

# **Endorsement of FirstClass by an Outstanding Instructional Technology Professional**

FirstClass is head and shoulders above all other groupware systems for student learning for several reasons:

## **Scalability & Performance**

On no other system will you be able to cram the (typically) tens and hundreds of thousands of users on one server and still have amazing performance. Having this low cost, high performance, and low support is critical in an educational environment where you don't have the tech support resources or dollars to implement costlier systems.

Remember, consider software, hardware, support and training costs in any Total Cost of Ownership. Related to this, the software CLIENT is a huge factor since it allows all users to have total speed/functionality from anywhere/anytime whereas some other systems require web clients for true roving. Any web client by default must be inferior because both data and forms info is transmitted whereas with the FirstClass client only data need be transmitted. This last is a subtle but important factor.

## **The Web Server**

First Class provides an integrated web server (Internet Services) which means:

- All teachers, students, users can have their own personal web page controlled right from their FirstClass desktop with no uploading, no ftp, no saving, no versioning, no HTML knowledge, etc. (THIS IS HUGE)
- School and board-wide web content can be maintained by collaborative groups using existing FirstClass conferences
- Any intranet content can simultaneously be served to the web leading to true single-source knowledge management

## **The FC Document**

FirstClass provides unparalleled content/knowledge management for online information (academic or corporate) because of the FirstClass DOCUMENT. This allows collaborative groups to maintain content far easier than any other electronic method. Again, a huge factor for developing and maintaining robust, up-to-date, high-quality online content.

## **Top 12 Reasons to Author Content in FirstClass Using FirstClass Documents**

- 1) **FC documents can be opened anywhere by any user** whereas there are always those who cannot open Word, PowerPoint, Appleworks or sometimes even Adobe .pdf files.
- 2) **FC documents can be richly formatted, saved or printed** as with other authoring applications (e.g., font/paragraph formats, embedded images, tables, etc.). In addition, they can be easily toggled for online or page viewing.
- 3) **FC documents are quickly and easily updated live online** so the most current version (not different versions) is *always* 'out there'. Ease of revision means information/processes/procedures will tend to be *refined and improved* rather than ignored.

Compare the revision processes:

- FC document revisions (quick): **open-revise-close**
- Word document revisions (slow): **download-open-revise-save-close-delete old-upload new**

- 4) **FC documents are more compact** (can be 2 to 50 times smaller than .doc, .ppt or .pdf) and therefore *faster* to open, especially on slow connections.
- 5) **A FC document represents an online, single-source piece of information.** Using a Word file results in multiple users saving copies locally, thus greatly increasing version confusion and server storage requirements in the system.
- 6) **FC documents can be searched online** (search titles and/or contents and even including sub-folders) to find relevant information. Attached or uploaded files cannot be searched.
- 7) **FC documents can be hyperlinked online** from other FC objects and even within their own content using markers. Attached files cannot be linked.
- 8) **FC documents never expire**, but messages with file attachments (like Word) do.
- 9) **FC documents can be shared to the web easily and powerfully** so that intranet content becomes internet content as well. This potential to 'webify' board policies and procedures with no conversion/duplication is huge so long as Word documents are avoided.
- 10) **FC documents encourage flexible online knowledge management** rather than paper-based management. They can be read-only or shared flexibly and FC skills around documents are transferable to other areas of electronic communication and collaboration in organizations.
- 11) **FC documents can be set to auto-open** or used effectively as stationery unlike uploaded files.
- 12) **FC documents do not destabilize the security of the client machine** like .doc Word documents do.

There is so much more I could write, but it would take hours to elaborate on all the

advantages. These are only a few of the major ones.

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