

DUKE'S E-LEARNING WITH THE iPod

As part of an initiative to encourage creative uses of technology in education, Duke University gave Apple iPods to its 1,650 incoming freshmen. The goal is to use the digital device to download faculty-provided course content, including language lessons, recorded lectures and audio books. Lynne M. O'Brien, Director of the Duke Center for Instructional Technology, talks about the educational uses of the iPod and how the library fits into the picture.



How long has the Center been in existence, and what is its mission?

The Duke Center for Instructional Technology (CIT) was created in 1999. The CIT supports the academic mission of Duke University by helping faculty find innovative ways to use technology to achieve their educational goals. Drawing on expertise in both technology and pedagogy, CIT staff assist faculty with projects, examine the impact of technology on teaching and learning, and share information about effective practices across the entire university. CIT is a department within Duke University Libraries. As Director of the CIT, I report to the Vice Provost for Library Affairs.

Why is it a department of the library?

The CIT's focus on academic uses of technology fits well with the library's support of research and teaching. CIT staff work closely with librarians on projects and activities that center on teaching and research.

In what ways does the Center interact with faculty?

CIT staff provide consulting, project support and training on instructional technology for faculty.

How was the idea for the iPod program born?

The Duke Board of Trustees' five-year strategic plan adopted in 2001, "Building on Excellence," included the goal of intensifying the use of information technology (IT) at Duke and incorporating IT into all appropriate aspects of university life. Duke has experimented with a variety of technologies, including laptop computers, wireless networking, Personal Digital Assistants, multimedia projects and technology-enhanced classrooms, as part of that strategic plan. The Duke iPod project is one more piece of our overall effort to use IT to create a rich environment that facilitates communication, learning, collaboration, research and innovation.

Is Duke the first university to do this? A number of schools have found academic uses for iPods, but as far as I know, Duke is the first to distribute iPod devices to an entire entering class.

What has the reaction been from students, faculty and alumni? Many faculty and students are excited about experimenting with the iPod and have proposed a variety of uses related to both courses and student life. Others are skeptical about the educational value of iPods and waiting to see what unfolds over the course

of the year. Most upperclassmen are disappointed that they did not receive iPods. Several alumni have contacted us asking if they can have access to Duke-created content for iPod.

Can you give us some examples of how faculty plan to use the iPod?

Courses that use music, speeches, guest speakers, spoken poetry, foreign languages, dialects or other types of audio will make the content available to freshmen to listen to anywhere, anytime. Some faculty are recording lectures for students to listen to outside of class time. Students have the option to download and listen to audio books. In several classes, students will complete course projects involving audio. For example, they will conduct interviews, record group presentations or collect other types of audio samples and then share them with the rest of the class. Both faculty and students will use these 20 gigabyte devices to store and transfer large multimedia files. A list of

specific course projects is on our Web site at: cit.duke.edu/about/ipod_faculty_projects.do

Can students add content, toolbars, personal learning tools, course notes, etc., to the iPod?

Students can add their own audio files, text notes, voice memos and calendar entries to their iPods.

Is the library cataloging and archiving the educational content created by faculty? How does the library plan to leverage this opportunity?

This whole year will be an experiment to find out what kinds of things faculty and students create, and what long-term use they hope to have for those materials. We've only had the iPods for a few weeks, but as we get more familiar with them, we will experiment with new uses. Several talks from the library's "Engaging Faculty Lecture Series" will soon be available for members of the Duke community to download onto iPods for listening at their convenience. We expect other library projects to emerge during the year.

What future do you see for the library in the world of e-learning and instructional technology?

Libraries will continue to have an important role in providing the university community with access to a rich collection of materials, in all types of formats, for research and teaching. ■



Lynne M. O'Brien