IBM

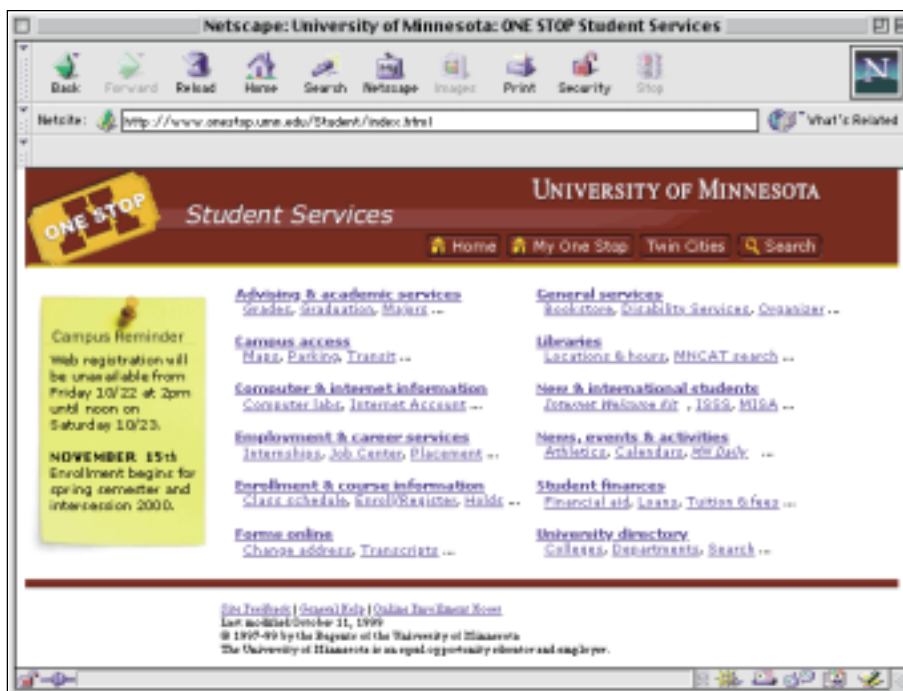# University of Minnesota chases away registration blues with WebSphere family.

If you've ever had to stand in line to register for classes or make simple changes in your university course schedule, you understand just how time-consuming and frustrating the experience can be. At some universities, students go as far as to camp overnight outside the registration office to compete for a seat in the most popular classes. At the University of Minnesota they have a better idea—stay home.

"WebSphere Performance Pack provides us key performance features, including load balancing and failover protection, that ensure the integrity of data transactions."

—Jim Hall, Manager of Web Production Support, University of Minnesota

With basic Internet access and a Web browser—standard features of any modern collegiate existence—students enrolling in any of the University of Minnesota's four campuses can now register for classes or modify their course selections from the comfort of their dorm rooms. Or if they prefer, they can do so from the cool ambience of their favorite Internet cafés. By creating its One Stop Student Services Web site (hosted at *www.onestop.umn.edu*) using IBM WebSphere Application Server, Standard Edition and IBM WebSphere

Application	Online student information and registration system
Business Benefits	Annual savings of $200,000 over cost of traditional paper-based system; 90% of students register online; as many as 132,000 transactions processed each month
Software	IBM WebSphere™ Application Server, Standard Edition IBM WebSphere Performance Pack
Hardware	IBM RS/6000® SP™

University of Minnesota's One Stop Student Services Web site, developed with IBM WebSphere Application Server, provides class registration, course information and other services over the Internet.

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Performance Pack, the university's office of information technologies has given its students the ability to control their academic destinies with the click of a mouse. "The Web server manages as many as 132,000 transactions each month. Today, nearly 90 percent of the students register online," says Michael Handberg, director of Web development for the university. "By reducing the costs associated with our paper-based system, the Web site is saving us more than $200,000 annually."

WebSphere Application Server runs the show

The Web site comprises a suite of Java™ servlets running within WebSphere Application Server on an IBM RS/6000 SP server. These servlets access and update various back-end database sources, including the university's new PeopleSoft enterprise resource planning (ERP) system. Logging on to the site, students have access to a variety of services in addition to class registration, such as a financial aid estimator that helps them determine their eligibility for a school loan and a Web application that allows students to update their contact information online.

WebSphere Performance Pack balances the load

The University of Minnesota is one of the largest universities in the United States, with more than 65,000 students at its four campuses at Morris, Crookston, Duluth and Twin Cities. With nearly 40,000 students, the Twin Cities campus at the University of Minnesota accounts for over 60 percent of the university's enrollment. The high volume of registration transactions—as many as 12,000 a day during peak periods from the Twin Cities campus alone—places significant performance demands on the Web server. To manage this transaction volume, the university

deployed WebSphere Performance Pack. Notes Jim Hall, the university's manager of Web production support, "WebSphere Performance Pack provides us key performance features, including load balancing and failover protection, that ensure the integrity of data transactions. If we have a problem with one node, WebSphere Performance Pack routes the transaction to another node automatically. If one node experiences a traffic overload, it routes the transaction to a node that has greater bandwidth. These features are essential to providing fail-proof transactions during peak seasons."

By enabling its students to register for classes online, the University of Minnesota has made mundane tasks fast and simple. It has also increased the efficiency of its administrative offices. More important, the Web site helps the university maintain its reputation as a leader in technological innovation, ensuring that it will continue to draw the best students. Says Handberg, "The Web site has added value to our institution beyond improving the quality of traditional activities such as registration. It has enhanced the university's reputation as an institution that is responsive to its students' long-term academic goals."

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