

New Developments..cont'd

The Seamless Classroom: A Prototype in the Making at URI

Thanks to a Champlin grant and URI contributions, OIS, Capital Projects, and the Interim Registrar will renovate and “technologize” four general-assignment classrooms for the fall.

These are not “labs” nor are they “smart classrooms” but in fact, the emerging standard classroom on campus. Walking into one of the new seamless classrooms, you would think, at first, that you have just walked into a pretty nicely appointed traditional classroom. Technology has shrunk and become wireless, so the technology in classrooms can almost disappear.

The four rooms currently slated for renovation are 235 Chafee, 028 Fogarty, 214 Quinn, and 213 Morrill. In each of these seamless classrooms you’ll find:

- *a permanently-installed video projector on the ceiling*
- *a smartboard mounted on the wall (allows you to create an active desktop on the wall; your finger becomes the mouse and whatever you can do at your computer, you can do on the smartboard)*
- *wireless hubs for laptops to connect to the network*
- *standard network ports*
- *sufficient electrical plugs for all students to plug in*
- *carpeted floors and dropped ceilings to dampen sound and thus facilitate group work*
- *tables for three students that can be used in standard ranks or re-configured into shallow ovals for group work*

Our goal is to make technology “seamless”; in other words, invisible, taken-for-granted. It should just “be there.” The other part of “seamless” is that the rooms can easily be used any way traditional classrooms have always been used.

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How would you like to teach one of your classes from your office?

URI has a rare opportunity to do a few free Webcasts through a hosting company in New York City. This is what happens during a Webcast:

- Your voice is broadcast to your students through the Internet
- they in turn can send chat messages that everyone sees
- at the same time, your PowerPoint slides or URLs are shown, and
- you can see the list of students who are logged on

This wonderful interface is low-tech: students can receive the Webcast in their dorm room or

at home over a standard low-end modem connected to the telephone line. You can even have a guest talking over the telephone and his or her voice is broadcast to everyone.

We in IITS and HorizonLive, the NYC company, will help you make this happen painlessly. Please contact me, Trent Batson, at trent@uri.edu or Vince Petronio at petronio@uri.edu if you are interested in talking about this opportunity.