

# features

## HP Wants to Go to the Head of the Class

Virtual Classroom Just One Offering in External Education Push

by Susan B. Shor

More robust, always on, added features, highly scalable and more secure—all of those things are great, if your staff knows how to get the most out of them. Brian Brouillette, HP Education Services general manager, said a customer summed it up best for him when he said, “We poured millions and millions of dollars into this IT project, and business results didn’t change. If you can’t get people to do things differently, you can’t get better results.”

That, said Brouillette, is the message his organization is trying to hammer home.

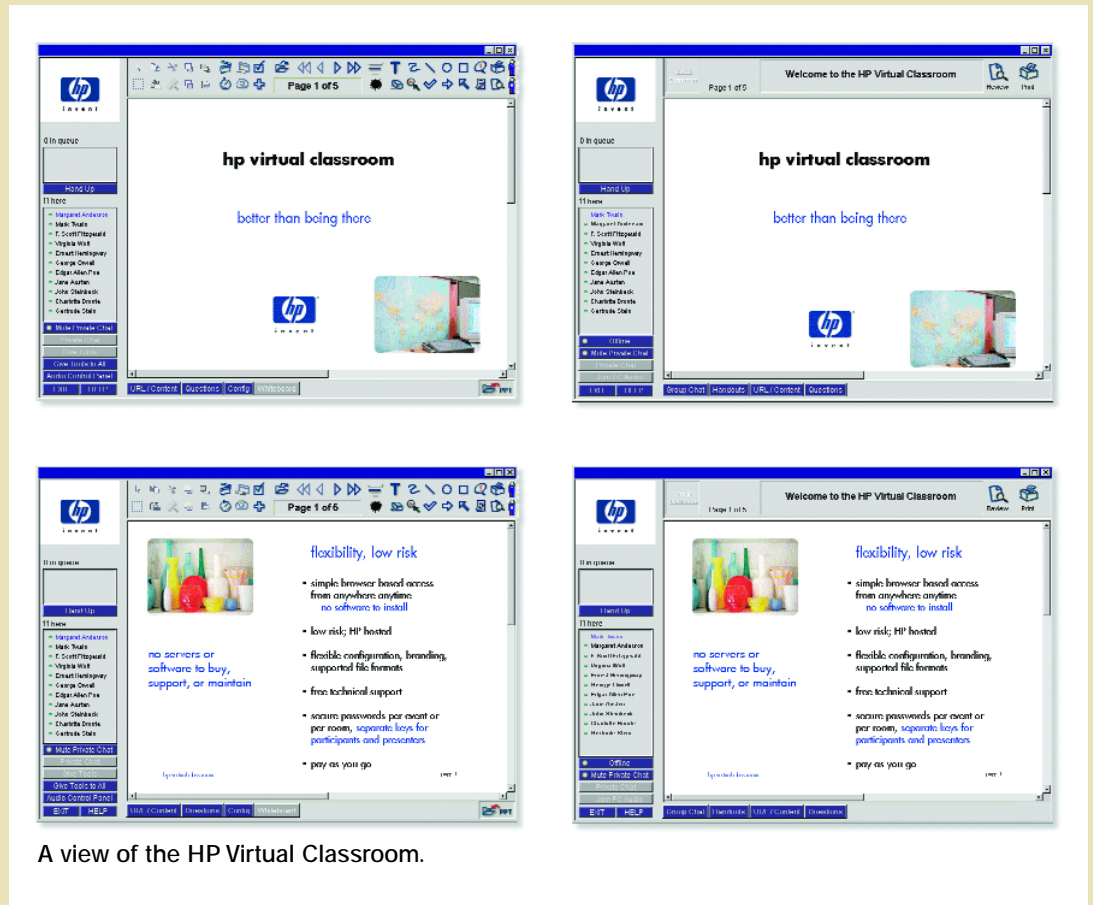
Education Services has been working to train Hewlett-Packard employees and large corporate customers for 25 years, but recently it has branched out into consumer education and into selling its Virtual Classroom as an e-service. HP is working hard to push its education services at a time when many companies are looking for ways to increase productivity without spending any money on IT products.

### Getting Together Without Being There

The Virtual Classroom started out as simply an interactive tool for imparting information across the Internet, but companies whose employees HP had trained started asking if the Virtual Classroom was a product they could buy. About a year and a half ago, HP began selling the classroom as an e-service that it hosts and maintains.

The Virtual Classroom is just what it sounds like, a Web-based “room” where instructors and students can come together. Material is easily loaded by dragging PowerPoint slides or other files onto the screen. The toolbar lies across the top of the screen and can be tailored for each session and user group. Another informational panel stretches down the left side of the page.

The instructor has control over how much interactivity there will be. For instance, students can be allowed to chat with each other while the class is in session or to ask



A view of the HP Virtual Classroom.

questions in a freeflowing manner, or the instructor can choose to be the gatekeeper for the discussion. The room can be customized on the fly so that the instructor can tune the presentation as the character of the audience becomes clearer. And classroom sessions will remain untouched as long as companies contract for them to be maintained.

A new feature allows students to record sessions and play them back at their convenience. For participants who miss the beginning or have to leave before the end of a session, there are rewind and fast forward options as well.

Also added to the recently released Version 3.3 were application sharing; the ability to show animated PowerPoint slides; streaming video; the direct import of PowerPoint, Excel, Word and PDF files; the ability to display graphics in various locations within the classroom; folders for organizing and managing files, and file-saving to participant PCs.

### Some Specs

The classroom is suited for up to 250 concurrent users. Brouillette told *HP World Magazine* the technology allows for more, but managing the group becomes unwieldy. The service got about 15,000 hours of use last year, according to Brouillette. Sessions can be encrypted for extra security, and all participants are given a key to get into the room. The room can be accessed through Internet Explorer Versions 4.01 to 5.x and Netscape 4.x and on Windows 95, 98, NT or 2000 or HP-UX 10.20 or higher.

Because the classroom is a hosted service, the requirements on the user’s end are minimal, said Vera McCoy, business development manager for the Virtual Classroom. That also means that the person with the slowest connection does not bog down everyone else. In addition, Jennifer Harrington, marketing program manager for the Virtual Classroom, said that because participants’ names change colors

depending on how fast their network is, she knows when to spend more time discussing issues as students wait for pages to load.

This method of learning is well suited to situations in which a company has an hour or so of information it needs to impart quickly to a large group of people. Telling IT workers about a security flaw and how to fix it or teaching former Compaq employees about the systems at HP are two examples. The classroom can be tailored to new product and sales training, virtual meetings and presentations, collaborative meetings or employee training.

In fact, Brouillette said that the Virtual Classroom has been widely used internally by HP to educate new employees in the post-merger world. Brouillette called HP Internal Education “a very important account.”

**More Than One Way to Learn**  
But the Virtual Classroom is only one way that HP teaches IT

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### Learning E-services

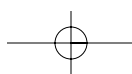
HP offers internal Virtual Classroom externally, [page 24](#)

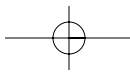
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### Education Services

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and end-user classes.

"We want to help customers take advantage of all this hardware that they buy from HP," Brouillette said. "Our approach is 'blended.' From the get-go you think about how these different teaching methods come together."

HP Education Services also holds "regular" classes and offers "asynchronous learning," which means the online classes are self-directed. A new catalog comes out twice a year.

In-person classes are best suited to multi-day, intensive training sessions where the students will benefit from hands-on labs and lots of interaction with the instructor. The asynchronous classes work best for a brush-up.

Varying degrees of these methods are used in Education Services' three business segments: solutions, core and online. The online segment features the Virtual Classroom.

The solutions business works with large, multi-nation companies to educate their employees. For example, when Nokia switched from Lotus cc:Mail to Exchange, HP stepped in to teach IT workers how to manage the new mail system and to show com-



Brian Brouillette

pany end users how to get the most out of it. The outreach encompassed approximately 50,000 people in 20 countries who spoke 12 languages, according to Brouillette. "There are very few companies who can do that," he said. "You're talking HP and IBM."

The solutions segment also includes a popular one-day course for which Brouillette says HP is the only game in town. It uses a simulation in which IT problems crop up, forcing the business side and the IT side to work together and learn each other's needs and language to get up and running again.

The core business focuses on educating IT personnel in operating systems such as HP-UX,

OpenView, Tru64, OpenVMS and complementary software. Among the offerings is a one-hour session on moving from Windows NT to XP. Sessions on migrating from VMS or Tru64 to HP-UX or Linux are in the works and will be modeled on some of the things HP has learned from e3000 users and their migration needs.

#### Consumer Training

HP has teamed up with retail outlet Office Depot to offer training to consumers and small business owners as well. Six weeks ago the companies launched a series of 400 targeted programs in categories such as personal productivity, personal entertainment and small business software. Educational CDs are bundled in with HP hardware so that consumers who buy products such as digital cameras, LaserJets or Jornadas can learn to get the most out of their purchases. Other classes are geared toward small business hardware or how best to scan and store digital assets.

No matter what the audience, Brouillette said, his organization's mandate is "helping people get to and maintain peak performance." In IT projects, managers should think about how much attention is given to end-user productivity. "It's usually an afterthought, but it shouldn't be," he said. ■

### Starbucks, HP and T-Mobile Rollout High-Speed Broadband Wireless Internet Access

High-speed wireless Internet access has become faster, simpler and more convenient as Starbucks Coffee Company, T-Mobile International, the wireless subsidiary of Deutsche Telekom, and Hewlett-Packard officially launched T-Mobile HotSpot service in Starbucks coffeehouses in August.

As easy as ordering their latte, Starbucks customers can check e-mail, surf the Web, watch streaming video or download multimedia presentations in the comfort of Starbucks via a fast, reliable standards based wireless Internet connection for notebook computers and Pocket PCs. Starbucks customers can trial T-Mobile HotSpot service for free at approximately 1,200 Starbucks stores in the United States, according to a joint press release. An additional 800 Starbucks locations in the U.S. are scheduled to feature the service by the end of the year. Starbucks and T-Mobile have also initiated a six-month pilot in select London and Berlin locations.

"This service is a natural extension of the Starbucks coffeehouse experience, which has always been about making connections with the people and information that are important to us over a cup of coffee," Howard Schultz, Starbucks chairman and chief global strategist, said in the press release. "Mobile professionals across the globe have been waiting for just such an offering: high-speed wireless Internet access in a familiar and widely available location that keeps them connected while on the road, or between the home and office. It's the right service offered in the right environment."

T-Mobile HotSpot service uses standards based "Wi-Fi" (802.11b) technology and is easily accessible for Starbucks customers with a wireless-ready notebook computer or Pocket PC. Backed by T-1 connections in popular venues in the U.S., T-Mobile HotSpot service is reliable and fast enough to accommodate the full spectrum of applications from checking e-mail to multi-media video conferencing with a high-speed wireless connection as much as 40-50 times faster than standard dial-up Internet access.

The release also said that as the preferred technology provider for Starbucks corporate headquarters and its network of retail stores, HP also introduces the new Wireless Connection Manager. The free, downloadable software makes it simple for mobile professionals to configure their wirelessly enabled notebook and Pocket PCs to automatically sense and connect to available wireless networks, making the move from home to office to Starbucks a breeze. The easy-to-use Wireless Connection Manager software will assist Starbucks customers in moving between T-Mobile HotSpot and other wireless networks in which they may connect. Starbucks customers can visit [www.starbucks.com/hotspot](http://www.starbucks.com/hotspot) to download the free HP software and order specially bundled HP mobile products such as Evo notebook computers, iPaq Pocket PCs and Wireless PC cards.

With this announcement, the release said, the service is now available at Starbucks stores in Atlanta; Austin, Texas; Boston; Connecticut; Denver; Dallas-Ft-Worth; Houston; New York; New Jersey; Philadelphia; Portland, Ore.; the San Francisco Bay Area; and the Seattle-Puget Sound region. Additionally, stores in Southern California, including Los Angeles; Chicago; Maryland; Pittsburgh; Virginia; and Washington, D.C., are scheduled to be enabled before the end of the calendar year. Customers can easily identify which of their favorite Starbucks have broadband wireless Internet access by looking for the T-Mobile HotSpot sign near Starbucks entrances or by visiting Starbucks and T-Mobile's Web sites.

Additional cities will be added to the European pilot over the next several months.

"HP's vision is to eliminate the boundaries of mobile computing, making wireless access fast, easy and rewarding," said Michael Capellas, president of HP. "Not only does HP offer the broadest array of innovative mobile technology today, but we're collaborating with Starbucks and T-Mobile on future technologies to deliver a constant stream of wireless products and places to enrich the mobile experience for our mutual customers worldwide," he said in the press release. ■

### Microsoft's Multimillion Dollar Outsourcing Contract to HP

Hewlett-Packard announced a multi-year, multimillion-dollar global services contract to provide centralized end-user technical support for 61,000 Microsoft employees, vendors and contractors in up to 68 countries.

With this agreement, HP said in a press release, Microsoft becomes one of the largest clients for the newly merged HP Services division, which combines the strengths of HP and Compaq into a \$15 billion services business. HP Services provides consulting and system integration, customer support and outsourcing services to help enterprise clients design,

deploy and manage mission-critical IT environments.

For the past two years, HP has provided help desk call-center support to 11,000 Microsoft employees, vendors and contractors in 35 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

"As Microsoft employees are eager to try our new enterprise software products, end-user support is a vital function for supporting productivity and contributing to the evolution of our premiere software products," Victor Bahna, director of worldwide help desk services, Microsoft Corp, said in the press release. "HP has made the commit-

ment to meet our high standards for support via the application of nascent technologies, implementation of best practices and global program management."

Ann Livermore, executive vice-president of HP Services, said, "The new HP offers the industry's deepest expertise in Microsoft technologies and a broad array of outsourcing capabilities. This agreement with Microsoft is just one example of the newly merged company's ability to provide superior value to our global business partners and to leverage our expanded service offerings in the marketplace." ■

### HP Signs Huge Deal with Department of Veterans Affairs

Hewlett-Packard will deploy and manage Microsoft software for all desktop systems at the Department of Veterans Affairs. The value of the contract—which covers all Microsoft desktop software licensing for the department—exceeds \$225 million, HP said in a press release in late August.

"Working with the Department of Veterans Affairs gives us immense satisfaction because they are a customer whose efforts support the needs of the men and women who served our country," Jim Weynand, vice-president and general manager, HP Public Sector Organization,

said in the press release. "Helping an organization of this magnitude implement the right IT solution isn't just about hardware. It isn't just about software. It isn't just about services. It's about applying all these elements to help them meet VA's unique challenges."

HP said the software licensing agreement is an outgrowth of the PCHS-2 contract that VA awarded to Compaq shortly before it merged with HP. The company's relationship with VA goes back 15 years.

"As one of VA's strategic IT partners, HP brings value to the

department by leveraging our strategic relationships with global partners like Microsoft," said Chuck Kinzel, director for the Department of Veterans Affairs, HP U.S. Public Sector Federal Organization. "Providing these software licenses as part of our integrated approach to working with VA ensures the best end-to-end solution for their needs."

As one of HP's largest federal customers, the Department of Veterans Affairs is managed by a dedicated HP federal team committed to high levels of customer satisfaction. ■

