/mar/).

Communication is a significant use of the Internet. It can provide students with immediate access to faculty and staff via e-mail. Further, students can communicate with each other through class bulletin boards, discussion lists and chat rooms and benefit from each other's questions and comments. The benefits of communication via the Internet may be particularly significant for part-time and nontraditional students that are not on campus on a daily basis.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The results of our survey conducted in October 1997 show that marketing faculty, in general, are currently not the most active users of Internet-based pedagogical resources but usage is increasing rapidly. However, the findings are encouraging to the extent that faculty seem to have a generally positive view of the Internet. Marketing faculty attitude about the usefulness of the Internet for teaching seems overwhelmingly positive.

Of all the Internet services, the two that faculty seem to consider most valuable for teaching are the WWW and e-mail. Lack of student or faculty access to the Internet did not seem to be a major factor inhibiting faculty efforts to integrate the Internet into the marketing classroom.

Some substantive implications of the results of this survey are that the different individuals involved in educational process need to adapt their products and services to meet this behavioral change. There are several such groups of people that need to heed the results of this survey. One can already see how textbook manufacturers are gearing up by offering interactive cases, presentation CD-ROMs, dynamic web sites, etc. in support of their marketing textbooks. As a faculty, we need to commit ourselves to educating ourselves about the opportunities that the Internet offers in enhancing the educational experiences for our students. Students themselves need to realize the importance of this mode of education and demand access to computing resources. University administrators need to allocate resources to develop the use of the Internet and the access to the Internet for both students and faculty.

REFERENCES
A copy of the full paper with references is available from the authors on request.