

## Community High School District 99

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David Jakes  
IT Coordinator  
Community High School District 99  
Northeastern Illinois



## Campus Pack™ in Action:

### Social Learning Software in a K-12 Setting

How can you create an environment in which students can learn, network, and interact with social learning software safely and securely? The Campus Pack™ software suite provides a solution: it integrates with existing online learning systems, is easy to learn, and gives teachers the ability to monitor activity and maintain a safe environment.

Community High School District 99 decided to put to the test Campus Pack's ease-of-use and ability to expand as the needs of the schools evolve.

#### Staying Safe

Located in Chicago's western suburbs, Community High School District 99 is known for academic excellence. The state-of-the-art technology resources found in its schools—North High School and South High School—help create this successful learning environment.

When David Jakes, IT Coordinator for Community High School District 99, became interested in the potential of wikis and blogs for aiding instruction, his number one priority was security. “There is a lot of negativity around tools that create digital environments where, for example, kids could possibly threaten other kids, sabotage work, etc. These types of issues extend into school, and so we discourage our teachers from using social software tools residing outside of the district's network,” explains Jakes.

Jakes set his sites on finding social learning software tools designed specifically for educational use. “Our first step was to find a solution that integrated into the existing online learning system, Blackboard. The technology needed to give teachers the ability to monitor activity and maintain a safe environment.”

District 99 chose to adopt the Campus Pack software suite. “We intended to take a conservative approach to rolling out blogs, wikis, and personal portfolios to the student body. Campus Pack was the only platform that bundled all these applications into one system— it fit the bill perfectly,” states Jakes.

## Campus Pack™ Wikis

Campus Pack's wiki tool is designed specifically for education, enabling students and instructors to collaboratively create interactive, multimedia websites. Sharing a common online workspace, course members author, organize, and present their work.

With Campus Pack wikis, users can

- Easily work together to build knowledgebases, write papers, or synthesize research
- Use hyperlinks to organize information in sophisticated and informative ways
- Enhance content with rich text formatting, images, and embedded video clips
- Track and review individual contributions to group projects



## Encouraging Adoption

Jakes notes that successfully introducing a new technology into the classroom requires thoughtful planning, creativity, and enthusiasm. Moreover, he believes it is important to have internal champions to help spread best practices. So District 99 started by putting together a small group of Blackboard power users to pilot the wiki application in Campus Pack.

With a small group of initial users, the IT department could get a much clearer understanding of what worked well. Jakes states, "Only after gathering this type of information did we then go out and introduce Campus Pack to the larger population. This approach was very effective for us. We found the early adopters had minimal technical questions, quickly embraced the tools, and most importantly shared their success stories with other faculty members."

## English, Science, and Wikis

Jakes describes a number of ways that District 99 instructors and students have been using Campus Pack wikis. For example, English teachers are using the wiki tool to support writing instruction. "Teachers have commented that Campus Pack has afforded them several advantages over traditional writing support, especially in allowing

students to trace their teacher's and peers' comments and feedback," says Jakes. In addition, teachers use wikis in Campus Pack as a common space for book reviews, grouping students together around specified topics for ongoing study and discussion. The students build on each other's writing, while the instructor can monitor progress and provide suggestions online.

In another example, a ninth-grade biology teacher assigns student groups the task of building wiki sites exploring questions fundamental to the course. Each group works collaboratively to create a "BioWiki," where they write and continually revise their analyses. Each BioWiki is assessed both on a group basis and according to individual contributions. In this instance, the wiki history function in Campus Pack is valuable for helping teachers mediate disputes between students and for providing insight into who contributed what and when.

"In general, wikis are a new concept for incoming students, as well as teachers. Campus Pack has been well accepted and is the ideal solution for supporting group functions ranging from the simple, such as note-taking, to the complex, such as building outlines and brainstorming," concludes Jakes.

