



Philips SpeechExec Enterprise Enables Canada's Sheridan College to Prepare Students for Corporate, Legal and Medical Office Careers

With a long history of technical innovation, Sheridan was one of the first colleges to use web-based course management software in 1998, and has since continued to upgrade to the latest enterprise-level capabilities and opportunities.

The pioneer in design of mobile computing classrooms that stimulate collaborative, team-based learning, Sheridan College's mobile computing curriculum is one of the largest, most advanced programs in Canada with 5,000 students.

The Sheridan's Administration Program in the School of Business at the Brampton, Ontario campus has embraced Sheridan's Learning and Teaching Environment (SLATE) platform to enhance the effectiveness of teaching office proficiencies its students need to succeed in future administrative careers.

When Sheridan College wanted to introduce advanced Transcription, Dictation and Administrative Management curriculum to improve the practical relevance of its courses, it needed innovative enterprise software compatible with a variety of Windows operating systems - from a company that supports its software in a mobile computing environment.

"Sheridan has a long history of turning out capable graduates, so it only makes sense for us to make a significant investment in state-of-the-art learning environments featuring the latest technology," says Cindy Gillett, Associate Dean, Sheridan School of Business.

Office Administration faculty at Sheridan's School of Business needed superior software applications and methods to deliver mobile computing transcription courses that would keep its graduates among the most sought-after office employees in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area). However, this objective presented the college with several technical and business challenges.

The first complication was that all students in Sheridan's mobile computing programs are required to bring a laptop that complies with the program's hardware and software standards. Naturally this results in faculty having to electronically interface with students using a variety of laptop models served by various operating systems. Sheridan needed a flexible dictation/transcription software program that could interface easily with multiple operating systems.

A faculty committee, led by Nancy Barrington (Office Administration Coordinator), evaluated and tested a number of web-based systems before selecting Philips SpeechExec Enterprise to provide all the capabilities the School of Business required. While appreciating the enterprise software's unparalleled features and functionality, the committee was particularly swayed by these contributing factors:

- Tiered technical support procedures built into the contract
- Compatibility of the Philips SpeechExec Enterprise with a variety of Windows operating systems

- Solid reputation of the dealer, Hofstetter Business Technologies, and Philips Speech Processing
- Availability of educational pricing

Sheridan purchased 80 network licenses of Philips SpeechExec Enterprise for classroom use on networked laptops and one stand-alone license for administrative use on a desktop computer. The new system was implemented and began providing academic and networked communication advantages for both faculty and students in November 2009.



Support that assures complete service "Because of the variety of laptop models our students own, it was important to us that technical support (if required) be built into our contract," says Gillett. "We're pleased our contract included the comprehensive procedures, and to date, SpeechExec has been running smoothly with Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7, and within our Bring Your Own Laptop (BYOL) computing environment."

Philips SpeechExec Enterprise offers centralized configuration tools, allowing recorder maintenance, programming and upgrades to be delivered centrally to each user. Additionally, it can be customized to meet the requirements of the different student laptops.

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Tiered Technical Support

Any technical issues are resolved first internally by Sheridan's ITSC (Information Technology Support Centre) and then, if required, by Sheridan's IT (Information Technology) help desk. If external support is required, the contract designates Hofstetter Business Technologies. If necessary, issues are then escalated within 24 hours to Philips Technical Support in Markham. In the unlikelyhood urgent services requests remain, they would then go directly to Philips headquarters in Vienna, Austria. "Having support procedures in place," says Gillett, "protects our investment and ensures we are able to continue to deliver our laptop educational programs."

Hard-working applications make the grade

Sheridan's Office Administration programs provide training for students in a variety of administrative careers in corporate, legal and medical office settings. Technical training includes hands-on office applications for e-transcription, dictation, document processing and other administrative procedures.

"The structure and delivery of Sheridan's Office Administration e-transcription courses currently utilizes Philips SpeechExec Enterprise."

Nancy Barrington, Coordinator, Office Administration, Sheridan School of Business

The powerful dictation management tool Philips SpeechExec Enterprise simulates a networked office environment where process efficiencies mean money. Students learn to transcribe digitally recorded legal, medical and executive correspondence using their personal laptops. They gain valuable marketability by becoming proficient with the highly regarded Philip's business software used by many potential employers.

Procedures have been established within Sheridan to distribute digital voice files electronically via email to students or uploaded to Sheridan's online learning management system. These files include mock court documents or legal correspondence;

hypothetical physician's notes, medical reports or executive correspondence. SpeechExec's Workflow Manager technology will enable students to transcribe and manage these documents in future just as they would in the workplace.

Philips digital dictation capabilities also simplify time-consuming teaching tasks. Now professors can record on Philips' easy-to-use Digital Pocket Memo to quickly create custom dictations for student transcription assignments, tests and other documents. Just as in an office environment, these digital voice files are electronically transferred to students. When students finish their transcription assignments, they send their work electronically to their instructors via Sheridan's online learning management system.

Students are also capable of using the software off line at home so they can practice their transcription skills outside of their scheduled classes.

Sheridan also uses the Philips SpeechExec Enterprise system in an entirely different scenario, suggesting what's good for the student is good for the faculty. According to Gillett, the Legal, Medical and Executive Program Advisory Committee meetings are recorded verbatim using the voice-activated Philips Digital Pocket Memo, complete with speakers. This recording is transcribed later by a program support specialist in the School of Business for complete, accurate minutes

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Cindy Gillett, Associate Dean, Sheridan School of Business

of the meetings, which are digitally archived. "Why should mobile computing classes have an exclusive on productivity improvements?" she adds.

Carrying the tradition of success forward

"Our leading-edge digital learning environments help our students develop the language and technical skills they need to jump right into today's rapidly changing world," says Gillett. "Now with Philips SpeechExec Enterprise we can structure and present mobile computing business courses more efficiently to provide the type of hands-on experience our students can expect to find in real-world medical, legal and corporate offices."

With the success for mobile computing proven in Brampton, Office Administration programs may be moving to the new Mississauga campus in the near future.

Supporting Academic Achievement

At the Sheridan College School of Business Academic Awards Ceremony held on Wednesday, May 26, 2010, the Philips Speech Processing Award was presented to two deserving recipients in Sheridan's Medical Office Administration Diploma program for outstanding academic achievement in Medical E-Transcription: Prabha Raman and Nicole Malandrino.



Left to right: Nicole Malandrino (Student), Nancy Barrington (Coordinator), Prabha Raman (Student) of Sheridan College; and Brian Johnston of Hofstetter Business Technologies



For more information:

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