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EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL

OCTOBER - 27 - 2015

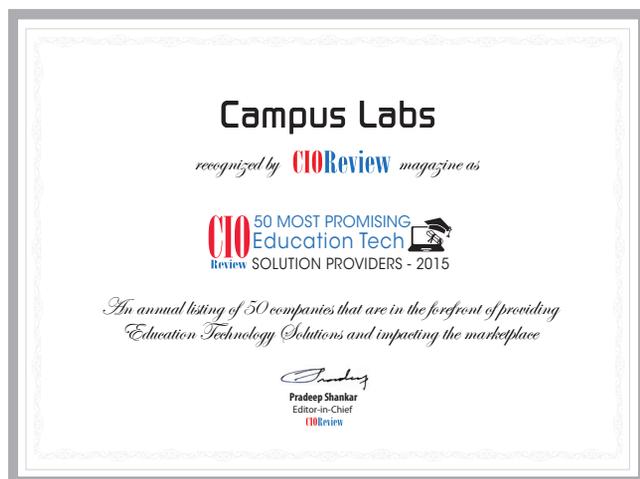
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50 Most Promising Education Tech Solution Providers 2015

With the advent of technology in education, schools, colleges and universities are exploring newer ways of carrying out the whole process of teaching, learning and administration. These technologies are helping them to augment their services in multiple areas—be it maintaining records, providing online educational resources, or streamlining administration with reduced paperwork. The other opportunities include greater access to rich, multimedia content that goes beyond traditional linear text based learning environment, and the use of mobility and cloud that takes classes to wherever the students are. Also, the educators are using social networking tools to set up collaborative learning and digital games for more personalized learning. These technology-based contributions have gone a long way into creating an inspiring environment for learners and a broad channel to dispense knowledge for the educators.

Meanwhile, this pace of technological disruptions in education sector is also creating significant challenges for educational institutions. The main challenge is to catch up with emerging digital innovations that require these institutions to upgrade their existing IT infrastructure and build new development programs. To address these issues, a distinguished panel comprising of CEOs, CIOs, VCs, analysts including CIO Review editorial board have selected the leading firms that offers best-of-breed technology solutions and services in the education sector.

The selection panel looked at the vendor's capability to fulfill needs of buyers with effective solutions that curb the challenges and promote business growth. In this edition of CIO Review, we bring to you "50 Most Promising Education Tech Solution Providers 2015", featuring the most prolific vendors in the educational sector.



Company:

Campus Labs

Key Person:

Eric Reich
President & Co-Founder

Website:

www.campuslabs.com

Description:

Offers integrated solutions for every aspect of an institution's mission: Analytics and Insight, Improvement and Accountability, Teaching and Learning, Student Engagement, and Retention and Success.

Campus Labs Take an Enterprise Approach to Higher Ed Data

Founded in 2001, Campus Labs began with a system to solicit student feedback about campus services. Today, Campus Labs serves over 750 campuses and offers integrated software and cloud-based solutions for virtually every area of higher education administration—from assessment and accreditation to teaching and learning to student success and institutional effectiveness. “We’re more focused than ever on empowering colleges and universities,” says John D. White, Ph.D., Vice President of Product Management. The key to this empowerment is the strategic use of campus-wide data to better understand how an institution can evolve.

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An enterprise approach to data is what’s necessary for transformative change on campus

“Assessment is just one source and use of data,” White explains. “It’s important, but there’s much more information a campus should be exploring.” A comprehensive approach can uncover valuable insights by tapping into a university’s data-rich ecosystem. By leveraging data from all corners of their campus, institutions can strengthen learning outcomes, highlight co-curricular opportunities, identify which resources best serve students, and improve retention. He offers the example of a public university that had a significant retention challenge. The campus was good at identifying pre-matriculating at-risk learners, but limited in its ability to support them once they were enrolled. Campus Labs provided an integrated solution that helped the university connect its institution-wide data to identify which students needed specific support and then match these students with the right resources, including advising and tutoring services. After implementing the Campus Labs solution, the university saw a six-percent increase in retention.

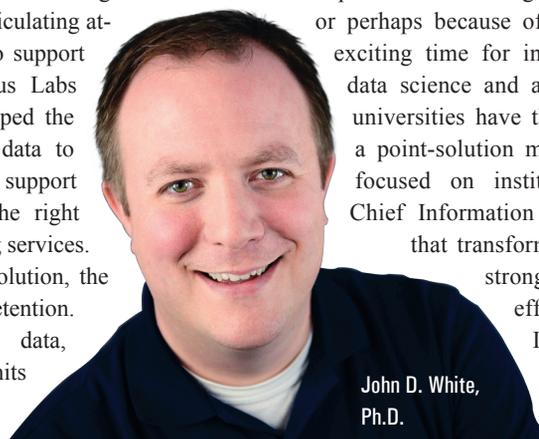
Yet despite the possibilities of data, campuses remain challenged by the limits of their traditional infrastructure. White says that administrators and faculty,

who typically function within well-defined departments, need to transcend the silos and see how all the data points come together. “When data is stored separately, this limits the institutional layer of data,” he explains. “Siloed solutions create a challenge because they don’t tell you the complete story. An enterprise approach to data is what’s necessary for transformative change on campus.”

Connecting the data will enable leaders to ask better questions, the answers to which will empower their institution to more effectively fulfill its mission. The questions can range from immediately practical concerns (e.g., How can the accreditation reporting process be streamlined?) to deeper, mission-centric concepts (e.g., Which teaching methods can improve learning outcomes for courses taken by first-generation students?). Getting the various data sets to talk to each other, White says, will unlock more connections, revealing more answers—and even more instructive questions.

Most campuses already have much of the information they need; they’re just not efficient with their data resources. Recognizing that a significant amount of data isn’t collected effectively, the Campus Labs team offers tools that incorporate the day-to-day workflow into the data collection process. “As we build, we consider making this process a part of someone’s daily life, whether that’s a faculty member, administrator, or student.” Connecting an institution’s everyday data is essential to understanding a student’s journey through the entire campus experience.

In spite of the challenges facing higher education today—or perhaps because of them—White believes this is an exciting time for institutions. With the advances in data science and analytics, leaders at colleges and universities have the opportunity to transition from a point-solution mindset to an enterprise approach focused on institution-wide transformation. The Chief Information Officer plays a pivotal role in that transformation, and White recommends a stronger partnership with institutional effectiveness peers. “The CIO and IE teams need to move beyond the ‘data ask’ and begin to create a data layer and collaborate on a comprehensive approach.” 



John D. White,
 Ph.D.