

## IBM Customer Reference



# *Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning*



**Synopsis:** *Canadian college that caters to non-traditional students enables its Web site to accept online student enrollments, decreasing the workload on its telephone enrollment center and increasing student satisfaction by leveraging IBM WebSphere Commerce – Express, IBM WebSphere Application Server – Network Deployment and DB2 Express software*

**Location:** Oakville, Ontario Canada

**Industry:** Education

**Focus Area:** WebSphere Commerce

**URL:** College: <http://www.sheridanc.on.ca>  
Course Enrollment:  
<http://sculptor.sheridanc.on.ca/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/TopCategoriesDisplay?storeId=10051&catalogId=10051>

### **Customer Background:**

Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning (Sheridan College) operates several campuses in the western section of the greater Toronto Area, offering undergraduate and continuing education degree and diploma courses. The School of Continuing Education offers a wide variety of courses and programs in many disciplines, targeted specifically at adult education and part-time students. Shift magazine's 2002 Guide to Digital Education named Sheridan College as the "Best" and "Most Famous We've Got" among Canadian schools.



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**Business Need:**

The Sheridan College School of Continuing Education needed to streamline its enrollment processes. Previously, the only way for potential students to enroll in classes was through a telephone call center maintained strictly for this purpose that had limited hours and a limited capacity. Not only was this an inefficient means of handling the surge of enrollments at the beginning of each semester, it was also a highly labor-intensive process requiring telephone operators to manually enter information into the college's PeopleSoft enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

To reduce the workload on the telephone call center and to allow current and potential students 24x7 access to enrollment services, Sheridan College wanted to enable its Web site to accept enrollments. The existing Sheridan Web site, however, did not allow integration with the PeopleSoft system. The college needed a leading-edge solution to integrate its Web site with its back-end systems to enable online enrollment.

**Solution:**

To integrate its Web site with its back-end PeopleSoft ERP environment, Sheridan College implemented a solution based solely on IBM technologies. The college deployed two IBM eServer xSeries 345 servers running Red Hat Linux Enterprise V3.0. One xSeries server runs IBM WebSphere Commerce - Express V5.6, IBM WebSphere Application Server - Network Deployment V5.0.2.3 and the college's HTTP server. The second xSeries server hosts an IBM DB2 Express V8 database.

WebSphere Commerce software runs on the WebSphere Application Server platform and manages the integration of the college's course catalogue with its PeopleSoft system, allowing potential students to view how many seats are available in any given class. WebSphere Commerce software also processes student enrollment requests and credit card payments and provides student's with e-mail confirmation of enrollment. The DB2 Express information management software serves as a database for all WebSphere Commerce data components and transactions and manages the College of Continuing Education's curriculum and course descriptions, which amounts to several hundred courses and class offerings for each semester. The DB2 Express database software came bundled with the WebSphere Commerce software as a standard solution.

IBM Software Services for WebSphere and IBM Business Partner MRS Company Ltd. provided technical knowledge and assisted Sheridan College in deploying this solution.

**Benefits of the Solution:**

In its first ten days of operation, the School of Continuing Education's new e-commerce site took in CAN\$5 million worth of enrollment fees for the Fall 2004 term, which equates to approximately ten percent of the school's total annual revenue. The college anticipates that as the site gains acceptability, it will generate about 60 percent of the school's total enrollments, dramatically decreasing the call center's workload. Sheridan College also believes that the e-commerce site will also improve customer satisfaction and allow the college to grab more market share in the continuing education arena.

The college is now able to process enrollments online, 24x7. Although exceptions are still handled manually (i.e., duplicate or unknown student identification numbers), the enrollment system has been streamlined with the implementation of the online system. Currently, Sheridan College has fewer than ten personnel devoted to processing enrollments over the phone. This solution has not only reduced the volume of calls operators must process, it has also reduced the need to manually enter information into the ERP system via green screens. Staff can now use the WebSphere Commerce interface to input data



directly into the PeopleSoft system.

Sheridan College chose IBM for three main reasons. First, the out-of-the-box capabilities of the WebSphere Commerce software suited the college's vision for its online enrollment system. Second, the marketing campaign and management tools in WebSphere Commerce software will allow Sheridan College to make the site more dynamic by offering promotions that will recommend specific courses or programs to students. The college expects that this functionality will help to improve its competitive advantage and yield higher revenues. Finally, the price of the WebSphere Commerce software suited Sheridan College's limited IT budget.



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