A survey of Blackboard integration for both academic and administrative purposes

An increasing amount of colleges and universities have adopted commercial course management systems on campus. Blackboard is a software among the few very popular ones. This study described how the system is utilized by faculty, administration and students in a small liberal arts college, hoping that it will provide some indication to its higher education colleagues in adoption of such course management packaging. Three surveys were conducted respectively to faculty, administration, and students. The following questions were asked.

To what extent was the system adopted campus-wide?
Is there any relationship between end users’ self-reported computer experiences and their adoption of the system?
What were the perceptions of the end users toward use of the system, technologically and pedagogically?
What were the suggestions the end users provided?

Statistical analyses will be conducted after data collection at the end of Fall 2005. We want to explore the following perspectives regarding use of this system. We want to find out the range of use of the system including the frequency, the extent of adoption, i.e. the features of Blackboard that are used, and location where the system was accessed. We would also like to find out the perceptions of use by faculty. These may include their perceptions of the software and the impact of the software on students’ learning. From the survey to the administrations we wanted to find out in what ways this system was utilized for administrative activities. We also hoped to find out how students perceive the use of this software, both for academic and administrative purposes with the course tools and the portal tools respectively. Finally, we would like to get some suggestions from the end users for the adoption of this system and for our training as an academic computing support department.

In addition, follow-up group interviews will be conducted in order to find out whether there are changes over time for the end users relating to their technology skills and confidence, concerns for use of the system, and/or possibilities for expanding to more other uses of the system.

Course management systems with its pedagogical impact and institutional resource consumption have become the academic system equivalent of enterprise resource planning systems. Course management systems play an increasingly important role in carrying out strategic academic and administrative goals in higher education. This study will provide a guide for higher education administrators to learn how faculty members use course management systems, how the system can be used for administrative purposes, and what impact it will have on students’ learning; therefore, how it will influence the strategic planning for an institution.