An Online Assessment Submission System

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• SPIRIT Project Overview
• Problem caused by the large number of required assessment documents and other program participant deliverables
• Solutions we have used
• Overview of essignments.com
• Hands-on demonstration for using the system
• Future plans
• Questions and answers
SPIRIT Project Overview

• SPIRIT is Surprising Possibilities Imagined and Realized through Information Technology

• SPIRIT celebrates the immense impact that information technology has on our world and seeks to rekindle enthusiasm for field as a career choice among high school students, especially young women.
SPIRIT Project Overview

- The SPIRIT website: www.ITPossibilities.org
- Supported by the National Science Foundation, #DRL-0737679
- Three-year project: 1/2008 – 12/2010
- Intervention programs for HS teachers, HS counselors, and HS students to increase female interest in IT
The SPIRIT Approach

• Correct negative perceptions about IT
  – IT skills relevant to a broad range of disciplines
  – IT can benefit society
  – IT can be fun, welcoming, interesting
  – Both men and women can have successful careers in IT

• Let participants try out and create many interesting & useful applications

• Give guidance on what to do now to have a successful career in IT
The SPIRIT Approach

- Two-week teacher institute
- Two-week program for counselors (during week two)
- One-week summer camp for students (during week two)
The SPIRIT Approach

• Week 2 activities
  – Learn how to create Alice worlds (animated stories and interactive games)
  – Complete hands-on activities that show a variety of unexpected ways that IT can benefit society
    • Forensics
    • Manufacturing
    • Robotics
  – Listen to (and ask questions of) dynamic speakers who have successful IT experiences, work on interesting issues, and solve problems that positively impact society
Problem

- SPIRIT requires participants to submit a large number of assessment documents
  - Prior to attending
  - Session evaluation forms each day while attending
  - After attending
- Participant compensation was tied to submission of these documents
Possible Solutions

Paper documents?
- Keeping track of “who submitted what”
- Absences at in-service meetings
- Transcribing costs and errors
- Not “green”
- No backup mechanism for paper documents except to photocopy and create more paper

Surprising Possibilities Imagined & Realized through Information Technology
Possible Solutions

Send documents as Email attachments?

• Spam filters make email not as reliable as it once was
• Attachment file size restrictions
• Can’t enforce deadlines
• Multiple submissions “just to be sure it was received”
• Mixed in with other correspondence
• Too much email already
Overview of essignments.com

- A general-purpose, web-based, electronic submission system that gives instructors the ability to accept paperless assignments
- Students submit assignment materials to course instructors
- Instructors can use the system to provide feedback on graded assignments to the students
- Originally created in 1999 for use in large computer programming courses to allow students to submit their homework for grading
Benefits

• Web interface for students and instructors
• Supports an unlimited number of users
• Supports any file format from any PC platform
• More structured and reliable than email
• Immediate submission confirmation
• Quickly able to see who has submitted documents
Benefits (continued)

- Dates and times can be defined for when documents can be submitted
- Electronic documents allow for easy backup
- Retrieve an individual document or all at the same time
- No special network administration is required since instructors and students maintain their own accounts
- Built-in features to handle *zip* files
- Free to use
Hands-On Demonstration

Download a tutorial at:
http://www.essignments.com/Help/essignments_instructor_tutorial.ppt
Hands-On Demonstration

• Create an instructor account
  – Use authorization code “CPT”
Hands-On Demonstration

• Add a “Course”
Hands-On Demonstration

• Add “Assignments”
Hands-On Demonstration

• Post a link to your account
• For example,
  – http://essignments.com/?alias=MrRoberts&coursecode=SPIRIT2009
Hands-On Demonstration

- Participants create student accounts

![Create Student Account Form](image)

- User Name: cindynelson
- Password: (hidden)
- Password Hint: first and last name
- First Name: Cindy
- Last Name: Nelson
- Email Address: cindynelson@purdue.edu

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• Documents are submitted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Select Assignment</th>
<th>Instructor: Mr. Bob Robert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignments for course: SPIRIT2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td><strong>Due Date</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week1Assessment</td>
<td>7/1/2009 8:00 am</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hands-On Demonstration

• Documents are submitted

Logon
Logoff
Change Account
Submit a File
Retrieve a File
List All Submitted Files
Delete a File
Show Password Hint
Help

Select File to Submit

Select a file to send and click Submit to continue.

Instructor: Mr. Bob Robert
Course: SPIRIT2009
Assignment: Week1Assessment

Choose File ActivityPre...udents.doc
Submit

Surprising Possibilities Imagined & Realized through Information Technology
Hands-On Demonstration

- Documents are submitted

Select File to Submit

File ActivityPresentation_Students.doc received OK.

Click [here](#) to list all files submitted for this assignment, or use the form below to submit another file for this same assignment.

Instructor: Mr. Bob Robert

Course: SPIRIT2009

Assignment: Week1Assessment

Choose File: No file chosen

Submit
• Instructors view documents submitted
Hands-On Demonstration

• Instructors view documents submitted
Hands-On Demonstration

- Instructors can download individual submissions or package and download all submissions at once.
• The assignments File Packager works similar to *zip* or *rar* files.
Hands-On Demonstration

• Optionally, instructors can edit submissions, repackage, and return to the students
Future Development

- Add Course Management System features
- New user interface for instructor
- Require students to be authorized before they have access to a course
- Course home page customization
- More easily share documents with students
- Suggestions appreciated
Summary

• Electronic assignments submission systems such as essignments.com can be an effective tool to help manage assessments and other deliverables you need to collect
• The SPIRIT project has been using essignments.com for the past two years
Questions?

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