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Haworth College of Business News



RED HAT

More and more companies and organizations are starting to see the advantages of open source technology and how it can revolutionize business as we know it. WMU business students are also learning—and experiencing—these advantages with an open source strategist at Red Hat and Dr. Alan Rea.

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GLOBAL TRAVEL

In a recent post on Just Business, the college's dean, Kay Palan, discusses the importance of travel and intercultural experience for business professionals and students.

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Haworth College of Business
Western Michigan University

Straight from the source

open-source [oh-puh n-sawrs, -sohrs], adj.

1. Computers. pertaining to or denoting software whose source code is available free of charge to the public to use, copy, modify, sublicense or distribute.
2. pertaining to or denoting a product or system whose origins, formula, design, etc., are freely accessible to the public. Dictionary.com Unabridged



More and more companies and organizations are starting to see the advantages of open source technology and how it can revolutionize business as we know it.

Given that, it's exciting that a group of WMU students recently had the opportunity to explore the theory of open source and the practice of building a streamlined and functional website for instructors who are teaching the subject to their students.

In the business web architecture course, Dr. Alan Rea, professor of business information systems, has traditionally paired students with non-profit organizations that need a website overhaul. This year, the entire class was working on one website, teachingopensource.org. The site is devoted to providing teaching resources for instructors who want to incorporate open source into their classes. However, as time has worn on and management of the site has turned over, the repository of teaching resources has become harder to navigate, thereby affecting the potential impact of the site in the teaching community.

So, how did Rea learn of the need for this redesign and begin a conversation that resulted in a commitment from WMU in helping to rebuild this site for optimal user experience?

Enter Nick Yeates, open source strategist at Red Hat. As the only billion dollar open source company, Red Hat's mission is "to be the catalyst in communities of customers, contributors and partners creating better technology the open source way."

And having more teachers introduce students to the concept of open source is definitely a way to bring the open source concept to the next generation of IT professionals, managers and decision makers. Red Hat is part of the [teachingopensource](http://teachingopensource.org) community and was looking into options for improving the website.

Rea and Yeates met at the Professors Open Source Software Experience, a workshop for computer science and computer information systems professors, which Red Hat co-sponsors along with a National Science Foundation grant. As Yeates spoke about the challenge of making teachingopensource.org a more intuitive and navigable site, Rea saw an opportunity to engage his students in the redesign of the website and offered to take on the project in his fall web architecture course.

Yeates then traveled to WMU in October for three days, speaking to classes and student groups, as well as meeting with many students, including intensive sessions with those who would be working on the site.

The goal was to give the class the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in what it means to work on an open source project as well as to propose ideas for improving the user experience that the website provides.

The students divided into five teams, each responsible for a different area of the site as well as collaborating with fellow teams and Yeates.

Project Management: This team was the glue that held all aspects of the project together, managing schedules, deliverable dates and communication. Team members served as liaisons to each team as well as the client.

Design & User Interface: This team was responsible for the art, design, layout and color themes throughout the site as well as ensuring the site met Red Hat design standards for usability and branding.

Information Architecture: After pruning material from the old site, this team focused on organization and usability, creating an entirely new site structure where users can find what they need.

System Analysis: After researching and recommending a content management system, this team had the critical role of documenting and explaining the system to both administrators and users.

System Administration: This team was responsible for the technical implementation of the servers, programming scripts and making sure the site was secure, robust and reliable. If they have done their job well, no user will wait for web pages to load or have issues with the site availability.

The students met virtually with Yeates weekly to assess progress, pose questions and think together about the best solutions for different aspects of the site.

For the students, this was a dream opportunity. Since Red Hat allotted time in Yeates's schedule for this project, he was available to engage with the student teams. "I think I speak for everyone in our CIS 3900 class when I say this has been a tremendous experience that will benefit all of our careers," says Kathleen Cotter, a senior electronic business marketing major. "Nick Yeates from Red Hat and Dr. Rea have provided a learning experience that goes beyond the classroom

into the professional world. As a project manager, I learned the importance of time management, collaboration and cohesion. I am so grateful for this experience and value the opportunity to learn from not only Nick and Dr. Rea but also from my classmates whose unique skills have contributed to the success of this project.”

For Yeates, the experience allowed him to connect with students, introduce them to a broader understanding of open source and generate useful proposals for the site redesign. "I truly treated this as the students and I being on the same team—all of us working together. Red Hat benefited by getting 20 smart minds to work on our project for three months,” says Yeates. “Programmers want to contribute to open source when given the choice. They feel as if they are helping a greater good outside of simply making profits for their employers. Students at WMU got a flavor of this culture and development paradigm.”

And for Rea, the class allowed him to engage his students in a rich and complex project that had a meaningful impact on their learning.

“At the college, we often work with our business partners to enrich the student experience,” says Rea. “This project has taken this interaction to an entirely new level. Not only were we working with a multi-national technology business on a highly visible project but also collaborating with the company on an almost daily basis. Nick's virtual project sprints and classroom work sessions became mainstays of the class this semester. Students took away an intimate understanding of how software development is an intense collaborative effort among skilled knowledge workers. This experience will mirror the atmosphere they will encounter beyond WMU.”

Class Notes

Share your accomplishments and news with your fellow Haworth College of Business alumni through class notes in our annual college magazine. Send us details about promotions, awards, honors, appointments, marriages, births, adoptions, and retirements, and your class note will be included in the Haworth College of Business magazine.

Notes:

- When informing us of a marriage, please include the date, location, WMU alumni guests and their class years, and any legal name changes.
- When informing us of a death, please include date, location, and the names of any WMU-connected survivors and their class years.
- Class notes are subject to editing for space and grammar. Although we will process all alumni notes in a timely manner, notes that are received after magazine production begins may be included in a future edition.

WMU offers new program to prepare finance students for Series 7 exam

Western Michigan University's finance program is now offering advanced preparation for students to become licensed in securities trading, thanks to a sponsorship by Edward Jones.

The new offering provides finance students with the training required to take the licensing exam to become securities traders. Known as the Series 7 course, the class is typically taken by new employees in the first year after being hired by a trading firm. Under the partnership with Edward Jones, WMU students will be prepared to take the licensing exam upon being hired.

"This is another example of how well our program prepares our students for the job market. Students who take this class will have the necessary knowledge to take the Series 7 exam," says Dr. Devrim Yaman, chair of the Finance and Commercial Law Department at Western Michigan University. "The industry-relevance of this course will set our students apart when competing for jobs."

Studies point to a lack of qualified professionals in the finance advisory industry in coming years, as more advisors are retiring from the field than those who are entering it. A recent report from Cerulli Associates, a research firm specializing in asset management and distribution analytics, indicates that during the next decade, more than one third of financial advisors plan to retire. To keep up with demand, the industry will need to hire more than 200,000 new professionals.

"There is a strong need among the financial industry for incoming qualified financial advisors, and the Securities Training Corporation's partnership with universities across the country is part of a dedicated effort to address this industry-wide shortage," said Paul Weisman, CEO of the Securities Training Corporation in a recent press release. "The goal of this partnership is to help students pass the Series 7 exam and increase their exposure to careers as financial advisors."

Dr. David Burnie, professor of finance at Western Michigan University, says the partnership provides Haworth College of Business students with several advantages. "The students are studying the material that professionals in the field do; they will have the advantage of having studied the Series 7 material, which will put them in a strong position before their first brokerage position."

About the finance program

WMU's Department of Finance and Commercial Law offers major coursework in finance and personal financial planning. The program offers the Series 7 coursework for finance students as well as the coursework required by the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards to undergraduates in the personal financial planning degree program.

The finance degree program is the first in Michigan to be recognized by the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) Institute University Recognition Program. The WMU Student Managed Investment Fund provides students an opportunity to manage a portfolio of one million dollars of WMU Foundation money. The Greenleaf Trust Trading Room, a new addition to the college, allows students to experience stock prices scrolling across an electronic ticker, providing real-time data on market movements and world news updates. The atmosphere of the trading room enables Haworth College of Business students to experience the fast pace of Wall Street while in Kalamazoo.