



Academic Spotlight

Joseph Sant, Sheridan College

“The BlackBerry Academic Program was the critical factor that allowed us to get a rapid start in this emerging area”

– Brian Jervis, Associate Dean, School of Applied Computing, Sheridan College



Professor Profile: Joseph Sant

Joseph Sant started in information technology in the early days of the personal computer. Initially combining software development with teaching he soon decided to concentrate full-time on teaching. One textbook, many papers, hundreds of classes and thousands of students later he still loves teaching.

Joseph sees many similarities between “constructive disruption of personal computing” in the 1980’s and the disruption occurring now because of smartphones and now focuses his research on eLearning in the mobile age (mLearning).

Published Texts: A Workbook in C, Prentice-Hall Canada, 1989.

Sheridan College: A New Beginning

The BlackBerry® Academic Program provides free curriculum resources and hardware for instructors to effectively teach mobile computing. Joseph Sant is one of many professors at Sheridan College in Toronto, Ontario, Canada using BlackBerry Academic Program resources to deliver mobile curriculum. Joseph initially contacted the academic team to learn more about how Sheridan could shift their computer science programs to include a mobile focus. Through the use of academic resources provided by Research In Motion® (RIM®), Sheridan went from offering limited mobile curriculum, to teaching foundations of mobile computing in their diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate and degree programs. More recently they co-hosted an event with RIM geared to get local students and faculty excited about mobile curriculum.

Inspired by Innovation

Looking for new, innovative ways to educate their students on mobile computing, Sheridan College sent five faculty members to attend the BlackBerry® Developer Conference (DevCon) in 2009. Brian Jervis, Associate Dean, School of Applied Computing explains, “At DevCon, the team was inspired by the technology, the rate of change in wireless technology and the developer community. The Sheridan team sat down with our Applied Computing curriculum maps after the conference. We were inspired to create new curriculum that balanced theory and application.”

Quick Facts

December 2010 – over 80 students graduated after successfully completing the new mobile courses.

Winter 2011 semester (January 2011) - 14 classes with a combined total of over 350 students taking courses in Mobile Computing.

In June 2010 and 2011 - RIM and Sheridan co-hosted a Faculty Forum for universities and colleges in the greater Toronto area. Over 120 faculty and students attended sessions in 2010, and over 200 in 2011.

Mobile Focus

Following the conference, Sheridan was armed with a plan for revising their curriculum, focusing on wireless technology and mobile applications. Sheridan added 12 wireless and mobile courses to their curriculum. Brian says, “The BlackBerry Academic Program was the critical factor that allowed Sheridan to get a rapid start in this emerging area of mobile computing. It is still the foundation for many of our courses.” Sheridan is now starting to see mobile applications developed as part of the cumulative projects that students complete during the final two semesters of their programs.

In December 2010, Sheridan graduated over 80 students who had successfully completed the new mobile courses. As of the beginning of Winter 2011 semester, Sheridan will have 14 classes in Mobile Computing with a combined total of over 350 students taking these courses. Mobile has also become a focus for the Interactive Multimedia Graduate Certificate program.

Collaborating with Local Talent

Sheridan recognized the advantages the mobile curriculum gave their students and decided to share their experiences. In June 2010 and 2011, RIM and Sheridan co-hosted a “Faculty Forum for Universities and Colleges” in the greater Toronto area for schools who were planning to develop curriculum in wireless and mobile. The intent was to share best practices across institutions and further academic knowledge in the area of mobile education. The 2011 forum was attended by roughly 200 local faculty and students. This forum provided an opportunity for local academics and students to discuss their experiences with mobile devices in the classroom and the potential of mobile learning.

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