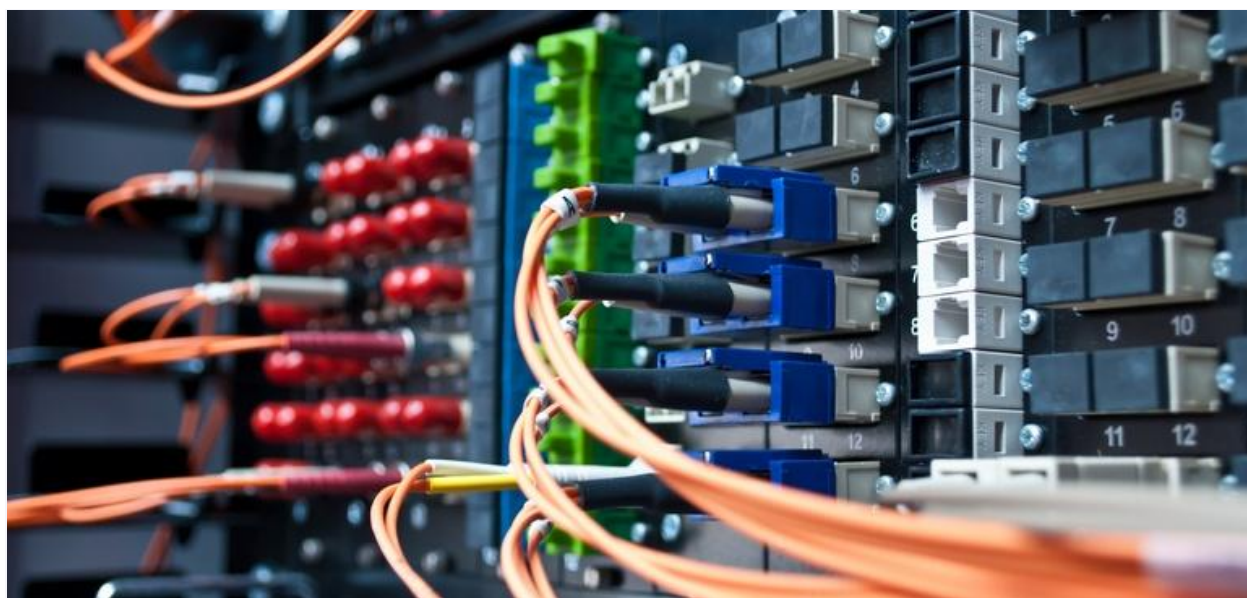


6 ed tech products to note from Educause 2016

From solutions for boosting cybersecurity to new accessibility components on familiar platforms, these solutions are worth a closer look



Between keynotes, panels and interviews, Education Dive took time to check out what Educause 2016's close to 300 exhibitors had on display. From solutions for boosting cybersecurity to new accessibility components on familiar platforms, here are six products we saw worth noting.

EfficientIP helping campuses boost DNS security

Recently dubbed "at the forefront of DNS security" by CIO Magazine, EfficientIP is quickly gaining prominence among vendors of DDI software. If the acronyms are a bit much, the basics are like this: The company helps institutions manage a more secure network infrastructure with products like "SOLIDserver," which offers improved data protection, additional network reliability and security, centralized management and policy-driven automated deployment.

The company also recently commissioned what it says is the largest independent survey into DNS attacks, with responses from 995 respondents. And in higher ed, it already counts institutions like SUNY, Colorado University and University of Central Florida among its clients.

Cengage's Learning Objects fully prepared for competency-based education

Competency-based learning is trending big in higher ed, so it's a no-brainer that Cengage invested in an acquisition of Learning Objects last year. At this year's show, the company had its full Competency-Based Learning Platform on display. When implemented in such programs, it offers competency dashboards, personalized learning activities, extended transcripts and evidence portfolios, and design that takes self-paced programs offering modular credentials in mind. It can also support instructor-led or independent learning in traditional, flipped, fully-online or blended course formats.

Blackboard looks toward improving accessibility

Speaking of acquisitions, Blackboard had accessibility in mind with the announcement that it purchased U.K.-based ed tech firm Fronteer. Inadequate focus on digital resource accessibility has been referred to as a "lawsuit waiting to happen" in higher ed, but Fronteer's Ally product should set Blackboard up to solve that problem on several fronts. Ally is capable of integrating with a number of LMS platforms and provides accessibility assistance by checking posted documents and materials for issues, using machine

learning algorithms to create files in additional formats like Semantic HTML, Tagged PDF, Audio, ePub and Electronic Braille.

Citrix transforms classrooms, saves campuses money with virtualization

Citrix offers a range of solutions for helping campuses go digital with networking, classroom virtualization, and moves to mobile and cloud platforms. At Educause, we had an opportunity to speak with Mark Henry, manager of virtualization and learning technologies at Texas A&M's College of Engineering, for details on how Citrix helped him transform class spaces. Virtual desktops, for example, allowed the school to replace computer labs with much more modern, open, dynamic learning spaces. This also enabled students to access engineering applications on their personal devices, where they could previously only use those programs at the school. The savings to the department overall have been estimated around \$100,000 per year.

Bomgar simplifies two-point verification deployment

As much as you can use software to improve cybersecurity, end users (students, faculty and staff) remain a major pain point. This has made two-factor authentication a standard in many industries, and Bomgar's Verify solution can ease its implementation. Verify prevents malicious actors from being able to compromise a person's user name and password by requiring a second security check via a personal device, which can include a smartphone, tablet or computer. The solution can also integrate with Microsoft Active Directory, Novell eDirectory, Sun Directory Server and Open LDAP, and is also compatible with other Bomgar products like Vault (for remote support) and Privileged Access (which can eliminate the need for VPNs for vendors and others).

D2L gets personal

Personalized learning is still a major buzzphrase in education, and with the Autumn16 release of its Brightspace LMS, D2L is boosting its efforts to capitalize on those efforts. The new release includes a focus on helping educators further personalize their pedagogy with instant feedback via Intelligent Agents, new Virtual Classroom features, new Video Assignment features and more. The company is also now using Amazon Web Services for its strategic public cloud infrastructure, taking advantage of services like Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2), Amazon Simple Storage Service (S3), Amazon CloudFront and Amazon Elasticsearch.