

Web Portals Constituent Group
Minutes of EDUCAUSE 2001 Meeting
Monday, October 29, 2001 — Indianapolis
Leader: Jameson Watkins, University of Kansas Medical Center

Thanks to all who made it to the EDUCAUSE meeting. Below are some quick notes I made. I hope we can carry on the good conversation using the group's listserv.

- 51 were in attendance
- Approx. five had portals in production
- Approx. five more had pilot implementations under way
- The rest were still evaluating products and working on strategic directions

Of the five who were in production, one was using uPortal, another using Campus Pipeline, and the three others had homegrown portal solutions. Those that were evaluating products (and spoke up) included Oracle Portal, Novell Portal, and uPortal.

Some interesting discussion occurred about what to do with ERP vendors who were packaging (or offering discounts to) their portal products along with services they were already receiving such as PeopleSoft, Oracle, and Novell. One comment made was that the staff responsible for the portal had to be familiar with that vendor's toolset to make it a worthwhile decision...if your web developers were responsible for the portal development but had no PeopleSoft PeopleTools experience, then that must factor in to the decision and total cost of ownership of the PeopleSoft portal product.

A general consensus was reached that the 80/20 rule applied — 80% of your work was dealing with your business processes and identifying roles and relationships within your organization, and 20% was technical. The majority of the work a vendor could not help an institution with, despite any marketing claims.

Several had success with this aspect of the portal project in using well-defined and selected committees to determine content and work through the business aspects to gain ownership of the project among its constituents. Others recommended a small group to push through a pilot project, avoiding committees at all costs.

Someone asked about content management systems (CMS) and portals. One university has been using the Campus Pipeline product. Another was using Vignette Story Server. Another pointed out the need for CMS might decline as campus organizations and depts. had an outlet for news and links via a portal announcements channel.

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