

**USING THE INTERNET AND SHAREWARE TO  
FACILITATE COMPUTER SIMULATION  
IN DISTANCE LEARNING CLASSES**

John D. Overby, The University of Tennessee at Martin  
Richard B. Griffin, The University of Tennessee at Martin  
Edd R. Joyner, The University of Tennessee at Martin  
Tom W. Schmidt, The University of Tennessee at Martin  
Lisha Tuck, The University of Tennessee at Martin  
Keith Mansfield, Bancorp South, Inc.

**ABSTRACT**

A live demonstration by the authors will show how to use the Internet and freeware/shareware software (NetMeeting) to facilitate the use of computer simulations (DOS or Windows based) as an integral part of a distance learning class without having to make exotic changes to the simulation programs. Participants in the demonstration will be located in at least three states.

**INTRODUCTION**

A myriad of reasons have led many colleges and universities to become participants in the development of distance learning courses. For most educators the development of distance learning classes has required the use of new technologies and the demise of others. Burns (1998) aptly described some of the difficulties that are experienced when educators become participants in a distance education class. The question often asked by the neophyte distance educator is: How can I retain the use of a computer simulation that I consider a critical part of my course?

**TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGES THAT  
ENHANCE THE USE OF COMPUTER  
SIMULATIONS IN DISTANCE LEARNING  
CLASSES**

As described by Burns (1998) the technological problems that are sometimes encountered by educators can be enough to cause students to drop a course, cause major pedagogical changes in the way the course is conducted, and to make the educator regret that s/he has even agreed to attempt a distance learning course. Griffin et al. (1999) demonstrated that technological software had advanced sufficiently to assist educators in improving the distance learning class experience for everyone involved. Microsoft's NetMeeting is a program that provides educators a means of conducting computer simulations, chat sessions, whiteboards, and file transfers via the Internet without changes having to be made in the simulation programs.

**A DEMONSTRATION**

The authors will demonstrate using freeware/shareware available via the Internet that the professor has the capability to use computer simulations in a distance learning environment. No special requirements are placed on these

simulations, in fact any simulation you have used before in a traditional classroom can be used with this approach. Three popular computer simulations (The Multinational Management Game: A Simuworld of Global Strategy by Keys and Wells; The Business Management Laboratory by Jensen; and The Management/Accounting Simulation by Goosen), not designed for Networks or the Internet, have been tested in their DOS versions and one of the three computer simulations has been tested in its Windows version to validate that the technological capabilities currently exist.

#### **Tools Used in the Demonstration**

- Personal Computer with Windows 95/98
- Internet Access
- Microsoft NetMeeting
- Computer Simulation Software
- IP Address of the Instructor

#### **Required Knowledge/Experience (Students and Faculty)**

Participants should have the following computer knowledge/experience to be able to successfully participate in the conduct of a computer simulation via the Internet.

- Familiarity with a computer
- Ability to download and install software from a packaged program
- Ability to download and install software from the Internet

#### **SUMMARY**

The use of freeware/software such as Microsoft's NetMeeting will permit an instructor to use traditional classroom simulations in a distance learning setting without making modifications to the simulation.

#### **REFERENCES**

- Burns, Alvin C. (1998) A neophyte distance educator's experience. *Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning*, 25,138-144.
- Griffin, Richard B.; Joyner, Edd R.; Schmidt, Tom; Mansfield, Keith; Tuck, Lisha. (1999) A day in the life of an interactive, real time, internet delivered course: a demonstration. *Developments in Business Simulation and Experiential Learning*, 26,346-347.