

# Interactive Classroom Update

## Staff

Incorporating technology "smartly" into the classroom is nothing new for the School of Business at Ole Miss. In 1993, Conner Hall held one of the only electronic classrooms on campus. So, when it was decided to build Holman and renovate Conner, "revamping" the teaching technology was also in order.

The Business School's first "smart" classroom was 54 networked computers whose interactivity was controlled by software. It worked well during the DOS age, but as computers and their operating systems advanced the original "smart" software technology couldn't keep up. With the renovation, the B-School's administration looked towards a longer-term scalable solution. This time, their answer came after a two year period of research--by Brian Reithel and Bart Garner--in the form of a German piece of hardware: VideoDidact.

So what is a "smart classroom" exactly? To generalize, a smart classroom is one where the instructor controls and has an overall view of the computer classroom from their computer. The instructor can easily transfer his or her screen to any/all of the students to demonstrate the solution to a particular problem. Or, if the instructor wants to know what a student is doing, her or she simply can simply access the student's computer screen--without leaving their desk, and without the student's knowledge. Dr. Del Hawley, Associate Dean of Business Administration, who offered the interview about their facilities, prefers the name "interactive classroom" to "smart." "The classroom isn't 'smart' its interactive," said Hawley.

Hawley said they chose the VideoDidact system--over comparable other smart technology systems--because it gives the instructor the ability to electronically control activities in the classroom with little "cognitive overload." The instructor uses the computer in the classroom as she normally would, but whenever she wishes she could push her screen to a student--or all students, blank out all students' screens, lock their keyboards, whatever, and all with the simple press of a button. The VideoDidact system is a solely hardware-based product, which operates with any hardware, software, or local area network that is installed in a computer classroom. "It is a entirely separate system from the data network, just an extra link, so any computer can hook up to it."

So far the Business School has been thrilled with the product. So much so, that they're helping VideoDidact develop a marketing strategy for the product in the U.S.

The interactive classrooms have made a fine addition to the B-School's technology offerings. Providing the means for both student and teacher to be more efficient and fluid with technology in the classroom.

For more information about the Business School's use of technology go to:

<http://www.bus.olemiss.edu/technology/>

For more information on the VideoDidact system go to: [http://www.ebs-euchner.de/englisch/index\\_e.html](http://www.ebs-euchner.de/englisch/index_e.html)