



## CASE STUDY

### THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS®

#### Key Facts

**Industry:**

Higher Education

**Product:**

Xythos Digital Locker

**Audience:**

Students, Faculty  
and Administrators

#### Benefits

- Enables online collaboration
- Eliminates investments in zip-drives, RW-CDs and floppy drives
- Reduces paper and printing costs
- Widespread adoption and use by students and faculty.

#### Why Xythos?

- Minimal maintenance and support
- Intuitive user interface
- Positive feedback from pilot users

The University of Memphis is a learner-centered metropolitan research university providing high quality educational experiences while pursuing new knowledge through research, artistic expression, and interdisciplinary and engaged scholarship.

The web-enabled collaboration platform chronicled in this case study was pioneered by the Advanced Learning Center at the FedEx Institute of Technology at University of Memphis, whose mission is to support effective learning for the University through the development of technology fluency, innovations in teaching, and research.

### Challenge: Need for Web-Based Collaboration Across Distributed Campus

As a metropolitan campus, the University of Memphis has a scattered, mobile student body; out of 21,000 students, only 10 percent of its students live on campus. In addition, a large number of students never even step foot on campus, earning their degrees through the University's wide range of online programs.

Collaboration and basic course management was essentially done via email or in face-to-face meetings. For example, if a student lost his or her syllabi, they would need to track down the professor or request it via email. If a student wanted to share a large file with another student, they would need to upload it to the University's LAN or transfer it to a zip drive. The University needed a way to push information to its distributed campus and enable online collaboration between students and faculty.

### Why Xythos? Minimal Training and Support

In late 2002, the IT team at the University of Memphis embarked on an extensive search for a Basic Content Services solution to meet its needs. Every potential solution was met with the following questions:

- Would the solution address the need for web-based document sharing and collaboration?
- Could the University support the solution with its existing technical staff?
- Was the interface intuitive enough that training would be minimal?
- And finally, would users be happy with the solution and adopt it?



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**Sandy Schaeffer**  
Dir. of the Advanced Learning Center  
at the FedEx Institute of Technology  
University of Memphis

After a pilot deployment with Xythos, the IT team found that ongoing maintenance and support of the Xythos system would be minimal. They also found that the user interface was easy for users to understand and use, keeping the learning curve for the new technology very low. To cap it off, the pilot users were extremely pleased with the Xythos system. As a result, the University purchased a 25,000 user license and began the roll out in Spring 2003.

## **Deployment: Student Web Sites, Online Collaboration and First Electronic Dissertation Possible Through UM Drive**

With the Xythos solution, branded UMdrive, faculty members who experienced budget cuts were able to save on printing costs by uploading assignment to UMdrive. Students, who wanted to access their files from their off-campus apartments, as well as any workstation or coffee house, could now store their work on UMdrive and access it at anytime. In addition, the first electronic dissertation completed at the University of Memphis in Fall 2004 was possible because of UMdrive.

### **UMdrive is being used by students and faculty to:**

- Share syllabi, course assignments and more in a high percentage of undergraduate and graduate classes on campus;
- Host personal web sites;
- Store and back-up files and work;
- Collaborate on research with faculty outside the University.

### **UMdrive is being used by administrators to:**

- Manage IT projects and share project notes;
- Collaborate on statewide RFPs with other administrators;
- Eliminate email attachment in campus-wide emails;
- Manage departmental web sites and shared files; and
- Locate administrative training documentation and agendas;

## **UMdrive Has Highest Adoption of Any Instructional Technology**

UMdrive experienced widespread adoption across the entire campus because it was solved specific pains experienced by faculty members and students. It was also easy-to-use and required minimal training.

The IT team now maintains UMdrive with less than one full-time employee. The initial phase of the deployment required three full-time employees for a couple of months, but now that the system is up and running, that figure is down to half of a full-time employee’s job.

“Xythos-powered UMdrive has been phenomenal technology for the University of Memphis—it’s changed the way we work and collaborate on campus,” said Sandy Schaeffer, Director of the Advanced Learning Center at the FedEx Institute of Technology, University of Memphis. “Xythos has had the highest adoption rate of any instructional technology we’ve offered to our campus and it has become integral to our teaching and learning environment.”

## **Benefits: Replaced Aging Technology and Increased Productivity**

UMdrive is being used to replace aging technology at the University, like the People Server, which used to store departmental files. In addition to not having to host several different file management systems, UMdrive offers several features that are not available on the people server, including flexible disk quota and greater control of file and folder permissions.



Because of its ease-of-use, the transition from People Server to UMdrive has been smooth with little issues. As a result, IT has been able to turn off many of the old systems entirely, reducing the costs of having to support multiple systems.

**Other benefits of UMdrive include:**

- Enabling online collaboration between students and faculty;
- Eliminating extensive investments in zip-drives, RW-CDs and floppy drives in student labs across campus;
- Reducing paper and printing costs now that syllabi and homework assignments don't need to be printed for each class;
- Improving productivity by saving faculty and students time in locating the information they need; and
- Widespread adoption and use by students and faculty.



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