

California State University Chancellor's Office An all-new U.



**California State University
Chancellor's Office**
Long Beach, California
www.calstate.edu

**In partnership with:
Refined Data Solutions, Inc.**
www.refineddata.com

Leading public university system uses extensible Adobe® Connect™ solution to improve collaboration, boost performance, and save the environment

With 23 campuses statewide, more than 400,000 students, and 44,000 faculty and staff, the California State University system is among the largest, most diverse, and affordable university systems in the country. It's also among the most innovative and forward-thinking, as the university puts cutting-edge technologies to good use to support the needs of university staff and hundreds of thousands of students.

And while much of the university's focus is rightly directed at improving in-class instruction and academic rigor, a substantial amount of that work goes on out of sight of the student body.

The California State University Chancellor's Office is responsible for facilitating training, meetings, and professional development events for human resources staff, campus employee trade union members, and construction management professionals across all its campuses. Amid growing budget concerns in California and ever-increasing emphasis on eco-friendly activities, the university needed a cost-effective, environmentally conscious way to conduct its business.

"We adopted Adobe Connect and applications from Refined Data Solutions to conduct our business in a financially and environmentally responsible manner," says Jennifer Wicks, the Executive Producer for the Central Station U Studio at CSU's Chancellor's Office. "Using an industry-leading webinar solution helps us improve interactions and engagement with employees and partners across the state while cutting costs and minimizing our environmental impact."

“Adobe Connect helps ensure that regardless of the engagement, everyone can access the full array of content and presentations for the most productive online meeting possible.”

Jennifer Wicks
Executive Producer,
California State University Chancellor’s Office

Challenge

- Creating an engaging environment to improve collaboration and meeting attendance
- Reducing travel expenses and environmental impact of state-wide meetings and seminars
- Extending the reach of content to staff, prospective students, and colleagues throughout California

Solution

- Deploy Adobe Connect to provide seamless, reliable access to host online content from anywhere
- Use Refined Data Solutions’ Talking Stick application for Adobe Connect to enhance streaming video capabilities and provide a more interactive meeting experience
- Leverage the Footprints application to demonstrate cost savings and the environmental impact of webinars to support wider adoption of online collaboration

Benefits

- Saved more than \$1 million on travel-related expenses and more than 600,000 metric tons of carbon emissions over a two year period
- Enhanced real-time interaction among dispersed staff
- Provided seamless, reliable access to rich online meeting and professional development content without requiring additional software or hardware
- Improved the quality and breadth of video capabilities

Cultivating excellence

CSU’s system stretches from its Humboldt State campus in the north all the way to the San Diego State campus in the south. Coordinating meetings, seminars, and events to promote professional development and knowledge sharing can be a time-consuming and expensive undertaking. In the past, basic conference calls served as a temporary fix, but didn’t provide a level of interactivity required for truly effective and innovative meetings. Other webinar solutions also fell short, offering limited communication features and lack of flexibility that couldn’t keep participants engaged.

Today, the CSU Chancellor’s Office hosts daily, weekly, and monthly meetings, trainings, and events covering a wide spectrum of topics. Regularly scheduled live webcast trainings include *The Inside Edge—Payroll* and *The Inside Edge—Benefits*, where human resources staff participate in interactive sessions focusing on subjects directly related to their roles. Similar sessions are produced for the university’s system-wide construction planning and design staff, featuring guest presenters and trainers. A quarterly forum is held online for state employee tradesworkers in which they can share ideas, exchange best practices, and provide substantial input to aid CSU in developing and maintaining best safety practices.

With the Adobe Connect solution, CSU can produce television-quality online meetings and seminars that feature a multitude of interactive elements for a more compelling, impactful meeting experience. Unlike other solutions, Adobe Connect leverages the free and ubiquitous Adobe Flash® Player to enable participants easy, reliable access to rich content—including dynamic presentations, integrated audio and video, and more—from virtually any computer or mobile device.

“We conduct an abundance of events on a regular basis ranging from outreach to high school students in rural areas to full day web conferences with multiple sessions that reach as many as 250 people simultaneously,” says Wicks. “Adobe Connect helps ensure that regardless of the engagement, everyone can access the full array of content and presentations for the most productive online meeting possible.”

Broadcasting live to multiple campuses

One of the key advantages of choosing Adobe Connect over other webinar solutions is its enhanced software developer kit (SDK), which enables seamless integration of third-party extensions that can bring additional liveliness and interactivity to large-scale online webinars. “Adobe Connect provides an extensible platform that makes it easy to integrate with virtually any kind of web service or back-end, legacy system,” says Terry Shane, President of Refined Data Solutions. “If you can dream it, we can build it. Anything is possible when you work with Adobe Connect.”

Using the Talking Stick application for Adobe Connect enables CSU conference producers to pull in multiple streams of video, including from outside sources, for a more dynamic and engaging online experience. Rich features like picture-in-picture and high-definition video help bring meeting participants together, regardless of location or computing environment.



“Adobe Connect provides an extensible platform...No other webinar solution allows you to build custom applications that can run inside a live meeting to meet any business need.”

Terry Shane
President,
Refined Data Solutions

Working with Refined Data Solutions—an Adobe partner that creates software solutions for learning management, and webinars for Global Fortune 1000 companies and other organizations—the CSU Chancellor’s Office integrated the Refined Data Talking Stick, Hands Up, and Footprints applications into its existing on-premise Adobe Connect deployment.

Talking Stick is a software extension designed to enhance webinars and eLearning sessions delivered via Adobe Connect through advanced video and audio functionality. With features and capabilities like high-definition webcam, digital video streaming, and picture-in-picture video feeds, the application provides event producers with a myriad of options for delivering high-quality, high-impact content to webinar attendees.

With Talking Stick, the CSU system-wide professional development team can deliver an unparalleled interactive and engaging meeting experience. The application’s advanced features enable Wicks and her colleagues to create an environment reminiscent of a live television talk show, bringing new life to the university’s annual Academic Resources Conference and other gatherings.

Using the picture-in-picture video capabilities in Talking Stick, participants across 23 campuses are united with participants in other locations. The live broadcasts let them see body language and other visual cues that aren’t possible with traditional webinars while simultaneously viewing rich, high-definition video feeds streamed from within the meeting or from outside sources.

“The Talking Stick pod in Adobe Connect lets us spotlight each person who’s presenting or speaking and cut away to someone else when they begin speaking,” Wicks says. “We can show people speaking and overlay it with additional content, which is something most campuses haven’t seen before. The level of excitement and engagement is exponentially higher, resulting in a three-fold increase in average attendance and participation.”

Saving the world one meeting at a time

Beyond enhanced video, the flexible Adobe solution enables CSU’s Chancellor’s Office meeting and conference producers to incorporate a range of dynamic elements that round out the online meeting experience. Meeting organizers can pull in richly animated and musically themed biographies of the day’s presenters created in Adobe Presenter or include captivating multimedia presentations that participants can control and interact with from their desktops.

However, among the more impressive—and important—additions to the sessions is a real-time graphical presentation of eco-savings the university realizes with webinars instead of travel. Environmental stewardship is a prime objective of the university, and the Refined Data Solutions Footprints application helps CSU reinforce the importance of alternatives to costly travel and other activities that increase the schools’ impact on the environment.

"Footprints is a powerful way to demonstrate that using Adobe Connect for collaboration and meetings is the smart, responsible choice. We can...drive home the point that in roughly two years, we've saved more than \$1 million in travel expenses, 616,000 metric tons of carbon emissions, and more than 1.2 million miles in a car or on a plane."

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Toolkit

Adobe Connect for Web Meetings
Adobe Presenter

"One of the most exciting things we do in every session is use Refined Data Solutions' Footprints application to post real time updates of the travel costs and carbon emissions we've avoided by holding our collaborative session online," Wicks says. "Each person can see live, updated statistics next to their name showing how many miles we've saved and how significant their contributions to cost and carbon emissions savings are with each online meeting they attend."

The application automatically calculates the distance, cost, and carbon savings per person based on their current location, which can be refined for greater data accuracy. Data can be displayed in line or bar charts, be compared between different meeting sessions, and be exported as spreadsheets to document historical and periodic savings.

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Wicks notes that Adobe Connect and applications from Refined Data Solutions are helping to transform the way the university communicates with staff, partners, and prospective students. "People around the university are taking note that this is the wave of the future," she says. "While there are other solutions out there, anyone who has used it is quick to recognize that the combination of the Refined Data Solutions custom pods and Adobe Connect stands heads and shoulders above the rest because it's extremely flexible and easy to use, and provides a wealth of options to conduct meetings in ways not possible in the past."

For more information

www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect

<http://RefinedData.com/adobe-connect/talking-stick>

<http://RefinedData.com/adobe-connect/footprints>

<http://RefinedData.com/adobe-connect/hands-up>



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