

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Technology
- Blackboard
- Electronic Classrooms
- Teaching Techniques
- Delivery Facilitation

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

- How Much is an Online... 1
- Bb Content System 1
- Website of the Month 2
- More Great Freebies 2

Distance Learning Today

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

MARCH 2007

How Much is an Online Degree Worth?

Not in the too distant past, online degrees were questionable, some even considered worthless. Could an individual sitting at home in front of a television or computer screen absorb as much information as students in a traditional classroom setting?

Many professors doubted it at the time. It did seem like a lazy person's way of learning. However now research suggests that the stigma has disappeared and distance learning is actually transforming the face of education. According to a recent study from the Sloan Consortium, a group supporting online education,

confirmed what advocates of cyber-academics had been saying for years, "Online learning can be just as good—if not better than—a classroom degree."

"A majority of academic leaders (57 percent) believe learning outcomes for online education are equal to or superior to those of face-to-face instruction," proclaims the Sloan study.

The bottom line is a degree is only as good as the opportunities it affords. Fortunately, recruiters have begun to realize the value of an online degree. As corporations have begun to utilize distance learning in their offerings, it has become more accepted as a

way to earn a degree.

Some fields lend themselves to distance education and some are more difficult. For example, advanced degrees with a great amount of lab work might be difficult to complete online.

The Sloan study also stated that almost one-third of academic leaders "expect that learning outcomes for online education will be superior to face-to-face instruction in three years." Perhaps the online degree will be worth even more than some believe.



Using the Blackboard Content

System to Manage Files & Content

Blackboard users with a role of either "faculty" or "staff" have an online folder in the Bb CS in which to save content. The "Content System" tab will appear when the user accesses Bb. (Students do not have an online folder and they will not be able to see the "Content System" tab in Bb.) Each person's CS folder has a limit of 100MB. The

online folder can be accessed from any computer that has an Internet connection. You can upload files from work to your online folder and access them from home or during a conference; anywhere you go, your work can go with you. Edit the files and save them back to the online folder so that you will have only one version of the file

to maintain.

For more information and tutorials on how to access and use BB Content System check out the site at <http://www.jtcc.edu/itde/bb6/cs/content.htm>





Use Google's SketchUp 3-D generator free. Visit sketchup.google.com

Website of the Month

If you are considering adding an addition to your home, remodeling a bath or designing the next trendy dog collar, Google SketchUp can help create your own world with true 3-D objects.



The 3-D modeling program is easy to learn and allows for detail as desired. This means you can test out the new deck before ever hammering

the first nail. With a few simple tools, you can create 3-D models of homes, decks, woodwork or even space-ships. Once created, you can post the images in Google Earth, allow others to view or

print hard copies. Google SketchUp is free for home use and no registration is required. Visit sketchup.google.com to begin



your next

project.

Suggestions or comments:

More Great Online Freebies...



The Google Pack is a free collection of essential software from Google.

It seems like not a day goes by that we don't hear about something new from Google.com. You can view Google Earth to get satellite maps of just about anywhere in the world. Desktop allows you to find anything in your PC quickly and Google offers even more add-ons.

Now, you can download all of these nifty freebies in one setting using the **Google Pack** - The Google Pack is a free collection of essential software from Google and other companies. The software in Google Pack helps you browse the web faster, remove spyware and viruses, organize your photos and more. Google Pack also takes the hassle out of downloading, installing and updating software. You can download and install the entire Google Pack in just a few clicks. This one download has it all. It includes Google Earth - 3D Earth browser, Google Desktop - Desktop

companion, Picasa - Photo organizer, Google Toolbar - Search toolbar, and Google Pack Screensaver - Photo screensaver.

The included Google Updater helps you discover new programs and keep your current software up to date. All the software in the Google Pack is free. Some programs may offer paid versions that provide additional features or ongoing updates, but you'll never have to install the paid versions, and your free version will continue to work as long as you have it installed.

The version of Norton AntiVirus in the Google Pack includes 6 months of protection updates that enable the program to identify and remove new threats. If you'd like to continue receiving these updates after 6 months, you'll need to purchase an update subscription from Symantec. Purchasing a subscription is optional.

To customize your installation package, please click the "Add or remove software" link under the "Download Google Pack" button on the Google Pack homepage. On the following page, simply uncheck the box next to any program you'd prefer not to receive, then proceed through the installation process.

For programs you select that you already have installed on your computer, the Google Updater checks whether you have the latest version. If you don't, the Google Updater will install the latest version. If you already have the latest version, the Google Updater won't install the program.

To learn more about the Google Pack, visit [Google Pack.com](http://GooglePack.com).



What do you want to hear? All SwVCC faculty and staff are encouraged to submit items or request topics for inclusion. Email comments or suggestions to: lanna.lumpkins@sw.edu