A scalable online language-learning solution

Challenges

American Public University System (APUS) sought a cloud-based language-learning solution in keeping with its strategic goal of affordable education and academic excellence. The challenges were manifest. APUS is a fully online university and the nation's leading provider to the American military—with 120,000-plus students in over 120 countries. The school needed a technologically innovative voice-recognition system that was highly scalable. The solution would have to address a rapidly growing student body and fulfillment of a two-course general-education language requirement. Offerings would have to respond in concert with faculty directions within a modern, asynchronous, online platform—one designed to offer anywhere, anytime study for both its American Public University and American Military University learners around the globe.

Implementation

APUS implemented Rosetta Stone® Language Lessons Version 3 for Higher Education (formerly Rosetta Course®) to supplement and support the language classroom in providing the two-course language requirement for the general-education program. With a focus on leveraging technology to deliver a modern, online course, the university integrated the program with the Learning Management System (LMS) platform to ensure consistency of delivery. Offering six languages of study, the Rosetta Stone solution was used to build core language skills and replace the required textbook previously used in language courses. The emphasis during the faculty-led instruction was on grammar instruction, culture activities, and forums to activate language learned. The university emphasized the importance of daily study for the successful acquisition of a language, and required learners to study an average of two and a half hours per week with the program, 30 minutes per day. Although APUS is currently offering 16-week courses with course start dates each month, the university plans to pilot an eight-week version of the course.

Benefits

APUS has realized the following benefits from implementation of the Rosetta Stone solution:

- Delivered core instruction for two-course general education requirement

- Leveraged instructor resources to deliver culture, grammar, and forums, with core instruction provided by the Rosetta Stone solution

- Delivered online language instruction in support of 31.5% average annual growth in university enrollment over the past nine years

- Increase in completion, retention, and re-enrollment in courses

AMU | American Public University System | APU

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Fred Stielow, PhD, MLS
American Public
University System
Vice President,
Dean of Libraries,
Course Materials, e-Press

Delivering global instruction

American Public University System continues to implement programs to provide effective global instruction for learners. By offering online instruction, the university focuses on delivering high-quality programs available 24-7 with the scalability and flexibility needed to support students for anywhere, anytime study. The Rosetta Stone® solution provided APUS a robust language-learning platform that meets unique program needs. By offering asynchronous instruction around the clock, the university has experienced phenomenal growth in enrollment over the past nine years—from approximately 4,000 learners to over 120,000 learners currently participating in programs. Due to effective implementation around the globe, APUS has been able to attract high-quality faculty both domestically and internationally. Because these faculty members are often technologically savvy, they have been eager to partner with the Rosetta Stone solution to provide effective, online, blended language-learning instruction. In addition, APUS has been able to support American Military University language needs by providing the boots-on-the-ground programs required to meet the needs of military personnel. As Dr. Fred Stielow, vice president and dean of libraries, states, "Thanks to Rosetta Stone, APUS faculty can deliver classroom services on demand and around the globe—including the unprecedented ability to reach our military on the ground in Afghanistan, Iraq, or wherever duty calls."

Leveraging technology

APUS has focused on implementing state-of-the-art technologies and delivery platforms to meet the strategic goal of providing affordable education and academic excellence at the university. As Dr. Stielow states, "A leader in the new breed of fully online universities, APUS is in a constant hunt for innovative, web-based solutions. The university thus logically turned to Rosetta Stone and its cloud-based voice-recognition software. Our pioneering collaboration enabled cutting-edge language education."

In partnering with the Rosetta Stone solution, the university has found that the proprietary speech-recognition technologies of the program have provided students with the ability to quickly activate language learned and build the confidence required to start conversations in their new language, and keep them going. In addition, through implementing the Rosetta Stone solution in the university's LMS, APUS has been able to create a consistent end-user experience for learners. Through blending the solution with faculty-led instruction, APUS has created a "technogogy" that includes the use of blogs and forums to support grammar and culture activities. Last, as the program has continued to evolve, APUS has been able to eliminate the textbook from its language courses, substituting it with the Rosetta Stone program as well as with activities developed by highly skilled faculty.

Providing a learner-centric solution

APUS has always put learners at the center of the university's instructional design of programs. Through implementing programs like the Rosetta Stone solution, the university has been able to support personalized learning environments for students. Focusing on the needs of learners, the university constantly looks for ways to create the best possible learning environment for students. Offering an online language-learning solution, APUS has been able to implement a flexible schedule to meet the needs of learners, which has contributed to increased enrollment around the globe. This has been especially important for military personnel participating in APUS programs.

Realizing benefits

With over 30% in average annualized growth over the past nine years, APUS has had to implement programs like the Rosetta Stone solution that were effective, and that could quickly scale to meet the growing needs of the learner population. The Rosetta Stone program delivered the core instruction required for six languages offered at APUS. This allowed the university to leverage instructor time to focus on culture, grammar, and forum delivery, which added significant value to learners. Through leveraging effective programs like the Rosetta Stone solution, the university has seen an increase in course completion, learner retention, and reenrollment by learners in new courses.

About APUS

American Public University System (APUS) consists of two online universities: American Public University (APU) and American Military University (AMU). APUS's origins reach back to 1991, when James P. Etter, a Marine Corps officer who taught at Marine Corps Base Quantico, retired from active service and launched one of the first 100% online universities, American Military University. AMU was designed to meet the unique educational needs of the military—transient, working adults needing a range of program offerings, from traditional courses such as criminal justice to unique courses such as counterterrorism and military intelligence, which are not readily available at most institutions.

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About Rosetta Stone

Rosetta Stone is a global leader in technology-driven language and learning solutions for individuals, classrooms, and entire organizations.

Our scalable, interactive solutions have been used by over 12,000 businesses, 9,000 public sector organizations, and 22,000 education institutions worldwide, and by millions of learners in over 150 countries.

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