

# Using Blackboard Courseware in the Delivery of Computerised Reservation System Training

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## Abstract

In order to prepare students to enter the New Zealand Travel, Tourism and Hospitality industries, it is vital that programmes of study are designed to produce graduates who are well equipped with a high level of computer literacy and information technology skills. The travel industry has always been an early adopter of information technology and with emerging Internet-based booking systems it has become increasingly evident that students must not only possess the technical skills to use these new booking systems but also the ability to communicate *effectively* electronically. This poster outlines the way Blackboard courseware has been used to introduce students to an asynchronous medium of electronic communication as well as providing electronic learner support to enhance the learning experience of these Certificate level students.

## Background

Unitec is one of two educational providers in New Zealand to use the live SABRE computerised reservation system (CRS) to deliver the CRS Unit of study for the Level 3 ATTTO Travel Certificate. The SABRE® global distribution system is the largest non-Government database in the world and students enjoy live access to the SABRE database when completing their CRS training. This is the first Certificate Level course delivered by the School of Information Systems and Computing that integrates an online system of learner support using Blackboard courseware with face-to-face delivery of course material.

## Experience

In this poster presentation, the benefits of Blackboard courseware as a learning tool are examined. The techniques used to integrate the online courseware with face-to-face delivery are also discussed.

Initial findings show that student participation in discussion boards and use of content areas to access course information and course documents have been at a much higher rate than initially anticipated bearing in mind that these are Level 3 students. An analysis of access to Blackboard by the students will be presented. Four online travel agencies have been established to create a “live” experience in-class, simulating the interchange between travel agent and customer. Using discussion group forums and inviting staff to contribute their travel-related queries, the students processed these queries using the SABRE CRS and responded to their “clients” accordingly. The effectiveness of this use of Blackboard as a teaching tool is reported upon.